

**“Belshazzar Defies God’s Sovereignty”**  
**“Daniel—A Testimony to the Power of God” — Part 6**  
*Daniel 5*

The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Psalm 33:10-11

**1. Belshazzar’s feast: indulgent, indifferent and irreverent.**

King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

Daniel 5:1-4

**Some things to consider:**

Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C. At that time Daniel was about 58 years old.

It is now 539 B.C. and Daniel is about 81 years old.

1 John 2:16—We tend to think we are secure when we are living in abundance.

The Medes and the Persians were at the walls of Babylon and Belshazzar didn’t care.

Nebuchadnezzar had decreed respect for the God of Israel, but Belshazzar treated the God of Israel with arrogant disrespect.

Psalm 10 paints a vivid picture of Belshazzar’s pride.

**2. Like fangernails on a chalkboard, God quiets the party!**

Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way.

Daniel 5:5-6

**Some things to consider:**

The handwriting on the wall was a miracle of God.

It was the finger of God that defeated the Egyptians.

It was the finger of God that wrote the 10 commandments.

Here the finger of God passes judgment on Babylon.

**3. The wise men of Babylon are stumped and the nobles baffled.**

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." Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled.

Daniel 5:7-9

#### **Some things to consider:**

Why does Belshazzar offer the third place of power in Babylon?

History repeats itself. The wisdom of the world cannot explain the mind of God.

#### **4. The Queen Mother remembers Daniel.**

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! 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. This man Daniel, whom the king called Beltshazzar, 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."

Daniel 5:10-12

#### **Some things to consider:**

The Queen Mother is either the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar or a widow of Nebuchadnezzar.

She is Belshazzar's mother.

She is not at the party but hears about the trouble.

She tells her son to "get a grip."

She knows Daniel and that he is still alive.

#### **5. Daniel's sermon and rebuke.**

"O king, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor... But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory... until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes. But you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription."

Daniel 5:18-24

#### **Some things to consider:**

The King only knew Daniel by reputation.  
Belshazzar compliments Daniel and offers incredible reward.  
It is interesting how people think the messenger of God can change the decree of God.  
Daniel is respectful to the king, but is not afraid to tell him the truth. (Romans 13:1)

## 6. Daniel interprets the handwriting on the wall.

"This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN. This is what these words mean: *Mene*: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. *Teke!*: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

*Peres*: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." 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. That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

Daniel 5:25-31

### **Some things to consider:**

Belshazzar was slain the very night the handwriting was interpreted.  
It is very sad that we refuse to learn from the past.

"Belshazzar Defies God's Sovereignty" is sixth in a series titled, "Daniel—A Testimony to the Power of God." June 23, 2013. All verses are taken from the New International version unless otherwise noted.