

1. Last week I finished teaching the Doctrine of Drinking and then taught verses five and six of Daniel chapter five.
2. Before resuming our study of Dan 5:7, I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 5:1-6.

Dan 5:1 King Belshazzar summoned a thousand of his nobles for a grand party; it soon turned into a licentious and drunken orgy.

Dan 5:2 Under the influence of the wine, Belshazzar commanded his wine steward to bring the sacred golden and silver vessels which his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of Israel's Temple; he wanted this done in order that he, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink from the sacred vessels of Jehovah God.

Dan 5:3 And so it was done, the golden vessels from the Holy City, used in the Temple of the house of God were brought before him; they were filled with wine and the king, and his guests, then toasted the gods of Babylon.

Dan 5:4 They drank their wine, and praised the Babylonian gods; these idols of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone were extolled as superior to the God of Israel.

Dan 5:5 Suddenly, as the King watched, the fingers of a human hand crawled slowly up the wall and began to write, the writing was unmistakable because they appeared under the lampstand directly behind the King. The king watched as the hand slowly wrote Babylon's final history.

Dan 5:6 Belshazzar's face turned pale; he was so terrified that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way; he could no longer stand, the King sank slowly to his pillowed couch.

3. Now let's take a look at Dan 5:7:

KJV

Dan 5:7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. 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.

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Dan 5:7 The king called out for the enchanters, astrologers and diviners to be brought and said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

Principles:

1. It is certainly true that the one thing mankind does not learn from history is that we do not learn from history.

1.1 Belshazzar had pursued the identical course followed by Nebuchadnezzar before his salvation.

1.2 Now, in desperation, he literally shouted (QERA) for the ranking officers in his "State Department" just as had his grandfather in his pre-salvation days.

Dan 2:1 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

Dan 2:2 So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

Dan 4:4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous.

Dan 4:5 I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me.

Dan 4:6 So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me.

Dan 4:7 When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream,

1.3 So loud was his "call for help" that everyone at the party and those living nearby heard his frantic cry.

1.4 The attention of those in attendance had now been directed to a spot on the wall; a spot well lighted, a spot juxtaposed with pictures and prose of Babylon's fabled history.

2. Listed among those called are three of the five groups who managed the affairs of state for the king. The astrologers (ASHEPAJA) - they functioned as an intelligence agency.

3. The Chaldeans (KASDAJE), or priestly caste - they kept the people subjugated by means of religious activity; and the soothsayers (GAZERIN) - they determined the future course of the empire.

4. The person who is not oriented to the Word of God must inevitably depend on man. While calling on one's fellow man for help in time of crisis is a logical reaction for an unbeliever, it is not to be the sole recourse for the believer.

4.1 Advice must be analyzed from the perspective of divine viewpoint which can only come from doctrine cycled in the soul.

5. People cannot provide assurance or happiness in time of adversity; this is the prerogative of Bible doctrine.

5.1 The person who has accepted Christ as Savior and understands His provision knows that God is the only Source of refuge.

6. God says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Psa 50: 15.

Psa 50:15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

6.1 Further, "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Psa 118:9).

Psa 118:9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.

6.2 There is no greater misery than that which results from dependence on man, for "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD" (Jer. 17:5).

Jer 17:5 This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD.

6.3 Remember men in the flesh are no dang good, and even your best friend will fail you under the right set of circumstances.

7. In contrast, verses 7 and 8 of this same chapter give the result of proper orientation: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope [confidence] the LORD is."

Jer 17:7 "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.
Jer 17:8 He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

8. The only exception to the general rule of not trusting in man, are friends who know Bible doctrine; they can offer encouragement from the Word and help in times of disaster, as Jonathan encouraged and helped David (1 Sam 23:17).

1Sa 23:17 "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this."

9. Belshazzar is a perfect illustration of the "natural (soulish, i.e., unregenerate) man" of 1 Corinthians 2:14. As such, he could neither receive nor understand the supernatural message, because "the things of the Spirit of God ... are spiritually discerned."

1Co 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1Co 2:15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

1Co 2:16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

10. When confronted with the Word of God, Belshazzar panicked.

10.1 In an effort to resolve his desperate predicament, he offered lavish gifts and advancement to any one of the "wise men of Babylon" who could interpret the mysterious message.

11. The promise of scarlet clothing literally, purple robes, a garment worn by only royalty (Qal imperfect of LEBASH, meaning, "to clothe, to invest"); this simply meant "to be elevated to nobility - and nobility in Babylon meant "you were a god".

12. The chain of gold about the neck was a badge of high rank; in this case, it signified the choicest plum of all the office of "third ruler of the land."

13. The accuracy of the inspired Record is borne out in that last phrase.

Dan 5:7 The king called out for the enchanters, astrologers and diviners to be brought and said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

13.1 The Nebunaid Chronicles, are quoted in "Unger's Bible Dictionary," the chronicles tells that King Nabonidus made his son, Belshazzar, co-regent in the third year of his reign.

14. He then made a successful expedition to Tema, in Arabia, where he established his residence, while Belshazzar apparently conducted the affairs of state in Babylon.

14.1 Thus Nabonidus held the first position of rulership in the empire, and his son, the second.

15. The third post, as second in command to the co-regent, was still vacant and was to be filled by the one who could interpret the writing on the wall.

15.1 This then was the prize which the frantic king planned to bestow in exchange for an explanation of this strange phenomenon.

16. Let me here give you an expanded translation of verse seven.

Expanded Translation:

Dan 5:7 The king called out in a desperate and loud voice for his Secretary of State, the head of the CIA and his top ranking religious advisor; he then said to them, "Whoever reads what has been written on the wall and tells me what it means I will clothe him in royal garments of purple to take his place among the pantheon, I will also place a gold chain around his neck and he will be elevated to the third highest office in the land."

17. Now let's take a look at Dan 5:8 and 9:

KJV

Dan 5:8 Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

Dan 5:9 Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

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Dan 5:8 Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant.

Dan 5:9 So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled.

1. The Royal State Department consisted of clever and learned men, who could usually be relied upon to provide excellent intelligence reports. However, this time they were stumped!

2. Although the inscription was perfectly clear and the words legible and pronounceable, together they were totally baffled; the writing made no sense to the "wise men."

3. Why not? Because unbelievers possess neither the vocabulary, principles or categories of Bible doctrine nor the necessary spiritual insight to "understand" the Word of God!

4. Belshazzar was not only confused and filled with consternation, he was absolutely terrified; this is indicated by the Hithpaal participle of BEHAL, which is much stronger than the translation "greatly troubled."

5. The king's terror proved to be infectious. Soon the lords, who had so recently been engaged in licentious brawling, were also stunned with fear.

5.1 The KJV states that they "were astonished," but the Hithpaal participle of the verb SHEBASH portrays their true status as being mentally shattered!

6. At a time when the enemy was poised for attack outside the gates, these men partied; they should have been stalwart aggressive leaders directing their men from the top of the walls but instead they became cowards, immobilized with fear.

7. The fall of a nation or empire is always preceded by the deterioration of the mental attitude of its leadership! When our nation is viewed in the light of this principle, the prospect is frightening.

8. A blanket of fear, confusion and suspicion not only covers Washington, but has spread to every corner of our land. The answer to this dilemma, as always, is clear: turn to the Lord and to His Word!

9. Now before proceeding with our analysis let me give you an expanded translation of verses 8 and 9.

Expanded Translation:

Dan 5:8 The King's wise men were hurried into the room, they made quite a show for they were obviously puzzled as they consulted with one another but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant.

Dan 5:9 So King Belshazzar became even more terrified; his face grew more pale because His greatest minds were baffled; no one could read the "handwriting on the wall".

Now let's see if "mom" can be of service:

KJV

Dan 5:10 Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live forever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:

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Dan 5:10 The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. "O king, live forever!" she said. "Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale!

1. The Queen mother hears a commotion and comes to the aid of her son.

1.1 Nebuchadnezzar was survived by at least three children: a son, Amel Marduk; an unidentified daughter, who married Neriglissar; and a second daughter named Nitocris, who had married Nabonidus, and was now the queen mother.

2. Perhaps Nitocris did not share her husband's retirement, or perhaps she was just visiting Babylon. Whatever the case, she was in the capital on the night of Belshazzar's party.

3. Accounts from Greek and Latin historians reveal that the bacchanalian parties of the ancient world make a modern soiree as tame as the proverbial Sunday school picnic.

4. Needless to say ladies of high station never attended such a lurid fete.

4.1 The only women present at Belshazzar's orgy were members of the king's harem (wives and concubines), entertainers and courtesans, the providers of sexual service for the royal entourage.

5. They were the congressional interns of that day.

6. The fact that these women were in attendance was an indication that this was definitely going to be a wild party!

6.1 Therefore, on the night of the banquet, Nitocris had withdrawn to her chambers.

7. For hours, the sounds of revelry echoed through the corridors of the palace; suddenly, the queen mother heard her son scream out in terror and then she noted the hush which followed; the hush in turn was quickly followed by a frantic sight from the drunken crowd of debauchers.

7.1 Startled, she set out for the "banquet house" (literally, the drinking -wenching house - BETH MISHTA) to investigate the cause of the disturbance.

8. In contrast to the pandemonium she found outside her quarters, Nitocris, every inch a queen, was composed and in complete control of herself.

8.1 Certainly, it must have grieved her to encounter such debauchery and to see her son a profligate. Yet she greeted the king with poise and dignity.

Expanded Translation:

Dan 5:10 The Queen mother, had heard the commotion from her nearby apartment in the palace; quickly she ran down the hall to the banquet hall. Seeing the King's pallor and obvious consternation she feared for his health. She exclaimed, "O king, live forever!" Don't be alarmed, be calm!

9. Let's see what the Queen mother has to say in verses eleven and twelve.

KJV

Dan 5:11 There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

Dan 5:12 Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

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Dan 5:11 There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. King Nebuchadnezzar your father--your father the king, I say--appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners.

Dan 5:12 This man Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means."

Principles:

1. What a testimony on the part of the Queen mother! Nitocris knew the importance of being properly equipped for the discernment of God's message.

1.1 She identified Daniel as a man "in whom is the spirit of the holy gods".

2. The term RUACH ELOHIM most likely is a reference to God the Holy Spirit.

3. Although the Scriptures are silent regarding Daniel's activities during the past twenty-three years, Nitocris was fully informed regarding the whereabouts and the character of Daniel, a man now in his eighties.

4. She recognized that he possessed "light" (NAHIRUÑ spiritual knowledge Ñ the reflected glory of God); "understanding" (SAKLETANU apparently a frame of reference saturated with divine viewpoint); and "wisdom" (CHAKMAHÑ doctrine on the launching pad of the right lobe).

4.1 Daniel literally possessed the "wisdom of Elohim (God)," which "was found" in him.

5. The reflexive form of the verb tells us that Daniel obtained this wisdom himself through the function of God's "grace apparatus for perception"; he took in the Word of God daily, believed it, and transferred it by faith to his right lobe where it became usable.

6. Thus, he had maintained his spiritual equilibrium in the midst of both prosperity and obscurity.

6.1 The Queen mother then reminded Belshazzar that Daniel had been the master of the magicians during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and had in the past interpreted difficult dreams.

7. The term "An excellent spirit" (JATIR, meaning "very great") is another reference to the fact that Daniel was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

7.1 Having logged a maximum amount of time in temporal fellowship, Daniel had knowledge (MANDA meaning here application of doctrine) and understanding (SAKLETANU).

8. Such understanding involved continuous study of the Word of God and resulted in a stable frame of reference, which prepared Daniel for the crisis that had arisen.

8.1 When dreams which constituted divine revelation had been the issue, Daniel could "interpret" (Pael participle of PESHAR); he could communicate accurately the true meaning of unfamiliar Bible doctrine because of previous doctrine already stored in his right lobe.

8.2 Recall doctrine builds on doctrine.

9. The queen mother concluded her counsel with a plea that Daniel named Belteshazzar by Nebuchadnezzar be summoned once again. Daniel was God's man prepared for the crisis.

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