

1. Last week I exegeted the last eight verses of Daniel chapter five. When time ran out I was in the process of teaching several of Jeremiah's prophecies which foretold of the demise of the Chaldean Empire.

2. Before resuming our study, I want to give you an expanded translation of Daniel chapter five.

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 more pale 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 mans name is Daniel, though Nebuchadnezzar called him Belteshazzar; 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 or 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 zoanthropy, 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."

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 ..."

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

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 chain around his neck and that he be proclaimed the third ruler in the government subordinate only to Belshazzar and Nabonidus.

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 the ruler of Chaldea by Cyrus the Great; Darius was sixty-two when he became the leader of what was once a vast and powerful empire.

Now I want to review some of that learned last week and then pick-up with new material at point eight as we look at several unheeded warnings:

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 ... when he went with Zedekiah ... to Babylon in 593 B.C ...

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 ... 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 ... saith the LORD.

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

Jer 50:21 Go up against the land of Merathaim Ñ [a 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 Jer 50:24; 30 and 31.

Jer 50:24 I have laid a snare for you, you are also taken, O Babylon, you shall be destroyed because you hast striven against the LORD.

Jer 50:30 Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day...

Jer 50:31 Behold I am against thee...

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.

7. Therefore the prophet Jeremiah continued:

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 become fools: 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.

8. Note especially this prophecy: "they shall become as women"! No doubt this explains the lack of action taken by Belshazzar when Daniel revealed the meaning of the handwriting on the wall.

8.1 With "female" souls, the king and his nobles expected someone else to protect them!

Jer 51:1 Thus saith the LORD; Behold I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind [Cyrus, king of Persia]].

9. God's man for that purpose was none other than Cyrus, concerning whom Isaiah wrote:

Isa 45:1 "This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:

10. Jeremiah 51 continues with the details of the condemnation of Babylon.

Jer 51:2 And will send unto Babylon fanners that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about.

11. In the agricultural economy of the ancient world, it was the task of the "fanner" to separate the wheat from the chaff.

11.1 In this instance, the Medes and Persians would become the Lord's shovel to speedily and efficiently dispense God's judgment on the doomed city.

12. The Lord would cause the wheat to be saved and the chaff to be destroyed.

12.1 Daniel and other spiritually mature believers (possibly including Nitocris) would be delivered, while Belshazzar and the other apostates would be annihilated.

Jer 51:11 "Sharpen the arrows, take up the shields! The LORD has stirred up the kings of the Medes, because his purpose is to destroy Babylon. The LORD will take vengeance, because of what they did to His temple.

Jer 51:12 Unfurl the flags above the walls of Babylon! Reinforce the guard, station the watchmen, prepare an ambush! The LORD will carry out his purpose, his decree against the people of Babylon.

Jer 51:13 You who live by many waters and are rich in treasures, your end has come, the time for you to be cut off.

13. Verse 11 contains a direct reference to the Medes as the Lord's device to destroy Babylon.

14. The pronoun "you" in verse 13 alludes to the city located "by many waters;" this refers to the Euphrates River which flowed through the midst of Babylon and abundantly supplied the city's needs.

14.1 Ironically, the source of Babylon's water was to become the means of its destruction! More detail will be provided regarding this later.

Jer 51:30 The mighty men of Babylon have refused to fight, they have remained in the city: their might has failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwelling places; her bars are broken.

15. Jer 51:30 foretells of the cowardice of the military, and proves the fortifications are no stronger than the men behind them.

15.1 The defenders of Babylon will lack courage and motivation to fight. Their power dissipated, they will become as helpless as women!

Jer 51:61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words [a reference to the prophecy of Babylon's doom;

Jer 51:62 Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever.

Jer 51:63 And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book [Jeremiah, Chapters 50 and 51] , That thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates.

Jer 51:64 And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her; and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

16. As always, God's warnings are clear and available to all who will search the Scriptures. According to the prophet's command, the message had been read in public, whereupon it had been tied to a rock and thrown into the Euphrates.

17. Sinking to the river bottom, it graphically depicted the "sinking into oblivion" of a once splendid empire which had become rotten to the core and had forfeited its place in history.

18. Some 50 odd years had passed since that proclamation was made. The proud city's inhabitants had blatantly ignored the warning and rejected the Savior.

18.1 Now every "jot and tittle" of Jeremiah's prediction was coming to pass.

19. The prophecy concerning the destruction of Chaldea was recorded even some one hundred and fifty years earlier than even Jeremiah's predictions; this by the prophet Isaiah.

19.1 In fact, Chapter 47 is an amplification of the second MENE of Daniel 5:25 and describes what happened to the "rest of the people."

Isa 47:1 Come down, and sit in the dust [symbol of mourning], O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne [end of the empire], O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate [beautiful and glamorous].

Isa 47:2 Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks [no veil], make bare the leg [lack of feminine attire work like men], uncover the thigh [rape], pass over the rivers [go into slavery].

Isa 47:3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not spare a man, you will have no protectors.

20. Pride deluded the Chaldeans and gave them a false sense of security behind their fortifications.

20.1 Occupied with the pursuit of pleasure, they became careless and disregarded the impending danger.

21. Through mental attitude sins and involvement in idol worship they would suffer loss of their loved ones (Isa. 47:7-10), and because of their rejection of doctrine, sudden destruction would overtake them.

Isa 47:7 You said, 'I will continue forever--the eternal queen!' But you did not consider these things or reflect on what might happen.

Isa 47:8 "Now then, listen, you wanton creature, lounging in your security and saying to yourself, 'I am, and there is none besides me. I will never be a widow or suffer the loss of children.'

Isa 47:9 Both of these will overtake you in a moment, on a single day: loss of children and widowhood. They will come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and all your potent spells.

Isa 47:10 You have trusted in your wickedness and have said, 'No one sees me.' Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you when you say to yourself, 'I am, and there is none besides me.'

22. The passage goes on to challenge the apostate Babylonians to appeal to their sorcerers, the multitude of their counsels, stargazers and prognosticators to save them (Isa 47:11-13).

Isa 47:11 Disaster will come upon you, and you will not know how to conjure it away. A calamity will fall upon you that you cannot ward off with a ransom; a catastrophe you cannot foresee will suddenly come upon you.

Isa 47:12 "Keep on, then, with your magic spells and with your many sorceries, which you have labored at since childhood. Perhaps you will succeed, perhaps you will cause terror.

Isa 47:13 All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you.

23. Yet none of their "diviners" shall be able to deliver them (Isa 47:14-15)!

Isa 47:14 Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. Here are no coals to warm anyone; here is no fire to sit by.

Isa 47:15 That is all they can do for you--these you have labored with and trafficked with since childhood. Each of them goes on in his error; there is not one that can save you.

24. In spite of repeated warnings concerning their destiny should they fail to turn to God, the Chaldeans chose to follow their own devices and ignore the only Savior.

25. All people in any era of history who follow that pattern are doomed as certainly as were the Chaldeans, for "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

26. How different things might have turned out for the Chaldeans had they continued to function as they did under Nebuchadnezzar's reign, according to the divine precepts and laws of establishment!

27. God's Word not only presents warnings but also imparts knowledge and skills to all who heed its counsel.

27.1 There is one lesson we must not miss; every spiritual asset ever needed for prosperity or calamity is available to each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Summary Points:

1. Escapism solves nothing. Every problem in life must be faced and resolved.
2. Human pleasure is never a satisfactory substitute for fellowship with God.
3. Drunkenness and debauchery creates its own problems and, as with all excesses, is a sign of degeneracy.
4. Religion, certainly as we had in Babylon, destroys a nation. No nation can survive apostasy or blasphemy against God.
5. It is impossible for a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to ignore Bible doctrine and be happy. There is no security in human success or power.
6. The Word of God judges those who ignore it!
7. The person who is not oriented to the Word of God must inevitably depend on man.

7.1 When the time of judgment comes, people with human viewpoint cannot be of help; this is the prerogative and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

8. Man never knows the day or hour of his death. Therefore, be prepared, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mar 8:36).

9. True poise and confidence come from Bible doctrine in the right lobe.

10. The fall of a nation or empire is preceded by the deterioration of the mental attitude of its leadership. Frightened, unstable rulers neutralize a nation.

11. It takes doctrine to learn doctrine. Understanding of advanced doctrine is built upon knowledge of basic doctrine.

12. Since the heritage of a nation is based on the Word of God, rejection of and apathy toward the Word results in the destruction of that nation.

13. The rise and fall of nations and empires depends on the sovereignty of God. He will both prosper and judge nations as well as individuals.

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