

Prayer:

Slide # 1

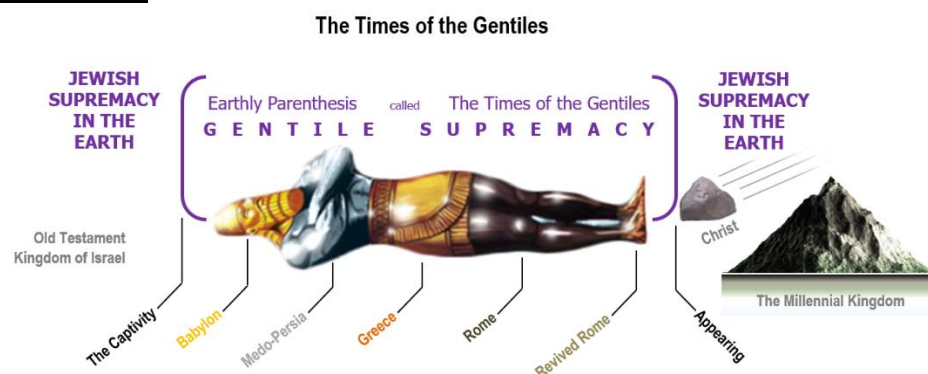
Theme: God is Sovereign over History

Outline:

- A. The personal history of the prophet Daniel – chapter 1
- B. The prophetic history of the Gentiles – chapters 2-7**
- C. The prophetic history of Israel – chapters 8-12

Daniel 2:4b through chapter 7 is not in Hebrew (the language of the Jews) but rather in Aramaic, which was the language of the Gentiles. This section outlines that broad period of time from the Babylonian Captivity until the Second Coming of Christ, which was called by Christ “the times of the Gentiles,” in which Jerusalem would be trodden down by the Gentiles (Lk. 21:24).

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In our study, we are coming to that point in the outline as seen in Daniel 2 where Babylon (the head of gold) is about to transition to the chest and arms which are made of silver.

But here is the KEY point. Even though it is the times of the Gentiles God wanted it made explicitly clear right from the very beginning that He, the God of the Jews, is the ONE true Sovereign God. He made this very clear with the starting point of Nebuchadnezzar who began the times of the Gentiles by destroying Jerusalem, the temple, and taking the Jews captive to Babylon.

After a prolonged period of judgment – 7 years in the pasture living like an animal, Nebuchadnezzar came to PERSONALLY recognize the Jewish God as sovereign over all, including himself and his kingdom. He got it! He then recognized the absolute LORDSHIP of YHWH with all the evidence being he was a true convert – a true believer.

But here is the thing, God intends that what He taught Nebuchadnezzar to a LESSON for the whole of the Gentile world going forward. He intended for it to be a LASTING LESSON that all going forward should take to heart!

Alas, one of the great lessons of history is that people, in general, tend to learn very little (if anything) from history. What God intends to be a LESSON for the ages is often quickly forgotten. This is the lesson seen in Daniel 5.

Between Daniel 4, which deals with the end of Nebuchadnezzar's life, and the events of Daniel 5, there was a period of about 25 years.

Nebuchadnezzar died on Oct. 7, 562 B.C. after a reign of 43 years. Following him, there was a tumultuous time in the kingdom where several leaders came to the fore before the fall of the kingdom in 539 B.C. as seen in Daniel 5.

Daniel 5:1–31 (NKJV)

1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand.

“Liberal scholars have long attacked the historicity of Belshazzar because his name had not been discovered in any secular history. However, with the discovery of the Nabonidus Cylinder in which Belshazzar was mentioned, liberals no longer can attack the historicity of Belshazzar even though they were slow in acknowledging their previous mistake.” - ***John Walvoord***

Since 1914 at least 37 ancient historical texts have been discovered with Belshazzar's name on them. In them, he is named as the son of Nabonidus, who is a clear historical figure who reigned over Babylon for its last 17 years from 556 to 539 B.C.

This reality totally destroys the arguments of liberal theologians who previously wanted to claim that Daniel was not prophecy, but rather they claimed it was written later as history after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes who died in 164 B.C.

The reason they said this is because Daniel prophetically spelled out the career of Antiochus in Daniel 8:9-14 and 11:21-35 in great detail, so much so they claimed this had to be written as history and not as prophecy. And part of their argument for a late date for Daniel was that history did not show that any man named Belshazzar was ever king over Babylon.

But that argument fell apart with the discovery of all these ancient texts that mention Belshazzar. The more the archaeologists dig, the more it proves the Bible. Never has an archaeological discovery contradicted the Bible – it always further serves to PROVE the Bible. TIME is always on the side of truth – on the side of proving the Bible right!

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Kings over Babylon...

562 B.C. – Nebuchadnezzar died
 562-560 – Evil-Merodach (son of Nebuchadnezzar)
 560-556 – Neriglissar (son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar)
 556 (2 months) – Labashi-Marduk (son of Neriglissar)
 556-539 – Nabonidus (son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar)
 (***Belshazzar*** – son of Nabonidus – ***co-regent***)

There was a lot of murder and hostile takeover involved in the short-lived reign of some of these kings (even though it was all in the family). This really speaks to the SOVEREIGNTY of God that held the throne for Nebuchadnezzar while he was insane for 7 years. That just doesn't happen!

But here we are about 25 years after the time of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar his grandson is on the throne as co-regent with his father.

The context was this. The Persians and the Medes were more and more bringing Babylon under their control. Nabonidus (the father of Belshazzar) was out of the country in Arabia, and Belshazzar, after some initial skirmishes with the Medes and the Persians, was now hold up in the city of Babylon. This probably explains the great number of nobles who were there also for this party. They were all hold up in the city! The city of Babylon was literally under siege.

Babylon was considered impregnable. They thought that no one could capture or overtake it.

The city had stockpiled enough food supplies for 20 years and had a branch of the Euphrates River running under the wall of the city, so they had plenty of fresh water. The great walls around the city gave them a strong sense of security. Great **double walls surrounded the entire city**. On the wall there were a total of 360 towers. One historian claims the walls were 87 feet thick and 350 feet high. The wall was said to be so strong and broad that chariots could parade on top of the wall four abreast.

Some say these claims are greatly **exaggerated**, and yet most agree that the wall system surrounding the city was indeed impressive.

The rest of the empire had fallen to the Media and Persians, but Babylon was the lone holdout, and they probably figured they could just outwait the enemy.

This is the context in which we find Belshazzar holding this elaborate feast. Some suggest the purpose may have been to keep up the morale of his leaders, and to show that he wasn't worried. Hence, Belshazzar's show of bravado!

Here he was with a thousand of his lords, and the wine was flowing freely. It was a drinking party! They were having a BIG time! And often with that comes a lack of inhibitions and folly. Often, these occasions were thought to involve revelry, hilarity, and sensuality involving flagrant immorality. As we will see, it certainly involved drinking, idolatry, and blasphemy.

King Belshazzar was probably at an elevated table leading the festivities.

2 While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.

Bright ideas and drinking don't go together! In this drinking state the king commanded that the vessels from the Jewish temple be brought to the party. Why? It kind of seems like an out-of-the-blue idea.

As we go along in the narrative, it is brought out that Belshazzar knew all about his grandfather's experience with the Most High God and how he had been humbled.

It seems that he really wanted to put on a braggart front before all his people. He wanted to portray that Babylon the Great was unconquerable and that he was very proudful confident. Furthermore, he wanted to make a point that his gods had overcome this so called Most High God of the Jews as seen in the fact that they had captured all the temple treasures.

In addition, Daniel had clearly prophesied that Babylon would fall. It was not to be the eternal kingdom – that kingdom belonged to God alone. Belshazzar, in effect, scoffed at this prophecy; he belittled the God of the Jews by desecrating the holy things from the temple.

The king was so confident of Babylon's defenses that he decided to challenge this God. His defiling of the vessels was his way of shaking his fist at God and saying, "You have said that Babylon will fall to the Medo-Persians who are now encamped outside our gates. I am declaring to you that Babylon will not fall. Its defenses are impregnable. No one will be able to take it. My actions will show you what I think of your prophecy. – **Renald Showers**

Note it says there that Nebuchadnezzar was his father (v. 2, 11, 13, 18, 22). However, in this language "father" could also mean grandfather which is most likely the case here.

The Aramaic word translated "father" could refer to grandfather, ancestor, or even predecessor to the king...

- **The Moody Bible Commentary**

3 Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. 4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone.

This was not an "innocent" mistake. Drinking from the sacred vessels of the temple is combined with praising the idolatrous gods of gold and silver, and so on. This was clearly a slam on the God of the Jews and an exaltation of idolatrous gods. In effect, this was a taunting of YHWH.

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Belshazzar meant that gesture to be the proof, indeed, that the gods of Babylon were greater than the God of the Jews. – **John Phillips**

What a change a few decades make. Earlier, Nebuchadnezzar had decreed that no one in the entire kingdom should say anything offensive about the God of the Jews on pain of death (Dan. 3:29). Now his grandson was involved in flagrant blasphemy with no fear of God whatsoever.

You talk about living dangerously. It is always folly of the highest degree to mess with the one true God in a frontal way. Belshazzar found that out the HARD way!

5 In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

Not the full arm but just the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote out something.

That has a way of getting your attention!

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6 Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.

Suddenly, the PARTY was over! The king was having a mental crisis. His countenance changed – I think into a terrified, ashen gray. The color drained from his face! And he was painfully disturbed!

When the joints of your hips are loosed that is a really bad thing. Literally it says, “the knots of his joints were loosed” in the sense of losing control. The probably means he lost basic control of his bodily functions.

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“His loins were loosed”. Don’t let the politeness of the translation cause you to miss the point. Belshazzar needed a change of britches.” – **Chuck Missler**

Talk about God humiliating you in front of a thousand people! That went south in a hurry!

And what is that knocking I hear? Is someone at the door? No! It's the king's knees knocking against each other. Few people have ever been more terrified out of their mind than the king at this point. So much for being Mr. BIG GUY with all his cocky arrogant idolatrous blasphemy! In an instant, God can put you down so low that we can't even imagine!

7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

The king cried for answers and desperately looked to the wise men of Babylon for help in solving this riddle. He promised everything he had to offer, all of which had to do with royalty and being treated like a king.

Purple was the color of wealth commonly worn by royalty (cf. Est. 8:15). Wearing a chain of gold was indicative of the wealth of royalty, and being the third ruler in the kingdom gave this person the third greatest ruling position in the kingdom.

His father Nabonidus was the top ruler, Belshazzar was second in command as co-ruler, but this person would now be third in command – an exceedingly high position in the kingdom.

8 Now all the king's wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation.

This is now the third time in the book that these “wise men” (so-called) have been shown to be worthless when it comes to supernatural insight! They were total phonies. Only God specializes in supernatural insight! And so here we go again (cf. Dan. 2:10-13; 4:4-7).

9 Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled; his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.

Their totally helplessness caused Belshazzar to be even more troubled. He must have turned the color of Clorox as he was horror-stricken at this point. And his lords (nobles) were astonished in shock and awe!

Lots of people come off like braggarts full of themselves in their defiance of the God of Israel – the God of heaven – that is, until He intervenes, even just a little bit. Just a little hand, just a few words, - why all the trepidation?

Because they suddenly realized they were dealing with the supernatural – a power beyond their control. And it terrified them!

10 The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change.

The queen here was NOT the wife of Belshazzar. Verse two has already said that his wives were already there. Most believe this was either his mother or his grandmother who still maintained an honored position in the kingdom. This would mean that she was either Nebuchadnezzar’s wife or his daughter. Either way she knew about Daniel and she knew he specialized in this sort of thing because of past history (cf. Dan. 1:17).

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She was the king’s mother, or perhaps even his grandmother. Her familiarity with both **Nebuchadnezzar** and **Daniel** seems to suggest that she was the king’s grandmother.

– ***The Bible Knowledge Commentary***

11 There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.

12 Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.”

She reviewed a little history and gave Daniel a glowing recommendation. She recognized the source of Daniel’s insight to be “the Spirit of the Holy God.” She had total confidence that Daniel could solve this mystery.

As we have noted, Daniel was never wrong in these situations because God always gave him supernatural insight! The queen says to call for Daniel, and he will give the interpretation.

13 Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, “Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah?”

Daniel is an older man at this point. He was taken into captivity in 605 BC, and now it was 539 BC – a period of 66 years. It is therefore a safe assumption that Daniel, at this point, was around the age of 80 or older.

It is also assumed that with the death of Nebuchadnezzar, he no longer held the leadership position over Babylon that he held while Nebuchadnezzar was alive. Belshazzar had to be told about his previous position over the wise men that he had at that time (cf. 11). Again, at this point, it has been about 23 years since Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC. So, for the up-and-coming generation, Daniel had largely been forgotten by this time.

14 I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.

15 Now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing.

16 And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

The king makes the very same offer that was put before the wise men (the occultists). This is what motivates the world: power, position, and possessions.

17 Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

Daniel cared nothing about these rewards. What motivates the world had no pull on him. Yet, he agrees to read the writing and make known the interpretation. After all this was his special calling.

Slide # 8

Daniel 1:17 (NKJV)

17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and **Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.**

For Daniel, this was all about being a testimony to the One true Sovereign God. It would clearly draw a stark contrast between the inability of the cultist and the power of Daniel's God, of which Daniel was already famous for a few years earlier.

At this point, Daniel took the liberty to give the king a little sermon – a little sermon of rebuke at that. Notice that in none of his remarks did he say, “O king live forever!” because in fact this message was that he was on the way out, and in fact, would die that very night.

Daniel began by recounting God's amazing dealings with his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar.

18 O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor.

19 And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down.

Twice the emphasis is on the fact that God GAVE Nebuchadnezzar the position that he had. Again, the emphasis is on God's sovereignty!

As seen in chapter 2 Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold and as such, he had the purest monarchy in the history of the world. His rule was absolute.

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Daniel 5:19...

- Whomever he wished, he executed;
- whomever he wished, he kept alive;
- whomever he wished, he set up;
- and whomever he wished, he put down.

He was LARGE and in CHARGE! The problem was it went to his head. The great issue of PRIDE got in there and he thought he was so in charge that he failed to recognize God's sovereign authority over him.

20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him.

21 Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.

Suddenly in his great pride he was removed from the throne, and in his insanity made to feed with the wild donkeys. This went on until he recognized the sovereign LORDSHIP of the Most High God and that He is in charge of human affairs. He rules in the kingdom of men.

As noted at the end of chapter 4 Nebuchadnezzar took this to heart and witnessed to the entire kingdom about the greatness of God and how he had been humbled.

Undoubtedly, Belshazzar had heard this story many times. He certainly was familiar with it, as Daniel goes on to point out.

According to ancient Babylonian texts, Belshazzar had served in the government of King Neriglissar (who ruled Babylon from 560-556 BC) in 560 BC indicating that he had been old enough to be aware of the events at the end of Nebuchadnezzar's life.

– *The Moody Bible Commentary*

We believe that after Nebuchadnezzar was humbled, he did not live very long. If Belshazzar was of age to have a position in the administration of Neriglissar in 560, two years after Nebuchadnezzar died in 562, he certainly would have been old enough to be aware of the humbling events in Nebuchadnezzar's life shortly before that time.

22 “But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this.

Here is the real condemning reality. Belshazzar knew all this! He knew what had happened to his grandfather. He knew his testimony as expounded on at length in chapter 4. And yet he didn't learn a thing from it. And yet he didn't take it to heart.

There is an amazing lesson here.

People are accountable for the truth that God has clearly laid out previously. People don't constantly need NEW revelation, but are accountable for the revelation already made known.

God seems to have given a lot more GRACE to Nebuchadnezzar. After Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar what was coming his way he pleaded with Nebuchadnezzar to repent saying, "***Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.***" (Dan. 4:27). And then there was a 12-month grace period before judgment fell and he was driven out to the pasture in a condition of insanity.

But as we will see here, there was no such extended GRACE period for Belshazzar. Why? Well, perhaps because, as Daniel said, "***you knew all this***". With knowledge comes responsibility. God is obligated to give no further revelation, no further grace period.

Of course, He is never under any obligation, but it does seem He is quite patient with ignorance, whereas He is not with flagrant sin against KNOWN TRUTH. In actual reality, God had given lots of space to Belshazzar – ever since he had known the truth many years before. But instead of receiving the truth he had grown hard.

God holds people accountable for revealed truth that they KNOW!

Slide # 10

Hebrews 10:26–27 (NKJV)

26 For **if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth**, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

There is a special level of accountability AFTER one has received the knowledge of the truth!

Slide # 11

2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 (NKJV)

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, **because they did not receive the love of the truth**, that they might be saved.

I think what is in view here are people in the second half of the Tribulation Period who take the mark of the beast. They rejected God's clear testimony of His two special witnesses (Rev. 13).

They rejected the powerful witness of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Rev. 7). They rejected the powerful testimony of God destroying Gog on the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 38-39). They did not receive the love of the truth and therefore they will believe the great LIE of Antichrist that he is GOD and they will therefore take the mark of the beast and be lost forever.

But the point is God holds people accountable for the truth revealed to them (cf. Rom. 1). And once God's truth is made clear to them, once His truth is clearly established people are especially accountable for that established truth.

Slide # 12

1 Timothy 1:12–13 (NKJV)

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,

13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy **because I did it ignorantly** in unbelief.

God is very patient with ignorance in a way that He is not with those who clearly know the truth and defy God in face of it.

God intended what happened to Nebuchadnezzar to be a lasting testimony for the whole world.

Slide # 13

Daniel 4:17 (NKJV)

17 'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, **In order that the living may know** That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'

What happened to Nebuchadnezzar was not only intended to be a lesson for him, but for all the living from that point forward! Belshazzar had very close, first-hand knowledge concerning the humbling of his grandfather, but totally blew it off and paid it no mind! That was a FATAL mistake!

In the OT, there was mercy and sacrifice for sins of ignorance, but **flagrant sins** – sins committed with a high hand were different. These types of sins demanded the death penalty.

It would seem that Belshazzar's sin was greater than Nebuchadnezzar's. Nebuchadnezzar had lifted himself up with no thought for God, but Belshazzar took it even further, directly lifting himself up against God and taking God on in a flagrant defiance in the desecration of the holy vessels of the temple.

It is one thing to sin out of ignorance – God is more patient with that – but to sin FLAGRANTLY in the face of knowledge. To knowingly defy God in that manner is most serious! That level of PRIDE is the most offensive to God and is often dealt with swiftly and severely.

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There is a line by us unseen,
That crosses ev'ry path,
The hidden boundary between,
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and his wrath.

-Joseph A. Alexander

23 And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.

This was a LORDSHIP issue! In arrogant pride, he had dared to lift himself up against the Lord of heaven. He had dared to challenge the sovereign authority of God! Watch out! He had dared to intrude in on, and desecrate the holy possessions of God's holy temple. This was a full frontal offense on God! This was BOLD, insanely ARROGANT!

Daniel plainly spelled out the LORDSHIP of God over him telling, him, ***"God who holds your breath in His hand."***

Ironically, the God who held Belshazzar's breath in His hand is the God who had sent a HAND to write him a message.

We are dependent upon God for every breath we take. He is in charge of our breathing. With every breath we should say “thank you” and then we would never get anything else done – which would not be all bad!

Belshazzar in his pampered position, had no fear of God – until SUDDENLY a hand of judgment appeared and began writing on the wall. He had completely lost sight of God’s absolute sovereign control over him as witnessed so strongly by his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar.

Furthermore, Daniel said of God, who “**owns all your ways**”. This is another LORDSHIP statement! The issue was God’s LORDSHIP! Note God, not some of your ways – but “all your ways”. God is sovereign over every detail of life.

James says it is evil to say anything other than, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” In other words, God is totally in charge of every detail of our lives, and to claim otherwise is SINFUL!

And then Daniel said that this God, “you have not glorified.” He had refused to acknowledge the LORDSHIP of God! There was his great sin! He gloried in idolatry, although he knew the truth of the Most High God as revealed to Nebuchadnezzar. The very purpose of every person is to glorify God! That is our essential purpose in life! It’s all about Him – but Belshazzar made it all about himself!

24 Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written.

25 “And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN

Do you know what this means? Loosely translated, it means, “THE PARTY IS OVER!” It means “Belshazzar, you are done!” It means, “Babylon as they had known it was over!”

Here we have the shortest prophecy in the Bible, and yet one of the most powerful messages ever communicated. It is the shortest and one that was also fulfilled very quickly, within a matter of hours.

The word “UPHARSIN” is the plural form of the word PERES as seen in the interpretation. The “U” at the beginning of UPHARSIN simply means “and”. It finished the thought. Mene, Mene, and Pharsin.

The first word “MENE” was repeated for emphasis!

Mene literally means “Numbered”. Tekel means “Weighed”. And Upharsin means “divided”.

Slide # 15

The handwriting on the wall...

NUMBERED! NUMBERED! WEIGHED! DIVIDED!

26 This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;

Mene means “numbered”, to count out”, “to fix the limit”, “measured”. The sense is “Your time is up! Your kingdom is over!” “Your days are numbered, and in fact, this is your last one.”

It is repeated for emphasis! God determines our time allotment, and his was up!

Slide # 16

Job 14:5 (NKJV)

5 Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.

God was saying to Belshazzar, “You are finished! This is THE END!” “Your days are numbered and they are finished.”

27 TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;

Weighed is the idea of evaluated. He has been assessed and found deficient. He has not passed the test. He is unacceptable. On God’s scales, he carried NO weight with God. He is rejected!

Slide # 17

1 Samuel 2:3 (NKJV)

3 “Talk no more so very proudly; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the LORD is the God of knowledge; And by Him actions are weighed.

28 PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”

Peres is the singular of Upharsin. It means “divided”. The message was, “Your kingdom is finished (v. 26) and divided between the Medes and the Persians (v. 28).”

There seems to be a play on the word Peres because it could also be understood as “Persia,” which was the dominant takeover power in view.

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The word PERES that appeared on the wall was identical to the word PARAS (the vowels did not appear), thus providing the double meaning of “Persians” and “divided.” – **Dr. John C. Whitcomb**

Peres carried a double meaning: “divided” and “Persia.” Babylon would be divided between the Medes and the Persians whose armies were at the gates of the city that very night. – **Warren Wiersbe**

Footnote:

This verse proves conclusively that the author of this book believed the successor of the Babylonian kingdom to be a dual kingdom, including two national elements. -**Wycliffe Bible Commentary**

Then an amazing thing happened. With an announcement like this we might expect an outburst of wrath against Daniel and for the king to call for his execution, but instead, the king carries through on his promise.

Perhaps he was thinking this would help his cause. Who knows? Pagans are always trying to work a deal of some kind. They play God-games to the very end. However, they lose every time.

29 Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

It really didn't matter, as Daniel had emphasized in verse 17, for later that night, the kingdom of Babylon would fall to the Medes and the Persians.

30 That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain.

According to the ancient records as Belshazzar was feasting and reveling and lifting himself up against the Lord of heaven - at that very time the Persians were channeling the river into a nearby lake which made the river level go down and they waded under the wall and into the city totally surprising those in charge of protecting the city and took over without so much as a struggle (cf. Isa. 47:9).

“Even while Daniel was interpreting the writing on the wall, the prophecy was being fulfilled as the Medes and the Persians poured into the city.” – **John Walvoord**

That very night, Belshazzar was killed!

That night the king's blood mingled with the wine of the banquet hall. Judgment came upon him unexpectedly, suddenly: and probably ninety-nine out of every hundred judgments come in this way. Death comes upon us unexpectedly; it comes upon us suddenly.

– **D.L. Moody**

Be warned! Be wise! Be ready!

31 And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

Scripture presents the passing away of the mighty Babylonian Empire with all of two verses [Daniel 5:30-31]. – **Dr. David Jeremiah**

Who was Darius the Mede? There are no ancient records that record him in these terms, and this has caused no end of discussion.

Dr. John Whitcomb (my mentor) did a deep dive on this subject and wrote a technical book about it titled “Darius the Mede”. The thesis of the book is that Darius the Mede was actually a man named Gubaru who is found in the ancient cuneiform [kyoo·**nee**·uh·form] tablets.

From 535 to 525 B.C. the name Gubaru appears frequently in the cuneiform texts as the “governor” of Babylon... – **John Whitcomb**

He is not to be confused with Darius I who later (521-486 BC) became king of Persia.

Darius was actually an honorary title meaning “*holder of the scepter*.” King Cyrus divided his HUGE empire into 20 provinces and appointed a governor to rule each province. Darius the Mede (Gubaru) was one of those governors, with his jurisdiction being the region of Babylon.

The fact that Darius the Mede is styled “king” is not an inaccuracy, even though he was a subordinate of Cyrus. Belshazzar was called “king” even though he was second ruler under Nabonidus (5:29).

– **Merrill Unger**

Nebuchadnezzar's story had a HAPPY ending. His pride was humbled, and he was converted, praising the Most High God after a lengthy process that God took him through.

Belshazzar's story had an abrupt and UNHAPPY ending.

Why the difference?

I believe it was because Belshazzar **already had God's revelation on this matter**, and he refused to listen to the revelation of God. He refused to bow before the LORDSHIP of God! Therefore, his judgment was swift and fatal.

Ignorance is serious, but willful rebellion against the clearly known truth of God is even more serious!

In the end, both were humbled.

Nebuchadnezzar was humbled to the point of conversion.

Belshazzar was humbled in irreversible judgment!

God is a very gracious God, but there is a LINE of no return - especially when a person has been duly warned!

There used to be a SIGN on the Niagara River above the Niagara Falls which read "***POINT OF NO RETURN***".

Those who went beyond that point would be caught up in the current with no hope of return. Those on board such a boat would feel the speeding of the current rushing them to the thundering falls, helpless and hopeless to avoid the ensuing destruction.

Nebuchadnezzar said, "***Those who walk in pride He is able to put down.***" (Dan. 4:37)

Some are humbled in conversion and some are humbled in destruction. Which defines you? Don't wait until the writing is on the wall to humble yourself. Then it might be too late!

The Bible says, "***Behold, now is the accepted time***" (2 Cor. 6:2). It says, "***Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts***" (Heb. 3:7-8). Only Jesus can save you! But you must humble yourself and come to Him, believing in Him as your personal Lord and Savior! Come to Jesus!

Be warned! Be wise! Be ready! Live Ready!