

## **THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 4/24-25/2023 Daniel 5:1-31**

**PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY!**

**MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)**  
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**TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).**  
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## **OPENING PRAYER**

***Daniel - The Sovereignty of God – He Rules Over All; He Overrides All!***

***Chapter 5 Belshazzar's Feast – vs. 1-12; The Writing on the Wall Explained – vs. 13-29; Belshazzar's Fall – vs. 30-31!***

- **THEME:** The Feast of Belshazzar; fingers of God write upon the wall; failure of the wise men to read the handwriting; Daniel spurns the king's gifts; Daniel interprets the handwriting on the wall; fall of Babylon—fulfillment that very night.
- **In chapter 5, about twenty-three years later than chapter four, we come to the end of the Babylonian kingdom.** In the great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, the head of gold was to be replaced by the chest and arms of silver, and that transition takes place here in chapter 5, the transition from the Babylonian Empire to the Medo-Persian Empire. In chapter 6, we come to the final historic account of the

book of Daniel. It happens during the Persian Empire Darius the king, who lived for just a couple of years after the Medo-Persians conquered the Babylonian Empire. In chapters 7 and 8, and the rest of the chapters, these are visions and prophecies that Daniel received, some of them during the reign of Belshazzar.

### ***The Handwriting on the Wall***

***Dan 5:1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand.***

- **This was a time when Babylon was being threatened by the Medo-Persian Empire**, which had taken the territory of Babylon with the exception of the city of Babylon itself, which was a well-fortified city. The city was thought to be siege-proof and impossible to defeat. There were plenty of provisions in the city, enough to last for twenty years. There was an interruptible water supply in that the Euphrates River flowed through the midst of the city. They had plenty of water, plenty of food, and these gigantic walls and gates, by which they could withstand a siege of many years. Thus, they felt extremely secure within the city of Babylon though the rest of the territory was pretty much conquered by the Medo-Persian confederacy. Belshazzar has this great celebration, which could have been on one of the special holidays commemorating one of the Babylonian gods, because we find them praising the gods of gold and silver on this special occasion.
- **Belshazzar the king: For a long time, historians and archaeologists knew that Nabonidus** was said to be the last king of Babylon, not Belshazzar. There was no additional mention of Belshazzar, the eldest son and co-regent with Nabonidus, until the *Nabonidus Cylinder* was discovered in this century, indicating that Belshazzar became co-regent in the third year of Nabonidus' reign (553 B.C.) and continued in that capacity till the fall of Babylon (539 B.C.). Likely at the time of Daniel 5, Nabonidus had gone out to fight the Medo-Persian army and had been already captured. The Medo-Persian armies had now likely been divided into three groups. One group each at the entry and exit of the Euphrates to the city. The third group likely was upriver, diverting it into a lake/swamp area, which caused the Euphrates level to drop sufficiently to allow the armies to come into Babylon underneath the protective gates.
- **The Nabonidus Cylinder: On the cylinder is written: "May I Nabonidus, King of Babylon...may I have my fill of life. As for Belshazzar, my first-born son, my dear offering, grant that his days be long O Shamash."** That is remarkable. In 1854, for the first time, we find a reference to Belshazzar. Nabonidus was referring to his son (or grandson). There are also other documents which give further information into the period of Nabonidus' reign concerning a period of two to three years when Nabonidus was absent from Babylon, leaving his son / grandson as a co-regent – probably at the same time that the Bible talks of Daniel being promoted to a high position in the land. Resulting in three men who shared the rule over Babylon:- Nabonidus, Belshazzar and Daniel. So, Daniel was indeed the third highest ruler in the land – exactly as the Bible claims. Nabonidus' cylinder now sits in the British Museum.

***Dan 5:2 While he tasted (becoming drunk) the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father (grandfather) Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.***

- **When Belshazzar had come under the influence of the wine**, without which, he may not have done this. It could be that Belshazzar is seeking, as did Nebuchadnezzar his grandfather on an earlier occasion, to defy the prophecy that the Babylonian Empire would fall to the Medo-Persian Empire. Even though the Medo-Persian's had conquered much of the territory it may be that he was seeking to affirm that the gods of Babylon were greater than the God of Israel, because of that there is a deliberate challenge to the God of Israel in taking the gold and the silver vessels which his grandfather had taken from the temple in Jerusalem.
- **The word, 'father' is father in the ancestral sense and** is descendent of Nebuchadnezzar. It was thought that his mother was the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. The Jews always spoke of our father Abraham, though they may have been many generations down the road, or they were called the sons of David though they were actually way down the line, as far as maybe five or six generations. Nebuchadnezzar is called his father when in reality he was his grandfather, but he descended from him thus the patriarchal type of father.

- **These holy, sanctified vessels of gold and silver that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, he foolishly ordered** that they be brought in and that his wives, princes, concubines, or prostitutes might drink from them.
- **Imagine how this scene was viewed in heaven!** God not only witnesses everything that is done on earth, but He ponders, giving deep consideration to it! (*Pro 5:21*) *For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He ponders all his paths.* Here we see one of the dangers of drunkenness! Losing wisdom and discernment. Think of Noah, Lot, Nabal, all mentioned in getting drunk and no good coming from any of it!
- (*Lev 10:9-10*) *"Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, [10] that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.* (*Isa 28:7*) *But they also have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way; The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, They are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.*

**Dan 5:3** *Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.*

- **Belshazzar, in his drunken condition was foolish enough, to not only lose all self-control** at this party, but also to openly mock God, committing the sin of *sacrilege*, of desecrating the vessels which had been set apart for worshipping the one true God!

**Dan 5:4** *They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone.*

**Dan 5:5** *In the same hour (of the drunken revelry) the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.*

- **The archaeologists have discovered the palace in Babylon, a rather large hall**, about fifty-two feet wide and a hundred and seventy feet long. It was a good-sized hall, and most likely was the one where this party was taking place, upon which wall the finger appeared and the writing on the plaster on the wall.
- **Now, when the king saw this phenomenon, this writing appearing on the wall, just the fingers** and the writing on the wall, his countenance was changed (it went white) from that of revelry and blasphemy, and his thoughts troubled him.
- **Consider the fear of Belshazzar in the blasphemous use of the sanctified vessels to what the fear with be on Judgment Day!** (*Heb 10:26-27,30-31*) *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, [27] but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. [30] For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." [31] It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*
- (*Rev 20:11-15*) *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. [12] And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. [13] The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. [14] Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. [15] And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

**Dan 5:6** *Then the king's countenance changed (his blood drained from his face), and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.*

- **A very interesting, picturesque speech.** Perhaps you had that experience at one time, when your knees began to knock against one another during a period of great fright. It quite often happens in stage fright

where you lose control, and your knees begin to knock against each other. He was tremendously frightened at this omen that he was seeing, going from a joyful, cheerful, and happy expression, suddenly to a deadly paleness.

***Dan 5:7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."***

- **Why the third ruler? Because his father, Nabonidus was still king**, however his father did not spend much time in Babylon. He spent a lot of time down in Tima, Arabia. It is thought that his father was probably not in Babylon at this particular time, but Belshazzar ruled under his father, and he ruled in Babylon, but he was able to offer the third place in the kingdom to whoever would interpret this message.
- **Now, notice he frantically called** for the astrologers and the soothsayers and so forth. What we read here took place in 536 B.C., which Isaiah had prophesied approximately one hundred and fifty years earlier! (***Isa 47:1-13***) "*Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called Tender and delicate. [2] Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, Take off the skirt, Uncover the thigh, Pass through the rivers. [3] Your nakedness shall be uncovered, Yes, your shame will be seen; I will take vengeance, and I will not arbitrate with a man.*" [4] *As for our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, The Holy One of Israel. [5] "Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; For you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms. [6] I was angry with My people; I have profaned My inheritance, And given them into your hand. You showed them no mercy; On the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily. [7] And you said, 'I shall be a lady forever,'(that Babylon should stand forever, the golden image that was all gold in the plains of Dura); So that you did not take these things to heart, Nor remember the latter end of them.*
- [8] "***Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, Who dwell securely***(feeling secure that the walls of Babylon were impregnable), *Who say in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, Nor shall I know the loss of children'; [9] But these two things shall come to you, in a moment, in one day: The loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness Because of the multitude of your sorceries, For the great abundance of your enchantments.* The prophet is actually prophesying of this one day when Babylon was going to fall. He goes on to say, [10] "*For you have trusted in your wickedness; You have said, 'No one sees me'; Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; And you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me.'* [11] *Therefore evil shall come upon you; You shall not know from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you; You will not be able to put it off. And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, Which you shall not know. It will be a sudden surprise attack. Notice here, [12] "Stand now with your enchantments And the multitude of your sorceries, In which you have labored from your youth—Perhaps you will be able to profit, Perhaps you will prevail. [13] You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels; Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, And the monthly prognosticators Stand up and save you From what shall come upon you.*
- **It is interesting that is exactly who he called, and here is Isaiah telling you about it**, one hundred and fifty years before it occurred! Oh, how marvelous is the Word of God! When we get into His Word, it is just so marvelous how God has just laid things out, and now the day of the fall of Babylon, one hundred and fifty years later, and here comes the writing on the plaster. Who does he call for help and deliverance? *The astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers*, to see what they said about him that day. The king offered this reward to whomever could interpret for him, this cryptic message which was written on the wall. It was written in Aramaic, but it was cryptic, and thus it needed an interpretation.
- **He shall be the third ruler in the kingdom:** Archaeologists have discovered why Belshazzar offered the interpreter of the dream the **third** place in the kingdom. The real king was Nabonidus, and his son Belshazzar ruled as second, as a co-regent, in the kingdom. Belshazzar couldn't give away the second place in the kingdom, because *he* was the second in the kingdom at the time. The best he had to offer was the **third** place.

***Dan 5:8 Now all the king's wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation.***

***Dan 5:9 Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.***

- **Now, panic began to take over, the revelry of the party suddenly changed** into a very sober and awesome fear and uncertainty. He thought that surely this was an omen of some great evil that was ready to befall them, and panic began to seize them.

***Dan 5:10 The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change.***

- **Now the queen, or the queen's mother perhaps, the former wife of Nebuchadnezzar**, if so she was probably in her eighties at this time, came into the banquet house. Probably word was quickly spreading around the palace grounds of some awesome thing happening at the party, and so the queen comes in to see what is going on.

***Dan 5:11 There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.***

- **We remember Nebuchadnezzar spoke of the spirit of the holy God was in him**, talking to Daniel. The pagans were not really holy. Their gods were very licentious, very lustful, far from holy! In fact, a holy God was rather a strange concept to the people.
- **Today, the world looks at you as a Christian and often sneering** because you believe in God. They believe that they have come to a state of education and sophistication where they no longer need that kind of crutch. But there is really a lot of deceit in the minds of the worldly person who is putting you down because of your belief in God and in Jesus Christ, because in reality he is also worshipping a god. Everybody worships something. Whatever they worship is their god. The ancients were honest enough and real enough to recognize that, and so they named their gods, Baal, Molech, Ashtoreth, recognizing that this is what they worshipped. This was the master passion of their life. They named it as a god. They recognized this was the god in their life.
- **Now today, with our sophistication and all, often people are not really in touch with themselves.** You get around Hollywood and you have so many airheads, they do not know what reality is. (*Psa 62:9 Surely men of low degree are a vapor, Men of high degree are a lie; If they are weighed on the scales, They are altogether lighter than vapor.*) They live in a completely unreal world, and they are not really in touch with themselves. A man who is in touch with himself is cognizant of the fact that there is in his life a master passion that drives him, and whatever that may be that is his god, and he worships that god. With some it is a car, a fancy sports car that they park sideways across three parking spaces, so no one can open the door and ding their god. Isn't it sad to have a god that can get dinged? I actually see a lot of humor when Laban came pursuing Jacob because Rachel had taken some of the little idols. When he caught up with Jacob he said that he had not only taken my daughters and grandkids, but that he had stolen his gods. I find humor in that a person having a god that can be stolen, a god that can be dinged, but such is the case!
- **In the Old Testament if a person lived for pleasure, if that was his chief goal and aim in life**, if he was always trying to be on the cutting edge of the latest kind of thrill device, they would say he worships Molech. He worships pleasure, and that is indeed the case. Those that worshipped money, whose whole life was absorbed in gaining money, possessions, power, would say they are worshipers of Mammon. Now, we say he is a workaholic, but we don't recognize that there is a worship of a principle. He is devoted to and actually controlled by this mad desire for pleasure or money or for sex. They were really closer to reality in the fact that they recognized that they were worshipping gods, though it wasn't the true and the living God.
- **Here, Belshazzar is worshipping the gods of gold made out of gold, the gods made out of silver**, the gods made out of brass or iron or carved out of wood or chipped out of stone. They were worshipping these gods while they were drinking their wine out of the cups of the true and the living God, but not glorifying Him.

***Dan 5:12 Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation."***

- **This man, Daniel, was marvelous. He had light. He had wisdom. He had understanding.** What a reputation he had developed, an excellent spirit. Truly, as you study the character of Daniel, what an excellent spirit was in Daniel. From his youth, he was committed to God. He was determined not to defile himself.
- ***Now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.*** It could be that Daniel was brought to Babylon as the Medo-Persians were conquering the country and that all the rulers of the various cities and provinces were brought into Babylon for safety purposes. Though Daniel was not really used by Belshazzar, nor personally acquainted with him, Belshazzar did know about Daniel. The queen mother is here reminding him of this man who would be able to give him the interpretation of the cryptic message.

### ***Daniel Interprets the Handwriting***

***Dan 5:13 Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, "Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah?"***

***Dan 5:14 I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.***

***Dan 5:15 Now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing.***

***Dan 5:16 And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."***

- **He is offering the same reward** that he offered his own wise men and astrologers if they could interpret the cryptic message on the wall.

***Dan 5:17 Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation.***

- **Notice, the servant of God is not for sale. The gifts of God are not for sale.** Daniel will not take a gift because he doesn't want to even put it in Belshazzar's mind that any Gift from the one and only true God, can be purchased for money, or that any financial reward is the basis for Daniel giving his God-given gift of interpretation and prophecy! Jesus said, "freely you have received, and freely give." The gifts of God are not for sale, nor are they to be used for personal profit or gain. Daniel, with all of the integrity in the world, said keep your gifts and give your rewards to someone else.
- ***Yet I will read the writing unto the king and make known to him the interpretation.*** In the New Testament, we had Simon trying to buy from Peter that gift that whoever he laid his hands on, they would receive the Holy Spirit. ***(Act 8:20) But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!"***
- **Daniel is a man of real integrity. I like Daniel. He is an old man at this point,** probably close to ninety, but he is a gutsy old man. Of course, I think the older you get the braver you get, because you think you do not have much to lose, because you are not going to be around much longer anyhow. Daniel says he will tell the interpretation, but not without preaching a sermon first.
- ***I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him!*** Be ready as Daniel was ready! (2Ti 4:2a) Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. (1Pe 3:15b) Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

**Dan 5:18** *O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor.* (It was given to him by God.)

**Dan 5:19** *And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him.* (He was an absolute solemn ruler) *Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down.*

**Dan 5:20** *But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him.*

- *They, being those watchers, those heavenly beings that drove him from society and made him like an animal.*

**Dan 5:21** *Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.*

- **Our Most High God reigns!** That is the only comfort that I have in the present situation here in the United States.

**Dan 5:22** *'But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this.*

- **He knew what happened to his grandfather.** He was probably fourteen years old at the time. He knew what he went through and yet he did not humble his heart before the Lord. He was then in a position of blaspheming God, profaning the things of God.
- **Sins of ignorance are bad, but sins against what you know are even worse!** That becomes a transgression! It is a deliberate willful transgression that you know better to sin against your own conscience things that you know.

**Dan 5:23** *And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.*

- **You have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven.** In his proclamation, Nebuchadnezzar called Him the King of heaven, and now Daniel speaks of Him as the Lord of heaven. *They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them.*
- **And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know.** In Psalm 115 and in 135, the psalmist speaks about the gods of the heathen; how that men make gods, and worship these gods that they have made, man-made gods. *(Psa 115:5-7) They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; [6] They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; [7] They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat; (Psa 135:18) Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.*
- **First, when man makes a god he makes him like himself.** He puts eyes on him, ears, and feet, because he has eyes, nose, ears and feet. You make it like yourself, but in reality you make it less than yourself, because though you carve the eyes on the little idol, the eyes cannot see. Though you carve ears, they cannot hear. The prophets are constantly pointing out to the people that the gods that they are worshipping are actually insensate gods. They cannot hear, or speak, or talk. Neither can they help you when you are in need.
- **Remember when Elijah was having a contest with the prophets of Baal,** and they had prayed all morning for the god of Baal to send the fire upon alter, and Elijah began to chive them and tease them a bit. He said, "I bet your god is asleep. You better cry louder and wake him up." But in reality Baal could not hear. He could not see. He could not respond.

- **I am glad that I serve a God that does hear, that can respond, that can help me** when I am in trouble! A god that can give me wisdom and guidance! A God that I can have a personal relationship with, who knows, who understands, who counsels!
- **And the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified. The God upon whom you depend for your very life! He sustains your life. You owe your life to Him. If it were not for God you would not be here. He is the sustainer of life. You have praised all these other gods, but you have not praised or glorified the God on whom you depend for your very life!**

***Dan 5:24 Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written.***

***Dan 5:25 "And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.***

***Dan 5:26 This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;***

- **It is over! You have come to the end of the kingdom!** It is over for you. It is as Jesus said in the New Testament concerning that rich man who boasted in his riches and said to himself, "Take your ease, eat, drink and be merry." God said, "You fool, tonight your soul will be required of you." Basically, that is what the Lord is saying to Belshazzar, "This is it! It is over tonight! Your soul is to be required of you!"

***Dan 5:27 TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;***

- **Balances are always used as a symbol of justice. They are in the Supreme Court building.** You see Lady Justice standing with the balances. The idea is the balancing of a man's life, the good with the evil. But in this case in a Biblical sense, all of your good works cannot counter-balance the sin that is in your life. Thus, by the works of righteousness or by the works of the law no man can be justified before God! There is no good work you can do, to be justified before God. The only hope that you have is in Jesus Christ, who through His death for you and for your sins, brought you forgiveness and justification from whatever sin you may have ever committed!
- **The beautiful word justification is more than just forgiveness.** That is glorious, but justification goes a step further and it is God treating you as though you never did it! You might forgive someone for what they did, but you don't forget it. With justification, it is the forgetting of it. It is just as though you never did it. God looks at you as though you are completely innocent, that you have never transgressed. Jesus justifies us, pushing off the sin that was weighing down the scale against you. The sins are not only wiped away, but Jesus stands on the scales with you, thereby you stand before God in His righteousness. Paul said in (*Eph 1:6*) *to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.* God accepts you in Christ Jesus in the beloved.
- **So, here is Belshazzar. He is being weighed in the balances and he is found wanting,** just as every man apart from Jesus Christ is found wanting! No man apart from Jesus Christ has any hope of the eternal kingdom of God. You are found wanting!

***Dan 5:28 PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."***

- **PERES (to divide or to break).** UPHARSIN, The "U" means "and"; Pharsin is the plural form of Peres, so it basically means Belshazzar's kingdom will be divided, or broken, and given to the Medes and the Persians.

***Dan 5:29 Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.***

***Dan 5:30 That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain.***

***Dan 5:31 And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.***

- **From the historic accounts there are stories that are contradictory, but that is history.** Notice, Daniel really does not give us any historic accounts he just lists the facts. The Bible does not contradict itself, but historians often contradicted themselves according to the sources that they had in writing their records. Some historic records that declare that there was a conspiracy of the priests of Marduk. They were angry

because Belshazzar was more favorable towards the worship of the sun god and the moon god and thus they opened the gates to one of the generals of the Persian army and they came in and took the city without a battle. Another historian speaks of Cyrus, the Persian general, who diverted the flow of the Euphrates river up stream and the soldiers came under the bars of the gate over the river Euphrates when the waters receded.

- **Prophetically, again turning to (Isa 44:28) Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."** In other words, Cyrus will be the instrument that God will use to send the people back to Jerusalem from their captivity in Babylon.
- **(Isa 45:1) "Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To Cyrus,** who was one of the leading generals of the Persian army. He became king after Darius died. Darius only survived about three years after the capture of Babylon. At that point Cyrus became king over the Medo-Persian Empire., *whose right hand I have held— To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings.* Remember what happened to Belshazzar when the writing came on the wall, his loins were loosened, and his knees began to knock, to shudder! Here, Isaiah is telling you about it one hundred and fifty years before it happened!
- **How marvelous is the Word of God!** *To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut:* Historians do agree that the gates were opened. The Medes-Persians did not have to break down *the gates* to come into the city. One historian says that the guards were so drunk, they did not lock *the gates* that night, that they came from the river into the city into the area of the palace. Another story says that *the gates were opened.* Here it says *the gates*, so it would seem to indicate that **the gates** from the river on into the city.
- **The Euphrates River flowed through the middle of the city.** There were walls seen along the banks of the river that kept people from coming into the city. But, according to the story the guards were so drunk they did not lock the gates. Here, God is saying, **(Isa 45:2) 'I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron.** The gates in Babylon were made out of bronze.
- **It continues, (Isa 45:3-4) I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the LORD, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel. [4] For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.**
- **When Cyrus came to Babylon, there is the story that Daniel the Prophet** took this prophecy of Isaiah, saying, Cyrus, your name is in our book! When he saw that, he was convinced and for that reason gave the decree for the Jews to return from the captivity and to be able to go home.
- **But again, oh the marvelous Word of God, how we need to pay attention to it!** When God speaks with such detail, calling people by name years before they are born, surely God's Word is confirmed to be just that, and as God said, "That you may know that I am God."
- **Daniel just gives us briefly and concisely the history of the last night of Babylon** and now we begin with the Medo-Persian Empire that was prophesied to supplant the Babylonian Empire. We get into chapter 6 where we have that fascinating story of Daniel in the Lion's Den.

## SUMMARY:

- **Beware of drunkenness or coming under the influence of any substance!** Belshazzar, losing wisdom and discernment because of the wine, made a horrible blasphemous decision, something that Nebuchadnezzar would never have done! How would God view such a terrible transgression? **(Pro 5:21) For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He ponders all his paths!** Think of Noah, Lot, Nabal, all in the Bible getting drunk, with only bad coming from any of it!
- **Never sell out to your Godly convictions, (Dan 5:17a) Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another.**
- **Be ready as Daniel was ready to serve the Lord! (Dan 5:17b) yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation. (2Ti 4:2a) Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. (1Pe 3:15b) Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;**
- **Take heed to what the Lord has shown you! (Dan 5:22) But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. He knew what happened to his grandfather.** He knew what he

went through and yet he did not humble his heart before the Lord. He was then in a position of blaspheming God, profaning the things of God. **Sins of ignorance are bad, but sins against what you know are even worse, becoming a transgression!**

- **Which of these two things will you hear at your last breath?** (*Mat 25:21*) *His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' OR? (Dan 5:27-28) You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting;...Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians."*
- **Fear God!** *And the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified!*
- **May we be Spirit filled! BREATHE ON ME, BREATH OF GOD –**

## CLOSING SONG:

***BREATHE ON ME, BREATH OF GOD*** – Edward Hatch – York College Concert Choir (1:56/2:00)  
(*Dan 5:23*) *And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven...and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what Thou dost love, and do what Thou wouldst do.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure, until with Thee I will one will, to do and to endure.*

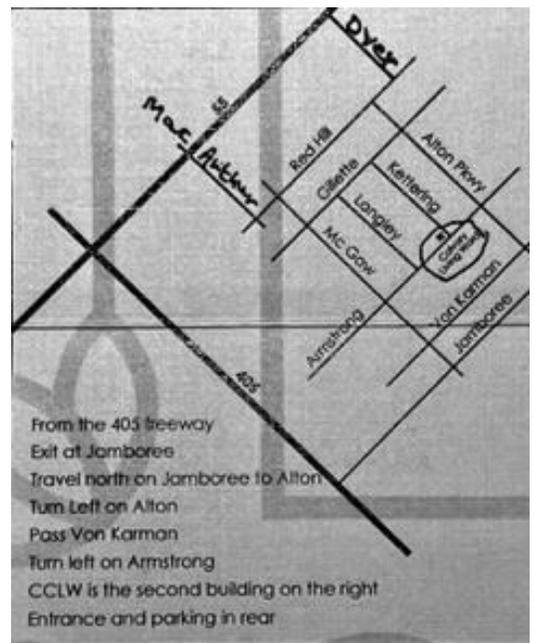
*Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly Thine, till all this earthly part of me glows with Thy fire divine.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die, but live with Thee the perfect life of Thine eternity.*

## CLOSING PRAYER:

We pray for one another that if there is even the smallest amount of pride that is being expressed through our lives as Your children toward anyone, those whom we work with, those in our neighborhood, toward those we live with, that we're married to, that we're raising or whatever the relationship might be, that You would use tonight in the work of Your Holy Spirit to completely burn it away from our lives and to give us that beautiful simplicity, that beautiful peace, that beautiful majestic, godly bearing of Daniel, as we make our way through this world. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen

**Read and meditate on *Daniel Chapter 6!***



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