

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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(7)

NUMBERED, WEIGHED, DIVIDED
Daniel 5:26

*“And this is the writing that was written, MENE,
MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the
interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath
numbered thy Kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL;
Thou art weighed in the balances, and art
found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided,
and given to the Medes and Persians.”*

Daniel 5:25-28

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NUMBERED, WEIGHED, DIVIDED

Daniel 5:26

In chapter 5 Daniel has moved from the story of Nebuchadnezzar's fall into insanity and subsequent restoration. We rejoiced to read of Nebuchadnezzar's faith in the Lord God Jehovah. Daniel then begins to relate the sordid tale of Belshazzar's feast. As the party begins Belshazzar is the king in Babylon. He is weak and foolish. Nabonidus, his father, "was defeated and shut up in Borsippa. The great walls of Babylon were surrounded by the Battalions of the armies of Cyrus." (Criswell.Vol.3.P.107.) Nebuchadnezzar had died many years before. Yet this foolish man was forgetting his fears by throwing a drunken party with the nobles of his realm. "*Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.*" (Vs. 5:1) To adds sacrilege to his list of crimes. "*Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had*

taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them." (Vs.2-3) There is in this part of the story a powerful message about the foolishness of drinking alcohol. It so affected Belshazzar's judgment that he ignored his enemy at the gate and committed great blasphemy against the God of Heaven. "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*" (Prov. 20:1) The believer today should carefully avoid any use of intoxicating beverages.

In the midst of this drunken debouched feast God intervened. God allows a person time to repent of his sin. We should not, however, forget that God does not overlook our sin. If judgment does not come immediately that does not mean that it will not come if we fail to repent. If we persist in our sinful actions judgment will come.

“In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.” (Vs. 5-6) Belshazzar sees the fingers of a hand begin to write on the plaster of the wall and it fills him with terror. He saw the words but not understand what they meant. He called all his wise men to look at the words but they were equally at a loss to explain their meaning. The queen, Belshazzar's mother, who was probably the wife of Nabonidus, heard about the commotion and came to Belshazzar and recommends that he bring out Daniel to explain the words. (Vs. 11-12) She recognized that in the prophet of God there was *“light, understanding and wisdom.”* The people who listen to the man who faithfully proclaims the truth of God's word will find great help.

Daniel came into the banquet hall that had until recently been the scene of riotous depravity and commands respect as he interprets the words for Belshazzar. He rejects the offer of reward the king had offered. (Vs.

17) At this point in his life Daniel is an older man who was unimpressed with the riches of Babylon. He also understood that this one who was offering the reward would soon be dead and in no position to reward anyone. Daniel began by reminded Belshazzar of Nebuchadnezzar. God placed him on the throne and blessed him for His own purposes. Daniel recounts how Nebuchadnezzar had lost his ability to rule. *“But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: 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 ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.”* (Vs. 20-21) He ran in the hills and woods like an animal *“till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.”* (Vs. 21b) The Prophet then pointed to the weak and wicked king and said, “*And thou his*

son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; (VS.21)
Belshazzar knew all the stories of the great king but he never humbled himself before the Lord. In fact, he had chosen to blaspheme the God of Heaven. He did this wickedness before “*the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all the ways, hast thou not glorified.*” (Vs. 23)

Daniel explained the words. “*Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.*” (Vs. 24-28) As Daniel was giving the king this message Darius, the Median, was diverting the river Euphrates away from the city where the waters went under the wall of the city. This left the river bed dry and the army walked into the city and conquered it without engaging in one battle or skirmish. “*In that night was*

Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.” (Vs. 30)

Belshazzar is an example of a son who witnessed the working of God in the life of his father but failed to apply those lessons to himself. God will be glorified in our lives. See how God has worked in our lived and glorify Him and obey His Word and you will avoid the judgment of God on your life.

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