

# THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

## Daniel 5:1-31

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Tonight we have the joy of continuing our study of the Book of Daniel.

Please turn your Bibles and your attention to Daniel chapter 5.

This is the chapter where we get a phrase that has become a common and well-understand idiom in English: “*the handwriting on the wall.*”

And the way we use this phrase in everyday life comes from this story.

Basically, we use this phrase to describe how we either pay attention to or ignore the **signs** of coming doom.

For example, if your job is laying off a bunch of people and you don't start updating your resume, we might say,

*'You need to stop ignoring the handwriting on the wall...'*

The phrase often implies that the signs of danger are so clear, yet people are too distracted or proud too to do anything until it's too late.

It's a powerful phrase that has remained timeless because it comes from powerful, timeless and TRUE source – the Word of God.

This is Daniel's narrative account of **real** events that took place in history.

And specifically, in this chapter we're going to witness one of the most consequential nights in world history.

This is the *final* night of the Babylonian empire.

Here in this chapter, we find the first transition of kingdoms that Daniel prophesied when he interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's statue dream (Dan. 2).

Remember that there are four gentile kingdoms prophesied – ***Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.***

This chapter marks the very night that the Babylonian empire fell to the Medo-Persian empire.

But far more than just an important history lesson, this chapter, once again, declares the great theme of the Book of Daniel.

That theme is (fill-in-the-blank): **absolute sovereignty and trustworthiness of the true and living God.**

We're going to see that theme on display in a **haunting**, but **helpful** way tonight.

We're going to move through this narrative in six scenes, as you can see on your handout:

Six Scenes in this Narrative that Display God's Absolute Sovereignty and Man's Need to Be Humble:

1. BELSHAZZAR'S DELUSIONAL DEBAUCHERY (5:1-4)
2. GOD'S TERRIFYING INTERRUPTION (5:5)
3. BELSHAZZAR'S HORRIFIED DESPERATION (5:6-9)
4. DANIEL'S EXEMPLARY REPUTATION (5:10-16)
5. THE HAUNTING INTERPRETATION (5:17-29)
6. BELSHAZZAR'S DEATH & BABYLON'S DOOM (5:30-31)

Let's begin by reading verses 1-4.

### ***Daniel 1:1-4***

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Belshazzar the king held a great feast for one thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand.</li><li>2 When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he said to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which <i>was</i> in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them.</li><li>3 Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which <i>was</i> in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them.</li><li>4 They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.</li></ol> |
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The events here take place long after King Nebuchadnezzar has died.

You'll remember that last chapter (ch. 4) was the final chapter dealing with Nebuchadnezzar.

And in many ways, this chapter 5 is a direct contrast to chapter 4.

You'll recall that in chapter 4, the proud King Nebuchadnezzar finally humbled himself under God after being made into a wild beast.

He was warned by God, disciplined by God, and ultimately, restored by God after he repented and humbled himself.

But here in chapter 5, we will find the opposite.

Again, it is the tale of another proud king, but this one refuses to humble himself.

We find here a king whose conscience is so seared that when God breaks in to confront him, it is not a message of hope, but of judgment.

We'll find that Belshazzar had no excuse because he knew the example of Nebuchadnezzar – Daniel will remind him of this.

But many years have passed since Nebuchadnezzar's story.

Enough time for a young king, Belshazzar, to grow calcified in his pride against God.

Daniel is about 60 or 70 years old now and we find that he has been discarded by the new administration.

After a period of instability and fighting over the throne, a new king is on the throne over Babylon's vast empire – a King named Nabonidus.

And I just want to orient you with a few comments about how King Nabonidus relates to King Belshazzar here.

History shows that Babylon's last king was this King Nabonidus.

Which has often brought up the question, why does Daniel present Belshazzar as the king here?

Well, Belshazzar was the oldest son of King Nabonidus, so he was the crown-prince of Babylon.

And history reveals that Nabonidus, evidently for religious reasons, chose to live in, not in Babylon but in Tema, Arabia (*about 500 miles south of Babylon*).<sup>1</sup>

In his absence, he made Belshazzar the functional king in Babylon city.

I bring this up because for many years, critics tried to discredit the book of Daniel because of the lack of historical evidence for Belshazzar as the king.

They claimed that Belshazzar was a fictional character and that the Bible could not be trusted with historical accuracy.

But we know that's not true.

And time and truth always go hand-in-hand. Our role is to take God at His Word.

In the last century, new archaeological evidence has surfaced that confirms the reality of what Daniel reports in this chapter.

The attacks against the Bible on the basis of Belshazzar's identity have died a natural death.

So, we find, of course, that God's Word contains no historical inaccuracies.

This King Belshazzar's role was that of "co-regent", or "second-in-command".

This is confirmed by his promise in v. 16 to promote Daniel to be the "**third**" ruler in the Kingdom (*recognizing Nabonidus as the 1<sup>st</sup>, and himself as the 2<sup>nd</sup>*).

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen R. Miller, [Daniel](#), vol. 18, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 147–148.

NOTE: Nebuchadnezzar is often referred to as Belshazzar's father in this chapter (vv. 2, 11 [3x], 13, 18) but he was actually his **grandfather**.

There was no word in Aramaic for "grandfather" or "grandson," so Nebuchadnezzar is simply referred to as his "father."<sup>2</sup>

The idea is that Nebuchadnezzar was Belshazzar's ancestor or predecessor. And he should have learned from his example.

But, I want you pay attention now to the events in this story.

This young king, Belshazzar is throwing a great feast – a huge party – with a **thousand** partiers living it up together!

And Daniel tells us that this was a drinking party – he says that Belshazzar was "*drinking wine in the presence of the thousand*" (v. 10).

These were the kinds of parties that very often devolved into drunkenness and debauchery.<sup>3</sup>

And the text clearly shows that this was a party of wickedness and high-handed blasphemy against God – we'll get there in a moment.

But I want you think about something deeper here.

Do you know what was going on outside the city walls of Babylon at the time of this party?

The city was being besieged by the Medo-Persian army.

History shows that the Medo-Persians were on the advance to conquer the world.

And at this point, they had already defeated Nabonidus at Sippar (539 BC).

And now they were marching on Babylon.

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<sup>2</sup> Miller 1994: 154.

<sup>3</sup> Miller 1994: 151.

I want you picture the scene here – the enemy is camped outside the city, about to besiege it, yet the king is throwing a drunken party.

I think this is a sobering illustration of the human heart.

Specifically, I'm thinking of how deceitful our hearts are in the face of **reality**.

Belshazzar is a man who is exceedingly full of himself.

Even with the city on the brink of invasion, he deceives himself into imagining that he is invincible and distracts himself with a drinking party.

But I think we need to examine that many times, we are like Belshazzar.

Sure, it might not be as brazen as throwing a party while your city is under attack...but we often distract ourselves with subtle, small things.

But I think those subtle distractions from reality are even MORE dangerous because of how undetected they can go in our thinking.

We'll get to more on this later, but I want you to be considering how Belshazzar is deceiving himself BY distracting himself from reality.

That's why I titled this first scene: *Belshazzar's delusional debauchery*.

It's a delusion. It's a distraction. It's self-deception.

And it devolved into debauchery and mocking of the true and living God.

As the party progressed into the night, Belshazzar moved into an act of high-handed blasphemy against God.

He brought the cups that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from God's temple and used them specifically in acts of worship of false gods.

Notice again v. 4 – they took the vessels of God's temple and drank wine from them and ***praised*** *the gods of gold and silver of bronze, iron, wood and stone.*

This is an act of deliberate insult against God.

This was not act of ignorance.

This chapter makes clear that Belshazzar **knew** that the God of Israel had done great and glorious things in Nebuchadnezzar's lifetime.

Here we find Belshazzar's pride laid bare without any restraints – total self-deception and delusion.

But God is about to break through.

This brings us to the second scene in this story: **#2 God's Terrifying Interruption (v. 5).**

*Daniel 5:5*

**Suddenly** the fingers of a man's hand came out and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing.

You can imagine the terror that must have brought this party to a complete halt.

I can imagine the music stopping, women screaming, and everyone freezing in shock.

What is happening is breathtaking and supernatural – a dismembered hand floats through the air and begins to write on the wall – utterly terrifying.

This is God breaking through, and we will find out in a moment what His message is.

But Belshazzar's reaction shows us just how graphic and terrifying this moment was.

Let's consider a 3<sup>rd</sup> scene in this story -- **#3 Belshazzar's Horrified Desperation (vv. 6-9).**

*Daniel 5:6-9*

6 Then the splendor of the king's *face* changed, and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack, and his knees were knocking against each other.

- 7 The king called out loudly to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans, and the diviners. The king answered and said to the wise men of Babylon, "Any man who can read this writing and declare its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and *have* a necklace of gold around his neck and rule with power as third *ruler* in the kingdom."
- 8 Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known its interpretation to the king.
- 9 Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and the splendor of his *face* changed *further*, and his nobles were perplexed.

As Belshazzar began to process what was happening, notice v. 6. Says that "*his hip joints went slack*"

Literally could be translated "*the knots of his loins loosened*" (i.e., he soiled himself) – this is visceral response of terror.

Verse 7 tells us the king is literally **screaming** for his wise men to come interpret the message on the wall.

One Pastor describes it this way:

*A moment before, the drunken king felt brave enough to hurl insults in the face of the living God, but with a flick of the hand, he was reduced to a quivering mass of terror. Although he could not read the words of the inscription, he knew that it must mean bad news.*<sup>4</sup>

You can see how desperate he is for some relief here by the extreme rewards that he is offering to the person who can interpret the message.

He goes as far as he can without giving up his own throne – a promise to promote the person to 3<sup>rd</sup> ruler!

Remember, as the *co-regent* (2<sup>nd</sup> ruler), the highest reward available to him would be to promote someone to be 3<sup>rd</sup> ruler.

But once again, we're not surprised to see the wise men of Babylon utterly incapable of providing answers.

We'll see this in a moment, but the words written on the wall are in Aramaic.

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<sup>4</sup> Dykstra, course notes for BE 607: Daniel

So it's interesting that v. 8 says that they could not read them, let alone interpret them.

It is likely that, though they might have understood the words (meaning the letters), its meaning was unknown to them.<sup>5</sup>

So, the king grows even more desperate, v. 9 says that his face changed *further* – he was physically contorted with terror.

This brings us to our next scene – which has been the usual pattern – Daniel comes in with the answers that only God can provide.

Our 4<sup>th</sup> scene tonight is found in verses 10-16 -- **#4 Daniel's Exemplary Reputation (10-16).**

#### *Daniel 5:10-16*

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| <p><b>10</b> The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; the queen answered and said, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or the splendor of your <i>face</i> be changed.</p> <p><b>11</b> "There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, set him as chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans, <i>and</i> diviners.</p> <p><b>12</b> "<i>This was</i> because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas, and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned, and he will declare the interpretation."</p> <p><b>13</b> Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, "Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah?"</p> <p><b>14</b> "Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight, and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you.</p> <p><b>15</b> "Just now the wise men <i>and</i> the conjurers were brought in before me that they might read this writing and make its interpretation known to me, but they could not declare the interpretation of the message.</p> <p><b>16</b> "But I personally have heard about you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you are able to read the writing and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and <i>wear</i> a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will rule with power as the third <i>ruler</i> in the kingdom.</p> |
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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

- v. 10 ~ The queen enters the banquet hall and offers hope to a desperate king.
  - This queen is not Belshazzar’s wife (remember, they were all already at the party).
  - This is most likely Queen Nitocris, Belshazzar’s mother (wife of Nabonidus, daughter of Nebuchadnezzar).
  
- v. 11-12 ~ The hope she brings is the report of Daniel, whom she knew from her father’s reign.
  - Her description of Daniel to Belshazzar is a powerful affirmation of Daniel’s integrity, now as an 60/70-year-old man, still an exile, he has been faithful, and the legacy of his integrity is intact.
  - Notice the characteristics she highlights:
    - Wisdom, an extraordinary spirit, knowledge, insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas, and solving of difficult problems (vv. 11-12)
  
- vv. 13-16 ~ Belshazzar calls for Daniel to be brought in and then offers him the rewards of gifts and a promotion to 3<sup>rd</sup> highest ruler in the kingdom if he can explain the handwriting on the wall.

[IMPLICATIONS] ~ *we must strive to FINISH WELL! Daniel is in his final lap and he stayed the course! What an example.*

With Daniel now standing before Belshazzar, we come to a 5<sup>th</sup> scene: **#5 The Haunting Interpretation (17-29).**

Let’s just read and follow the story.

***Daniel 5:17-23***

- 17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Let your gifts *remain* with you or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the writing to the king and make the interpretation known to him.
- 18 “O king, the Most High God granted the kingdom, grandeur, glory, and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father.

- 19 “And because of the grandeur which He bestowed on him, all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* tongue feared and were in dread before him; whomever he wished he killed, and whomever he wished he kept alive, and whomever he wished he raised up, and whomever he wished he made low.
- 20 “But when his heart was raised up and his spirit became so strong that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne, and *his* glory was taken away from him.
- 21 “He was also driven away from the sons of men, and his heart was made like *that of* beasts, and his *place* of habitation *was* with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of the sky until he knew that the Most High God is the powerful ruler over the kingdom of mankind and *that* He sets up over it whomever He wishes.
- 22 “Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not made your heart lowly, even though you knew all this,
- 23 but you have raised yourself up against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear, or know. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not honored.

I mentioned that this whole story is a contrast to the preceding chapter – you can see that contrast in how Daniel interacts with Belshazzar.

You can sense the difference in Daniel’s response to Belshazzar – the lack of relationship is clear.

I think there are some instructive observations in his response:

- Daniel does not mince words but moves into a direct confrontation of this wicked king who has spent the night mocking God.
- Daniel disregards the gifts offered by Belshazzar (v. 17) ~ he can’t be bought. “Keep your gifts...”

Daniel is not rude, but he is **assertive** with Belshazzar (a different tone than his usual approach to Nebuchadnezzar).

The reason for this direct confrontation is that Belshazzar has blatantly disregarded the reality of God.

Daniel reminds him of what he knew to be true.

He specifically reminds him of the story of how God humbled his forefather Nebuchadnezzar until he learned **that God is sovereign!**

He tells him the whole story about Nebuchadnezzar becoming a beast before humbling himself under God's mighty hand.

And then in v. 22 comes the key moment: "Yet YOU, his son, Belshazzar, have not **made your heart lowly**, even though you knew all this." (v. 22)

This is the height of Belshazzar's darkness – rejecting God's reality *even though you know what is true and right.*

Throughout God's Word, the strictest judgments are reserved for those who go on willfully sinning against the truth without repentance (cf. Rom. 1; Heb. 10:26-27)

And that is the case with Belshazzar.

Daniel turns this on Belshazzar with a frontal attack, consisting of four compact punches, evident in the "you have" statements in v. 23:<sup>6</sup>

1. "...[You] have not humbled your heart..."
2. "...You have exalted yourself against the Lord..."
3. "...You have praised the gods of silver and gold..."
4. "...You have not glorified [God]..."

This is the tragic state of unrestrained, unrepentant pride.

It leaves you living in a delusional reality. Daniel hits this delusion in the heart: "you have not honored God, **in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways.**"

What is he saying?

You have lived denying and rejecting reality from God's perspective.

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Dykstra, course notes for BE 607: Daniel

As I said earlier – it might be easy for us to shake our heads a Belshazzar here.

But the reality is that he simply illustrates what each of our hearts are capable of.

This brings some haunting implications to us. To my own heart.

Like Belshazzar, so often just fall into the patterns of distracting ourselves away from the condition of our souls before God.

And it is so often in subtle ways that go undetected. And I want to call each of us to examine ourselves in this area tonight.

*What are the things and activities and events that distract me from attending to my soul before God.*

If you've ever read any of C.S. Lewis's book *The Screwtape Letters*, he has a section about this.

Now, it's a fictional book, but it provides some insightful thoughts.

It is written from the perspective of an experienced demon (working for Satan), who is mentoring a younger demon on how to tempt a man.

The goal is to tempt him until he completely abandons Christ and consigns himself to an eternity away from Him.

One of the tactics is to just keep him distracted with subtle distractions and "small" domesticated sins.

Just enough to keep him distracted from the state of his soul before God. The demon Screwtape writes to his young apprentice:

*"It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the business. **Confessedly the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.**"* (see chapter 12).

A **delusional** person holds onto a belief despite all the evidence to the contrary.

They've convinced themselves the danger doesn't exist or isn't a threat.

This is what we do if we do not keep a sensitive conscience before God.

To relieve the pain of what we know and fear to be true, we *distract* ourselves with all sorts of things. We are drunk on distraction.

Screwtape goes on to describe the ideal state for man to be kept enslaved –

it is when “*...the man is not choosing to do anything, he is just letting things happen.*”

And when a man is in such a state, “*You will find that anything or nothing is sufficient to attract his wandering attention...*”

*“He will say to himself, ‘I am not doing anything.’ But he is doing something—he is moving. And he is moving in the direction which you want him to move.”*

This is the deadly drift of distracting ourselves and not paying attention to our souls and to our need to walk with the living God.

For many of us, the distractions aren't some grand party –it's the scrolling through meaningless information;

...it's the *binge-watching* of excessive entertainment;

...or maybe even just living for the next event or activity

... it's whatever will mute the alarm bells of our conscience.

We avoid stillness and silence before God.

So we keep going with the distractions.

Not even because we love the distractions, but because we dread facing who we are before God.

***What's the hope and remedy for this?***

We need to examine ourselves and repent of the ways we've been doing this!

We need to stop believing that we can be independent. We need to be still before God.

We need to bring other believers into it (Heb. 3:12-13).

Self-deception isn't always some huge lie that we believe, it's a slow drift and dipping into things that keep us from walking closely with God.

We need to attack it at the thought-level.

We need to stop thinking we deserve distraction. We need to be sober-minded about our souls and long above all things for communion with our God!

I am so gripped by that quote from George Muller that I've shared several times – he wrote:

*"I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was to have my soul happy in the Lord."*

The tragic story of Belshazzar is an illustration and a warning for us.

Will we learn from him?

He had clearly lived a life of unrepentant rejection of God.

And tragically for him, it was too late.

That's clear in the message that God wrote on the wall.

Let's go back to our passage to understand what that message was.

*Daniel 5:24-29*

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| 24 | “Then the hand was sent from Him, and this writing was inscribed.                                      |
| 25 | “Now this is the writing that was inscribed: ‘MENĒ, MENĒ, TEKĒL, UPHARSIN.’                            |
| 26 | “This is the interpretation of the message: ‘MENĒ’—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. |
| 27 | “‘TEKĒL’—you have been weighed on the scales and found lacking.  |
| 28 | “‘PERĒS’—your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.”                      |

vv. 24-28 ~ Daniel gives the **haunting** interpretation of the handwriting on the wall: **“MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN”**

This is the literal message<sup>7</sup>: *Numbered, Numbered, Weighed, Divided!*

And this is the tragic interpretation of God’s message to Belshazzar:

- **MENE** ~ God has numbered the days of your kingdom. *(the idea is God has set the limit for your days and the limit is up)*
- **TEKEL** ~ God has judged you and found you lacking. *(you’ve been weighed and found wanting).*
- **PERES** ~ God has divided your kingdom and given to the Medes and Persians.

Or in the modern vernacular:

- **MENE MENE** ~ *Your number is up!*
- **TEKEL** ~ *You don’t measure up!*
- **UPHARSIN/PERES** ~ *You will be divided up!*

Beloved young adults – this is a message that should strike our hearts with sobriety.

Hebrews 10:31 says, “it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

This is Belshazzar falling into the hands of the living God whom he had spent his life denying.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

But the reality that Belshazzar had been distracting himself from is no longer escapable.

And, beloved, this will be the end for all people.

One day, every soul will lay bare before the Judge of all.

He has numbered all of our days. And all souls will be weighed by the perfect Judge.

However, for believers, the only reason that we will not be found *wanting* on that day is because of Jesus Christ!

Our only hope is Christ!

And so, we **confess** – *agree with God* – that left to ourselves, we will be weighed and never measure up – but we cling to Christ’s righteousness!

I pray that if you’ve never done that – you would begin today to trust in Jesus Christ as your only hope.

And if you know Him and trust Him, be comforted and moved to a greater sober-mindedness.

Let’s examine ourselves for the many ways that we run to distract ourselves from the state of our soul before God.

For Belshazzar, God makes it clear, that it was too late. This was not a message of hope but of final judgment.

Judgment which would take place later that night, and then on into an eternity apart from God.

Let’s read the final verses -- notice in v. 29, Belshazzar honors Daniel with all the rewards he promised.

<p><b>29</b> Then Belshazzar said <i>the word</i>, and they clothed Daniel with purple and <i>put</i> a necklace of gold around his neck and issued a proclamation concerning him that he <i>now</i> would be the third powerful ruler in the kingdom.</p>
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This promotion is almost meaningless in light of what happens next – our final scene: **#6 BELSHAZZAR'S DEATH & BABYLON'S DOOM (5:30-31)**.

*vv. 30-31*

<p><b>30</b> That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. <b>31</b> So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.</p>
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Within a few hours God's judgement was carried out: Belshazzar was killed later that night and Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians.

<sup>8</sup>It was on October 12, 539 BC that the most powerful nation in the world came to an end. And the Medo-Persian age began.

- Two historians (Herodotus and Xenophon) fill in the details: The Medes and the Persians built a dam on the Euphrates River which flowed under the wall and through the city.
- The dam diverted the river into a marsh which allowed the water level in the river to fall.
- The Medes and the Persians were able to infiltrate the city by surprise using the riverbed.
- They sneaked into the party, sang songs as if reveling with the Babylonians, and made their way undetected into the banquet palace.
- Once inside, they killed the guards and threw open the gates which enabled the whole Medo-Persian to take over the city without a battle.
- They assassinated king Belshazzar and conquered the city in one night.
- Cyrus entered the city on October 29, 539 BC according to the Nabonidus Chronicle.
- Cyrus then appointed Darius over Babylon (Darius "received" the kingdom). (more on Darius next time).

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<sup>8</sup> Adapted from Dykstra, course notes for BE 607: Daniel

This is an incredible narrative. And above all of this we find this towering declaration: **GOD IS SOVEREIGN!** And we must humble ourselves before Him!

*Some important observations to consider here:*

- *God hates pride in our hearts. That is such a crucial lesson here!*
- *God will not be mocked.*
- *Consider the signposts of a nation's downfall – high-handed rejection of the fear of God.*
- *God is sovereign over the rise and fall of nations.*
- *God is faithful to fulfill His Word. Babylon's fall was prophesied, and it came to pass (Is 21:1-10; Jer 51:39, 57).*
- *The vindication of Neb's humility and repentance (verified by Daniel)!*
- *Daniel example in finishing well!*

#### **PRACTICAL HOPE AND ENCOURAGEMENT:**

- *Recognize your tendencies to distract and deceive yourself*
- *Confess, seek forgiveness, and repent and turn from away from those!*
- *Practice being before God in communion with Him through prayer and His Word.*
- *Seek out true, transparent fellowship and counsel and accountability.*
- *This passage shows us that **God sees all. He weighs. He numbers.***
- *One day you will stand before this Judge – and the only way you will not be found “wanting” is if you are clothed in Christ's righteousness.*
- *You can measure up **ONLY** because of Christ!*

[PRAY]