

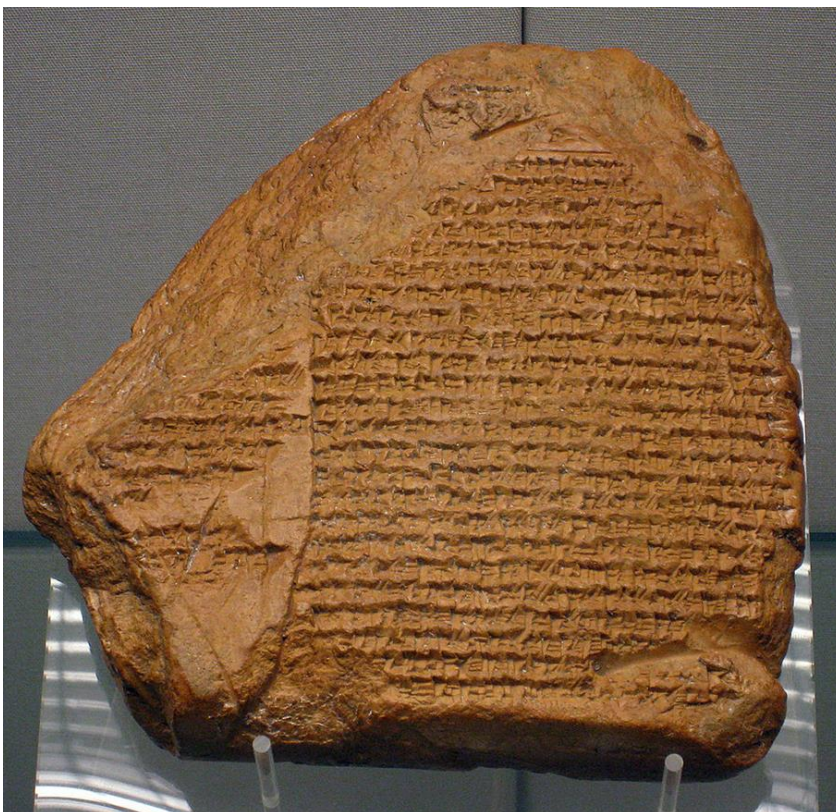
Daniel Chapter 5 - The Writing on the Wall



This chapter describes a Babylonian Regent, who was lifted up in pride and boasted in the gods of Babylon at the expense of the God of Israel. This regent is called Belshazzar. Belshazzar is described as the son of Nebuchadnezzar. However, many modern critics claim this was not true, and that Belshazzar was not a king. He was the son and crown prince of Nabonidus the last king of the Babylonian Empire, much archaeological evidence proves this to be the case. But the Bible record can easily be reconciled with this, as there is strong evidence (ancient Greek historian Herodotus) which suggests that Nabonidus married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. This would make Belshazzar a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar II. Additionally, the word for son in the original language is the same as grandson. Some people have an agenda to try and make the Bible contradict discovered history, so they can explain the Bible as a book of myth,

but every time, simple answers show that the Bible is of course an accurate record.

It is the same with the argument about the statement that Belshazzar is described as a king here in Daniel 5, when he wasn't a king, just a co-regent. But in fact, Nabonidus, the father of Belshazzar, exiled himself to Arabia for ten years, and in an inscription states that it was because of the "*impiety of the Babylonians*" While he was away he appointed his son and heir Belshazzar to rule over the province of Babylon, thus the de facto king. As Nabonidus his father was relatively old at the time, Belshazzar could expect to become king within a few years of the whole empire. Belshazzar means "*Bel, protect the king*". He was entrusted with many royal duties, such as granting privileges, commanding portions of the army, and receiving offerings and oaths.



The Nabonidus Chronicle, an ancient Babylonian text which chronicles the reign of Belshazzar's father and also documents the period during which Belshazzar was regent in Babylon.

The power and wealth which Belshazzar could revel in, unchallenged,

Stele depicting Nabonidus,
Belshazzar's father

Belshazzar was put in charge of “*the armies of all the lands*” – conscripts and troops of foreign origin, and was involved in the defence of Lydia an ally of Babylon, when Cyrus the Great crossed the Tigris. All of this made him a very confident man, trusting in his gods - especially Marduk to protect his city and domain.



In this Daniel chapter 5, it records how that this Belshazzar made a great feast to a thousand of his lords. No expense would have been spared, as he showed off his glory, and might.



Belshazzar was entitled as king regent to receive the *rēḫātu* (literally "remains", leftovers from food and drink offerings presented to statues of deities, the exclusive right of kings) and no doubt this feast would have involved this ritual. This explains the reason for Belshazzar commanding for the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had stolen out of the temple, which was in Jerusalem, to be fetched, and that these publicly be used by him and all his high ranking princes, and wives and concubines to drink out of them. It would have debased the holy vessels and been a public sign of the superiority of the Babylonian gods, rituals and religion over that of the Jews. Not only this but Belshazzar thinking of his military prowess and security of his city, would recall the prophecies given by Daniel the prophet to his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, that the head of gold would be superseded by another power. Well, those temple treasures had been looted from that little city Jerusalem nearly seventy years before, and look, Babylon was still standing!! But if he had read the Jewish Holy Books he might have read:

Proverbs 16:18 *Pride goes before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.* We are also reminded of the Apostles words also : 1 Corinthians 10:12: *therefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

In fact, the Hebrew prophets had predicted that Babylon would be indulging itself when the time of calamity would befall it:

Isaiah 21:2 -5 *A grievous vision is declared unto me; Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease. My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me. Prepare the table, ... eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.*

Jeremiah 50: 37 -39 *And Babylon shall become heaps... In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord.*

So it was that the elite of Babylon stupefied themselves senseless quaffing large quantities of wine, toasting to all the varied and many gods of Babylon *They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.*

As they blasphemed and ridiculed the holiest of Israel and committed sacrilege against the God of Israel, verse 5: *in the same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.*

6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

This is a brilliant description. It is almost humorous. We can almost imagine the scene. It would have been reminiscent of the recent king's coronation, with all the pomp and ceremony, all the regalia and ritual, and deep symbolism, all a complete fake, copying teachings from the Bible, but applying it to themselves. In short, this Anglican church was carrying out blasphemy on an industrial scale. Of course, they would: they are but a whorish daughter of the Great City of Babylon the super strumpet of the lot! Imaging the great and good of the British establishment quivering in the boots with fear, if a hand wrote on the wall in Westminster Abbey! The finger of God is still at work though. Daniel reminds: Daniel 2:21 *And he changes the times and the seasons: he removes kings, and sets up kings: he gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:* The Mother of the Church of England is the Church of Rome, known as that Great City, Babylon. This great religious empire, this obnoxious international system, also considers itself secure in its entrenchment in high society. It also believes in its immortality. Also, Babylon the Great through its ecumenical movement is drinking from the cups and vessels of different religions, to gather all into her broad church: Revelation 18: For all

nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies... How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously...

Jeremiah predicted also in Chapter 51: 7-8: *Babylon has been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so, be she may be healed.*

He predicted how the religious system of belief would influence that of many other surrounding nations, and that they would be affected, but that it would all come to an end. With Babylon the ancient empire it was true, and so will it be for its modern counterpart.



The King and his chums were petrified.

This hand all by itself, was writing away on the wall.

What did it mean?

Verse 7 *The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers.* – this was the same gang of con artists, tricksters and fraudsters that his grandad once trusted in, but learned that they deserved nothing but death, as their abilities were exposed as being non-existent. In the British Museum there is evidence discovered of some of their little ideas they cooked up. They liked to read livers! Not much different I suppose to some modern newspapers.



Sheep's Liver in Clay used for divination. The natural smoothness of the liver makes any abnormality easy to identify, and these blemishes were believed to give omens of the future. This can be seen in the British Museum and it was found in Iraq

And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Third Ruler in the Kingdom... this is a clue to the accuracy of scripture. Nabonidus was the first ruler, he, Belshazzar was the second ruler... the third ruler was now a vacancy created for someone who could read this strange writing on the wall.

Of course no one could read it being blind drunk, and unfamiliar with foreign writing style. It needed a Revealer of Secrets.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets.

The queen heard about all the commotion, and she came into the banqueting hall. Herodotus identifies her as Nitocris, and he describes her as having great influence. She informs Belshazzar about Daniel. She says that he had *the spirit of the holy gods*. It is unlikely Daniel appreciated this description, but he had been described that before by Nebuchadnezzar in 4:9: *I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubles thee*. It seems

that Daniel and his faith and wisdom had long been forgotten by the new generation of know-it-alls, which once again had to learn the mistakes made by their fathers all over again.

In verse 12, this queen also describes Daniel as having an excellent spirit. Paul identifies this as being a desirable quality in an elder in the Ecclesia: 1 Timothy 3:7 *Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without;*

Daniel is then brought into the same banqueting hall, the atmosphere is tense, no one eating or drinking but all crowded to the front where this mysterious writing was written, They all would have been able to hear Daniel, as he publicly rejected the king's offers of rewards, and then he with courage and clarity, rebuked and scolded this extremely powerful man without fear.

The way he would not take a reward reminds us of how Elisha refused the rewards of Naaman the Syrian in 2 Kings 5:15-16, and Abram to the King of Sodom in Genesis 14:22-23. As the Apostle Paul told Simon in Acts 8:18-20, the gift of God cannot be purchased with money!

Daniel reminded the packed hall with a thousand of the lords of Babylon, of the foolishness of their former king Nebuchadnezzar and how he was forcibly taught of the supremacy of the God of heaven. But how they all had lifted up themselves against the Lord of heaven, and that Belshazzar had refused to learn and humble his heart.

Daniel then explained the writing on the wall:



This meant: Numbered, Numbered, Weighed, Divided

Daniel explains:

26 This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Why was the word Mene mentioned twice? Three reasons: 1: God had numbered AND finished it. 2 Repeating the aspect of the vision, gives it emphasis and establishes the point – see Genesis 41:32) 3. The words have numerical value as we shall see. *Mene* is Aramaic and Hebrew, but the Mina was a Mesopotamian coin, worth 50 shekels.

27 Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

Weighed in the balances. God had weighed up Belshazzar, and found him and his kingdom deficient.

Again, Tekel is Aramaic and Hebrew from the same root word as the shekel. Ezekiel 45:12 tells us that the shekel was worth 20 gerahs

28 Peres; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

Peres is the singular form of the word *Parsin*. (*Uphasin* is the same as “and parsin”) This word has two meanings. It can either mean divided as in 1/2 a shekel or Persia. This relates to the division of Belshazzar’s Kingdom into two parts. One part for the Medes and the other for the Persians. The word was deliberately used to suggest Persians, but it is associated with another Hebrew word ‘to break down’ or ‘to break in’ which was exactly what was going to happen that night.

Taking these words together, and the values associated with them.

- Mene = 50 shekels
- Tekel = 1 shekel = 20 gerahs.
- Mene = 1000 gerahs.
- Peres = ½ shekel = 500 gerahs.

Mene mene tekkel upharsin: 1000 +1000+20+500 = 2520

2520 is used in the book of Daniel in chapter 4:32, when Daniel explained this time period to Nebuchadnezzar that “seven times” would pass over him *until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

7 x Time (Babylonian year had 360 days) = 2520. This we discussed in our last Daniel class is a time period which spans the madness of the Gentiles.

For example:

- Nebuchadnezzar's reign was from 604BC. +2520 = 1917 when Turks removed from Jerusalem.
- Nebuchadnezzar's death was 560BC + 2520 = 1961
- Fall of Babylon – Belshazzar - 536BC + 2520 = 1985

The power of Babylon the Great has been revived greatly, and the image as seen by Daniel has been assembled. The Head of Gold and all other territories associated with the Image are allied together.

We are waiting now for the assembling of the little stone power, to once again surprise the Empire of Evil as they drink themselves into a stupor of religious intoxication.



Daniel in this 5th chapter concludes:

30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Brother Terry