

# Daniel



## Lesson 8-Belshazzar's Drunken Feast and Babylon's Ruin

*Focus: Daniel 5:1-31*

### ❖ **King Belshazzar's night of drunken foolishness (v.1-4)**

- **Belshazzar was the son of King Nabonidus (of Babylon). Belshazzar was made a co-regent ruler of Babylon in the year 553 BC. Nabonidus had gone in that year to live in another place (the Oasis of Tayma). In 540 BC Nabonidus returned to fight against the advancing Persian armies. He marched his armies North to meet Cyrus' armies. Belshazzar however, was left to hold down the capital city, Babylon. On October 10, 539 BC Nabonidus surrendered and fled from Cyrus. Two days later, on the 12<sup>th</sup>, the capital city of Babylon fell to the Persian armies (this would have been the night of Belshazzar's feast). The Nabonidus Cylinder, an ancient Babylonian artifact held in the British Museum in London today mentions Belshazzar and Nabonidus (describing more details about their lives). Archeology confirms these biblically recorded events! There's also the Cyrus Cylinder which records Persian King Cyrus' account of Babylon's overthrow—it is also in the British Museum.**
- Drinking the "wine of Babylon" before a thousand of his lords, the king gets a foolish idea—to defile the Temple vessels from God's Holy Temple! "...while he tasted the wine" (v.2). **NOT the first time a foolish idea came from drinking wine (see the warning of Proverbs 31:3-5).** Not for kings, nor wise leaders, nor for Christians who want to keep God's commandments faithfully!!
- (v.2)—the king foolishly praises the idols of stone too. "...they that make them are like unto them..." (Psalm 115:4,7,8)—not rightly perceptive.

### ❖ **Belshazzar had to sober up quick when a mysterious hand of Judgment wrote a mysterious message on the wall for him (v.5-9)**

- (v.7) Belshazzar made the same mistake that his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar had made—he trusted in all his worldly counselors—he would of had more success by trusting in the DIVINELY inspired counsel of the Prophet Daniel. **The sign did not appear good for him, and the king was terribly afraid!**
- **More than 100 years before ISAIAH had written a prophetic view of this night (when Babylon was going to fall to the Persians) (Isaiah 21:2,4,5,9).**

### ❖ **The Queen mother came in to set the matter straight for Belshazzar (v.10-12)**

- (v.10,11)—She explained the matters of history concerning Daniel which had taken place more than 50 years before. **Knowing and heeding the lessons of History (both temporal and Sacred) is a quite a vital matter.** (Many times it is the Aged among us who have the simple and true wisdom that life experience has taught them).
- **The young king, in the folly of his youth, had not previously cared to remember those lessons of the past.** (He had not recalled the history of Daniel). **THE TRUE PROPHET, COUNSELOR, AND MESSENGER OF GOD (who was proven above all the wise men of Babylon) had been neglected by this king.** The true was given up for the false and useless. **Let us be careful** what we choose to REPLACE—some things are worth keeping around forever—like the PROPHETS!! (let not the word of God be substituted by some pleasing fables or things of men).

- **The true messenger of God had been forgotten about, because the unruly king wanted to run his own course**—He’d forgotten the lesson and life experience of his grandfather—Nebuchadnezzar. It would have been no secret for it had been proclaimed to all the world (ref. Daniel 4). **The queen mother**, on the other hand, **had perfect confidence in Daniel’s God-given ability—she knew well the history!** (v.12)
- ❖ **Belshazzar questions Daniel (v.13-16, 17)**
  - Now, at the time of his distress and trouble, by counsel of the queen mother, Belshazzar finally seeks counsel from God’s Prophet!
  - **We notice a pattern here from Daniel’s experience:** Repeatedly, **the philosophies and methods of men are not sufficient** to meet the GREATER CHALLENGES OF LIFE. **But**, God’s prophetic word is all sufficient to meet the challenges. **“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet...” (Psalm 119:105).**
  - (v.17) Daniel doesn’t want the worldly gifts. They are useless for him. **Daniel labored for a HIGHER MASTER** than even the king of Babylon! He labored for the “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16). He felt this was his duty from God to perform (not for another purpose or reward). **Daniel labored “...as unto the Lord, and not unto men”** (Colossians 3:23). He was not merely “teaching for hire” as some have done (ref. Micah 3:11). **Daniel needed not the gifts of Babylon for it was about to fall.**
- ❖ **Daniel expresses his heartfelt sorrow for this young man and relates to him the history of Nebuchadnezzar** (calling it back to the young man’s mind) (v.18-22, 23) (v.19) Nebuchadnezzar had been a much more powerful king than this young guy. Both had a pride problem (v.20, 22).
  - **“...though thou knewest all this” (v.22).** The young king had known the history of his grandfather, but he had failed to take to heart the lessons of his grandfather, and to obey the God of heaven. **We should always take advantage of matters by acting in accord with the truth that we have learned** (and that in short order—promptly!)
  - (v.23) The reason for the king’s failure was explained to him. He had taken the metal elements of this world as his gods, rather than the Living God of heaven. Many do this (be it by materialism or otherwise); they even “worship the creature, more than the Creator who is blessed forever” (Romans 1:25).
- ❖ **The prophetic sentencing of Judgment was read to the king (v.24-29)** *Let it not be our case to be “weighed in the balances and found wanting...” (v.27). For, the Bible tells us, “we shall all stand before the Judgment seat of Christ...” (2 Corinthians 5:10).*
- ❖ **The Medes and Persians captured the city that very night (v.30,31)** *In complacency and carnal security these had partied into the night, while their enemies had been camped outside.—Now, it was too late for them. The Prophet Jeremiah (whose writings Daniel had access to—Dan.9:2) prophesied of the events of this night by at least 40 years prior (Jeremiah 51:8,9,11-14). This city was taken “suddenly” and the armies swarmed it “as with caterpillars” [locust, margin](v.8,14). Jeremiah had finished his ministry by about 580 BC at the latest. The fulfilling events of this night took place in 539 B.C.*

*Question (s) for the Heart:*

**Is it your desire to keep in mind, to heed, and to follow the important lessons of God? \_\_\_\_\_** *We hope never to hear the words “you knew all this...yet...” (v.22). “...weighed...and found wanting...” (v.27).*