

My last message was on Daniel 4 and King Nebuchadnezzar. He was the last king we read about, if you remember he was sent out to live like animals. He was eventually reinstated back to king after being humbled by God. That is the way it usually works, isn't it? People start off pretty good, having good intentions and wanting to do the right thing. But as time goes on, we all run off course. Once we get to the point that we think we have it all under control, that is the point we usually start spiraling out of control.

Read Daniel 1-12

False Security, Fear, Faithfulness

As we start into chapter 5, we see that Nebuchadnezzar is no longer in the picture and Babylon has a new king. Belshazzar was not the next king after Neb though, there were a few in between them. This was a controversial few verses for a long time. See in secular history there was never mention of Belshazzar in the genealogy of Nebuchadnezzar. So, of course, the bible is wrong, this is just one more excuse not to believe or discredit the bible. A great archeologist named Rawlins was doing a lot of excavating in the area where Babylon once stood when they unearthed several interesting tablets, and something called Nabonidus cylinder. In these new pieces was found the name Belshazzar. So, there is the proof right everybody can go back to believing this great book is truthful. But instead, they just move on to something else. It is tragic that man has to stay in the pursuit of finding a flaw in this book.

I have never claimed to be the smartest person in the room...my wife will definitely agree with me too. But I really would like to believe that as smart as many of these men are and for as long as they have been at it, they would realize that if there was a flaw it would have been discovered already. Or that they would be wise enough to quit trying.

Let's look at the reigning order, and see where Belshazzar falls.

Nebuchadnezzar reigned for 43 years and died of natural causes.

Evilmerodach Nebuchadnezzar's son ruled for 2 years then was assassinated by his brother-in-law, because his rule was so arbitrary. We have already lost the genealogy of Nebuchadnezzar.

Neriglassar which was the brother-in-law ruled for 4 years who then also died of natural causes.

Next was his son Laborosoarchod who was only a child and who also had some mental disabilities. He only ruled for 9 months before being killed by a gang of conspirators.

The conspirator's appointed Nabonidus, who was one of their gang members. He ruled for the remaining Babylonian empire. Historical events say that Nabonidus was the last ruler of Babylon

So where does this Belshazzar come in? Great question, the bible lists him, but other historical data says Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon. Once again this was used this to further indicate that the bible was inconsistent, and incorrect. Until around 1835 when Nabonidus cylinder was discovered, indicating that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus and that he was left to rule Babylon while Nabonidus was in Arabia. That part does follow historical events, so now everything makes sense, and the bible is mysteriously right again.

SO now that we have all that figured out, we can see what Belshazzar was doing while he was in charge.

### False Security

V1 So he is throwing a huge party for all the wealthiest people in Babylon, now throwing big banquets was not uncommon among the kings and nobles, political figures. They did this sort of thing all the time, what makes this time slightly different is that Babylon is completely surrounded by the Medo-Persian army. Thousands of soldiers ready to attack the city at any moment and Belshazzar is in there partying like it is 1999.

What would make him think this was a good time to live it up instead of preparing for the inevitable attack? Well Babylon wasn't like most cities, it had a 17-mile wall that surrounded it, and this was no privacy fence. It stood 22 feet thick and 90 feet tall with watch towers that stood on top of that which were 100 feet tall. Inside the wall was a maze of hallways and passages, also including moats. The gates were made of bronze so they could stand the battle of fire or ramming from a persistent army.

So, Belshazzar had good right to think they would be completely safe inside the city, they had the security and enough food to survive for years. What should he worry about?

The attacking army had taken their time preparing for this battle, it is said that they spent 4 years planning, setting up their stations, even rerouting a section of the river in an attempt to cut off some of Babylon's precious supply of water.

V2-4 We can clear up one thing early on, Nebuchadnezzar was not Belshazzar's father in the sense of birth father. At best he was his grandfather from his mother's side. This is most likely referring to Nebuchadnezzar previously sitting on the same throne.

So, everyone is hanging out drinking and chasing after pleasure. This is all too common today, we that people would rather run away from their troubles, or try to hide from them, do what every they can do to forget about the danger facing them. We see people who want to ignore their problems like they will just miraculously go away. Let me tell you friends that this is not how things get better.

In the midst of drinking their problems away, Belshazzar calls for the vessels that had been taken from the Jewish temple. He was hoping that this would pick up the party even more, to desecrate the spoils of an old victory and blaspheme against God, that has to be the best way to liven up a get together.

V5 What would you do if you saw just a hand appear and start writing on the wall? I'm not real sure but I'm think I would be freaked out. This is an example of one of Gods mighty ways that He attempts to talk to us. This is also the first of a few popular sayings that we got from the bible. "The writing on the wall"

### False Security, Fear

V6-9 Daniel gives a great description of the fear that Belshazzar showed. He is absolutely terrified, he goes from party animal to scaredy cat in 2.5 seconds. But why, if something happens around us that we do not understand how do we know to be scared? Belshazzar may have been a little drunk, but his conscience was still talking to him.

We know when we have done something wrong, mistreated someone, or acted inappropriately. Our conscience will help us to realize we messed up, this is exactly what Belshazzar was feeling right now.

He wasn't real worried about what the writing meant but what it had to do with him. Another wonderful attribute we see more and more today, people are not worried about how things go for others, what someone else has to deal with, only how I will be affected. What is this going to cost me?

He calls for everyone he thinks can tell him what this writing means to him. The first one who explains if this is for the king or someone else will be handsomely rewarded.

He will cloth them in purple or royalty, he will adorn them with gold, and finally promote them to 3rd in command. Wait, wait, wait, 3rd in command? Who wants 3rd place? And if there is a number 2 guy, where is he right now? Well Belshazzar was 2nd in command, his father was still the actual king so he couldn't offer his 2nd place spot to someone else.

As usual none of the magicians, astrologers, soothsayers could figure out what the writing said let alone what it meant to the king. Some say it may have been written in Hebrew and this is why Daniel was able to read it so easily. Others say that God Himself caused them not to be able to understand the writing.

No matter how smart, ignorant, wise, or lost you may be, God has the ability to blind your eyes or help you to understand His writing's.

**V10-12** The queen coming in and telling Belshazzar not to worry that his guys couldn't explain the terrifying situation because he had someone in his court that was always able to help.

She is really talking up this guy, he is smart, understanding, a real leader, all this is showing her respect for this man. And what was his name, Daniel, do you remember the name he was given after being kidnapped by Nebuchadnezzar? Beltshazzar, meaning Bel protects his life, which is very similar to Belshazzar which means Bel protect the king.

The queen using Daniels real name shows her respect for him and his background.

This event has been more than 20 years sense Daniel was removed from his homeland, by this time Daniel was probably still in office as an adviser or administrative role. He was apparently not as well-known as he once was. Maybe also being semi-retired, his assistance would have been less demanded.

**False Security, Fear, Faithfulness**

**V13-16** Funny how when things are going good, no real trouble on the horizon how people seem to be perfectly fine mocking God, turning away from God, running away from God. Then when God says this is for you, in our confusion and fear we cry out for someone we have never known.

Salvation looks very much like this, we feel a change, we start to realize that the things we have always used to fill the voids in our heart are just not doing the job anymore. God calls us to make a decision. The real difference is that the cry out must be followed by repentance. If we are not willing to give our lives to God, then we are destined to return to the life of partying and self-seeking pleasure.

**V17** Daniel had a hard time reporting bad news to the former king, but this new guy did not hold the same respectful position that Nebuchadnezzar did. He didn't want his gifts, he wasn't interested in the fame the king was trying to offer.

Further down Daniel tells the king that he has not humbled himself to God, that he knew who God is. Instead, the king had set himself against God.

God the one who holds our very breath, every creature with a breath should praise the Creator, but Belshazzar blasphemed God. The ways of every creature should glorify the Creator, Belshazzar's ways mocked God.

So where are you in your security? Do you have a false sense of security, thinking you have everything set up to protect yourself from the enemy? Are you in fear because you are worried more about how difficult situations will affect YOU? Are you only calling out to God or someone who knows God because you want the problem resolved or is God calling you to true salvation through repentance?