

1. Last week I taught verses thirteen through twenty-three of Daniel chapter five.
2. Before resuming our study at Dan 5:24, I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 5:1-23.

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.

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."

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 paler because His greatest minds were baffled; no one could read the "handwriting on the wall".

Dan 5:10 The Queen mother 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!"

Dan 5:11 There is an old man who still resides here in Babylon who has the spirit of Jehovah God in him. During your grandfather's reign he was found to have special insight and intelligence and wisdom like even that of a god. King Nebuchadnezzar appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners.

Dan 5:12 The man's name is Daniel, though Nebuchadnezzar called him Belshazzar; he was found to have a keen mind, a man full of knowledge and understanding, he also had the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. I would urge you to call

for him; I feel sure he will tell you what the writing means."

Dan 5:13 After the queen made her recommendation; Daniel was brought into the presence of Belshazzar. The king asked, "Are you the Daniel, the Jewish exile, whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king, brought from Judah?"

Dan 5:14 I have heard that the Spirit of God is in you, that you possess brilliant knowledge and extraordinary wisdom.

Dan 5:15 The wisest of my advisors were brought in to translate this writing but none of them could read it; none could tell me what it means.

Dan 5:16 But I have heard that you can interpret dreams and solve difficult problems; if you are able to read the writing and tell me what it means, you shall be clothed in purple, wear a gold chain about your neck and be the third ruler in the government of the Kingdom of Babylon".

Dan 5:17 Daniel answered the king: "You may keep your gifts, or give your presents to someone else; but the writing on the wall I will not only read but I will also O king tell you exactly what it means.

Dan 5:18 The most high God gave your grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, a great kingdom and international fame.

Dan 5:19 Because God made him so great, the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him. Whomever Nebuchadnezzar wished, he killed or let live whomever he wished, he both promoted and demoted as he saw fit.

Dan 5:20 But when his heart became proud and his spirit was hardened by arrogance, he was pulled down from his royal throne and then deprived of his glory.

Dan 5:21 Suffering from a severe zoanthropic malady, he was cast out of the palace and was made insensate as a beast; he lived with the wild asses, and ate grass like the oxen roaming the field; his body was bathed with the dew of the earth and the rain from heaven, until he learned that the most high God rules over the kingdom of men and appoints men to rule as He will.

Dan 5:22 And you have not humbled yourself and accepted those things your grandfather taught you.

Dan 5:23 You have instead rebelled against the Lord of Heaven. You had the vessels of His temple brought before you so that you and your entourage might drink wine from them; you praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, inanimate objects which neither see nor hear nor have intelligence. But the God, in whose hand is your life breath and the One who controls everything you do, Him, you refused to worship."

3. Now let's see what we can learn from Dan 5:24 and 25.

KJV

Dan 5:24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

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

1. Mene means "to be numbered," Tekel means "to be weighed" and Upharsin as we will later see means "and to be divided".

NIV

Dan 5:24 Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

Dan 5:25 "This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN.

Principles:

1. "Then" because of Belshazzar's rejection of Christ "the hand [was] sent from Him [God]."

1.1 The Chaldean inscription "was written" (RESHAM, meaning to record), and Daniel began to read it, he carefully pronounced the Chaldean words before he explained them.

1.2 Note that at this point the translators of the KJV and NIV merely transliterate the inscription!

2. The first MENE (Piel passive participle of MENA), "to be numbered," might refer to both Belshazzar and the guests at his party; the second MENE (Piel passive participle) would therefore concern the rest of the people.

2.1 There is the possibility the two "Menas" are provided not to describe two objects of the numbering but rather to emphasize the seriousness of the "numbering".

3. The repetition of the word according to R.B. Thieme indicates the completeness of the divine estimate on the Chaldeans and their monarch!

3.1 TEQEL (Piel passive participle of TEQAL) means "to be weighed"; UPHARSIN (Piel active participle of PERAS preceded by the VA conjunction), means "and divided" or "shattered."

4. Babylon has been divinely evaluated and found to be deserving of the fifth cycle of discipline.

5. Before moving to verse twenty-six I want to give you an expanded translation of verses 24 and 25.

Expanded Translation

Dan 5:24 And that is why the Lord Jehovah sent the mysterious hand to write on your wall.

Dan 5:25 The words written there are Mene, which means "numbered", Teqel, which means "weighed," and Parsin which means "divided."."

6. Now let's see what we can learn from verse twenty-six.

KJV

Dan 5:26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

NIV

Dan 5:26 "This is what these words mean: Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.

1. Daniel explained that God had "numbered" (Piel active participle of MENE) the days of the Chaldean Empire.

2. Except for a few grains, the sands of time had run out for the "head of gold" of Nebuchadnezzar's image dream of Chapter 2.

Dan 2:31 "You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue--an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance.

Dan 2:32 The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

Dan 2:33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay.

Dan 2:34 While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them.

Dan 2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

Dan 2:36 "This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king.

Dan 2:37 You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory;

Dan 2:38 in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

Dan 2:39 "After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth.

Dan 2:40 Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron--for iron breaks and smashes everything--and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others.

2.1 "And finished it" (SHELAM) denotes termination; the Lord caused the end of the kingdom.

3. Divine judgment in the form of the fifth cycle of discipline was now literally at the gate or better "under the gate".

4. Now let me give you an expanded translation of verse twenty-six.

Expanded Translation:

Dan 5:26 The God of your grandfather Nebuchadnezzar has numbered the days of your kingdom and has brought it to an end.

5. Let's take a look at verses twenty-seven, twenty-eight and twenty-nine.

KJV

Dan 5:27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

Dan 5:28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

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

NIV

Dan 5:27 Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

Dan 5:28 Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

Dan 5:29 Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

1. The word TEQEL means "to weigh" and as noted would seem to pertain to the king personally. "Thou [Belshazzar] art weighed (Qal perfect of TEQAL).

2. Under God's scrutiny. Belshazzar had failed to measure up to the divine standard -"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

3. How would God evaluate the king? On one side of the divine scales is grace; on the other side is Belshazzar. The scales do not balance because Belshazzar had rejected Christ as his Savior.

4. The only way the scales can ever balance for any member of the human race is for him to believe in Christ. Regardless of how good a person might be, his best is only relative righteousness.

5. Unless the perfect righteousness of Christ has been imputed to him through faith in

the Savior, the scales can not be balanced. Such was the case of Belshazzar: he was minus salvation and consequently was "found wanting."

6. PERES in verse twenty-eight is the Peal passive participle of PARAS and should read, "Thy kingdom (the Chaldean Empire) is being divided (between the Medes and the Persians) "The word "Persians" is actually a paronomasia, a word play on PARSEE.

7. Even today in India where society is divided into classes, the Persians are called the Parsees, and belong to a high caste.

8. The very use of the word indicates the fulfillment of Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image in which the domination of Persia was portrayed by the silver arms and torso of Daniel chapter two.

9. The language spoken today by the Iranians, the modern Persians, is Pharsi, one of several Indo-European languages.

10. One would think that the gravity of this ominous message would have motivated someone to take immediate action to at least try to forestall the invasion.

11. Obviously, everyone's norms and standards were so distorted that they were incapable of making a proper evaluation of the situation and taking decisive action!

11.1 It is not surprising therefore, that contrary to Daniel's wishes, the king calmly followed through on his promise:

12. Daniel was decorated with the "medal of honor," vested with royal robes and elevated to the high position.

12.1 He now was the acknowledged third ruler of an empire which would vanish that very night; his new office was one of the shortest terms on record!

13. The rewards meant nothing to Daniel, for he knew that if God does not promote you, you are not promoted!

13.1 Thus the Lord did provide an exalted status for Daniel during the reign of the Medes and the Persians, and his ministry continued in spite of his advanced age.

14. Once again the principle was proven that a believer's ministry never depends on the political and economic status of a nation but on the faithfulness of God!

14.1 By that same faithfulness God not only sets up kings and establishes empires, but He removes kings who no longer serve their purpose.

Dan 2:21 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

Psa 75:6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

Psa 75:7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

15. While the reveling had been in progress and while Daniel fearlessly condemned the foolish king, the armies of the Medes and Persians were completing their preparations to invade or were in the process of invading Babylon.

16. The Euphrates River, which flowed through the center of the city, was diverted and the army marched inside; not over the great fortified walls, but through the river gates they came.

17. Now let me give you an expanded translation of these three verses.

Expanded Translation:

Dan 5:27 Tekel: "you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting".

Dan 5:28 Peres: "your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and the Persians.

Dan 5:29 Then the King ordered they clothe Daniel in purple, with a gold collar around his neck and that he be proclaimed the third ruler in the government.

18. Now we are ready for the last two verses of chapter five:

KJV

Dan 5:30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

Dan 5:31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

NIV

Dan 5:30 That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain,

Dan 5:31 and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

Let's see what principles we can glean from these last two verses:

1. The king of the Chaldeans (was) slain" (Peal passive participle of Qatal); he "received death violently."

2. Apparently the invaders marched right into the banquet hall and slaughtered Belshazzar and his fellow "merrymakers". A proud empire had ended; the prophecy was fulfilled!

3. Had the Babylonians possessed Bible doctrine in their souls, they would have been ready to discern the strategy of the Persians and thus able to hold back the forces of the Medes and the Persians.

4. The military advantage of the Babylonians given their fortifications was tremendous, °but apparently the army of Babylon put up very little resistance.

5. Consequently, the victory of the enemy was both quick and complete.

6. Again the God of history had used a nation to fulfill His plans for His people Israel.

7. Now for an expanded translation of verses thirty and thirty-one:

Dan 5:30 That same night Belshazzar, the Chaldean king was captured and slain by the Medo-Persian expedition force.

Dan 5:31 And Darius the Mede was made ruler of Chaldea by Cyrus the Great; Darius was sixty-two when he was made ruler of what was once a vast and powerful empire.

Let's here review some of the unheeded warnings early given to Babylon:

1. When Daniel was called before Belshazzar, he came straight to the point. His review of events, which the king should have remembered, was a reminder of man's failure and God's grace.

2. The Babylonians should have been familiar with the scroll of Jeremiah, which Prince Seraiah had brought with him when he was sent as an ambassador to Babylon.

Jer 51:59 The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And this Seraiah was a quiet prince.

Jer 51:60 So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon.

2.1 That scroll contained the dire prediction of the city's doom.

Jer 50:1 The word that the LORD spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.

Jer 50:2 Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach [Marduk] is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

Jer 50:3 For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast.

3. Note in Dan 50:2 that this information was to be proclaimed. "Conceal not" is an imperative, which is a command. Here is the principle of grace before judgment: the people were to be warned!

Jer 50:9 For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country; and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken; their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain.

Jer 50:10 And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD.

4. Verse 9 reiterates that the conquerors would come out of the north from the land of the Medes. Verse 10 prophesies complete destruction.

Jer 50:21 Go up against the land of Merathaim [meaning twofold or double rebellion the name given Babylon, alluding to intensive, rebellious defiance of the Lord], even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod [a strong Aramaen tribe in the Chaldean Empire; Ezek. 23:23]: waste and utterly destroy.

4.1 Further predictions of doom are found in Dan 50:24; 30 and 31

Jer 50:24 I have laid a snare [the Persian general, Gobryas who led the siege] for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD.

Jer 50:30-31 Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day... Behold I am against thee, O thou most proud...

5. Why was the Lord against the inhabitants of Babylon? Because they had "striven against the Lord".

6. Babylon was an abomination to God both individually and nationally, and their mental attitude sins and idolatry had destroyed them long before their judgment fell.

Jer 50:35 A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men

Jer 50:36 A sword is upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword is upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed [confounded].

Jer 59:37 A sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword is upon her treasurers; and they shall be robbed.

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