



DANIEL 5:1-6:1

WRITING ON THE WALL

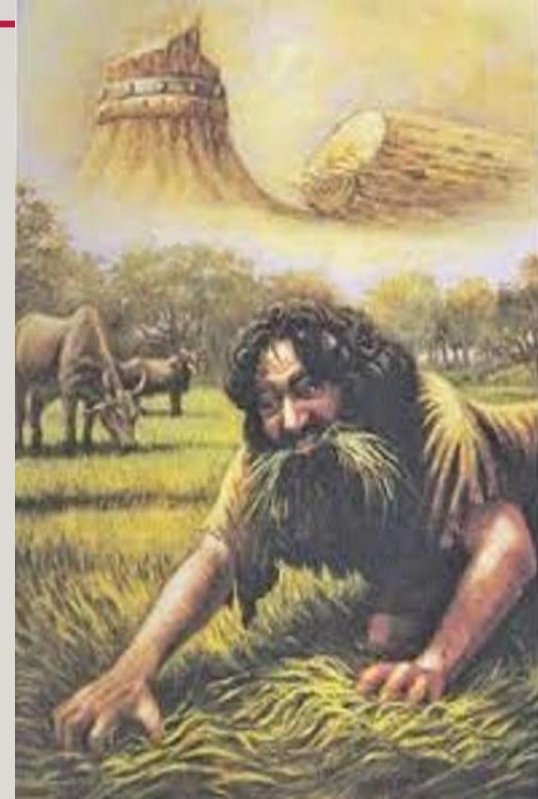
2 LOOKING BACK ...

- In chapter 4 Nebuchadnezzar had another dream that only Daniel could interpret.
- His dream was of a great tree that sheltered and fed *all living things*. In the dream the tree was cut down and only a stump was left.
- Daniel reveals that the king is the tree. *Because of his pride*, the king was to be cut down and for 7 years would live as a animal.



3 THERE WAS STILL TIME TO REPENT, BUT THE KING IGNORED DANIEL'S WARNINGS

- The dream contained a warning: ***if the king does not humble himself before God, he will be lowered.. to an existence not of a king, but of a filthy animal. He would also lose his mind.***
- ***And so it came to be that Nebuchadnezzar lived like an animal for seven years. Ultimately he changed his ways (for a time), he declared the greatness of a god who can humble a king. His kingdom was restored to him.***



4 LOOKING FURTHER BACK..



- **In chapter 3** after the incident of the fiery furnace, the same king Nebuchadnezzar had declared the god of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to be a great and powerful god who rescues. He issued a declaration and protection for the Jews and their God.
- **3:96** I decree for nations and peoples of every language that whoever blasphemes the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut to pieces and his house made into a refuse heap. For there is no other God who can rescue like this.”



5 IN THIS CHAPTER...WHO IS THE KING?

Nebuchadnezzar. died after a 43 year reign according to the ancient historian Berosus.

His son, **Evil-Merodach** mentioned in 2 Kings 25: 27-30 Jer 52:31-34, ruled for only two years when he was assassinated by his brother-in-law **Neriglassar**.

Neriglassar mentioned in Jeremiah 39: 3, 13, ruled for **four** years until he died a natural death.

His son, **Laborosoarchod**, only a child and of diminished mental capacity, ruled for only nine months when he was beaten to death by a gang of conspirators. The conspirators appointed **Nabonidus**, to be king. He ruled until Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon.

Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon, The evidence showed that during the last part of his reign Nabonidus lived in Arabia. While there, he left the duties of his Kingdom of Babylon to his oldest son **Belshazzar**.

6 CHAPTER 5: (KING) BELSHAZZAR GAVE A GREAT BANQUET

- This banquet was for **1000** nobles, lords, wives and concubines!
- There was the drinking of wine!
- While under the influence of the wine, he ordered the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, to be brought in so that the party guests might drink from them. (5:3)
- When these gold and silver vessels were brought in the king and his guests drank from them and praised their own false gods!

7 DANIEL 5:1-4

- The “king” was actually only a prince, but had been given the duties of the king in his absence. Several kings had come and gone since Nebuchadnezzar’s day.
- The name Belshazzar means “O Bel, protect the king.” “Bel” means “lord” or “master” and is a *title* used to address the Babylonian god, Marduk.



FIG. 1, MARDUK, THE CHIEF DEITY OF BABYLON

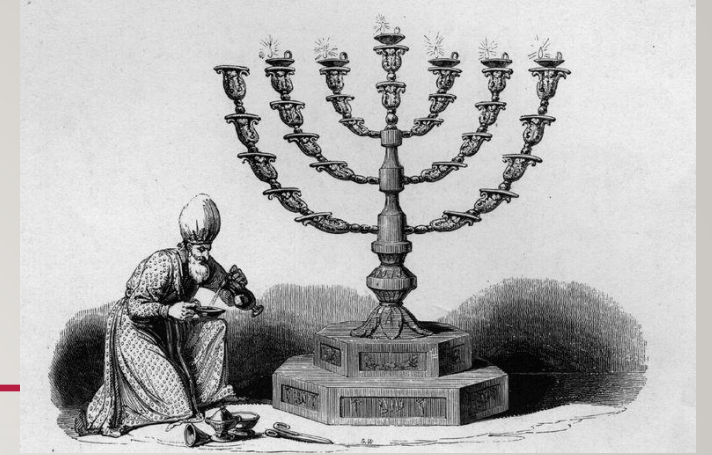
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WHAT ITEMS DID THE BABYLONIANS TAKE FROM THE TEMPLE?



- "And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his friends, all these he (Nebuchadnezzar) brought to Babylon. And they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its palaces with fire, (II Chronicles 36:18,19)
- At the end of the 70-year captivity in Babylon the returning Jews were allowed to carry back at least some of these gold and silver sacred objects to Jerusalem, (Ezra 1:5-10). The list of returned items included 1000 basins of gold, 1000 basins of silver, 29 censers, 30 bowls of gold, 2410 bowls of silver, and other vessels of gold and silver totaling 5,469 in number.

9 WRITING ON THE WALL!



- Suddenly, opposite the **lampstand**, the fingers of a human hand appeared, writing on the plaster of the wall in the king's palace. When the king saw the hand that wrote, ⁶ his face became pale; his thoughts terrified him, his hip joints shook, and his knees knocked. (5:5-6)
- The “lampstand” may have been from the Temple as well.
- Belshazzar calls the “usual suspects” the magicians, sorcerers and Chaldeans and astrologers to interpret the message on the wall. Guess what?! They could not do it.



10 THE QUEEN KNOWS JUST WHAT TO DO!

- 5:10-12 When the queen heard of the discussion between the king and his nobles, **she entered the banquet hall** and said, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts terrify you, or your face become so pale! ¹¹ There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; during the lifetime of your father he showed brilliant insight and god-like wisdom. King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and diviners. ¹² Because this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, has shown an extraordinary spirit, knowledge, and insight in interpreting dreams, explaining riddles and solving problems, let him now be summoned to tell you what this means.”

II THE WISE QUEEN-

- The Aramaic word used for “queen” actually means “queen mother.” The queen mother still had a great deal of authority.
- Notice that she was not a part of the party..she entered the room.
- The “queen” referred to here is possibly Belshazzar’s mother, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. The other ‘wise men’ were called first and like before, they were stumped by the message from the Lord. Daniel was older and less prominent in this new regime. The new king had to be reminded of his skills and insight. He was known by his Babylonian name, Belteshazzar, but the queen used his Jewish name.

12 DANIEL IS SUMMONED

- “Are you the Daniel, one of the Jewish exiles, whom my father, the king, brought from Judah? 5:13.
- I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems; now, if you are able to read the writing and tell me what it means, you shall be clothed in purple, wear a chain of gold around your neck, and be third in governing the kingdom.”
- ¹⁷ Daniel answered the king: “You may keep your gifts, or give your presents to someone else; but the writing I will read for the king, and tell what it means. 5:16-17
- Note the virtue of humility in Daniel vs the pride of the kings in this book.

13 INTRO TO THE MESSAGE-

- Daniel tells the king that God had given Nebuchadnezzar “kingship, greatness, splendor, and majesty.” He goes on to describe the power he had over people including the power of life or death for his subjects or those he conquered. Daniel goes on to explain that when he became “insolent” or proud that he was humbled, an outcast who lived as a beast because of the Most High God.
- “You, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this; ²³ you have rebelled against the Lord of heaven.” 5:22-23

14 DANIEL EXPLAINS

- Daniel was immediately harsh in his tone toward Belshazzar. The young king showed no respect for the things of God. Daniel chastised him by mentioning the great king who ruled before him. That king, though great in power, honored the God of the Jewish people. Nebuchadnezzar was humbled and gave glory to God as the Only True Sovereign. This new king partied and mocked God. **The writing was on the wall for him.**



15 MENE, TEKEL AND PERES

“This is the writing that was inscribed: **MENE, TEKEL, and PERES.** These words mean: ²⁶ **MENE**, God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it; ²⁷ **TEKEL**, you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting; ²⁸ **PERES**, your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

These are words that indicate units of weight used in weighing precious metals or coins of various values. God had counted, weighed and then divided the kingdom.

The king has been weighed and measured by God’s standards.

The King did not measure up.

16 DEATH OF THE KING AT THE HANDS OF A MEDE..

- There was an urban legend in the ancient world, that when Babylon was captured in a surprise attack by the Medes and Persians, the Babylonian king and his nobles were carousing at an all-night banquet.
- This story reflects the same legend.
- That very night Belshazzar, the Chaldean king, was slain: And Darius **the Mede** succeeded to the kingdom at the age of sixty-two. (5:30-6:1)

17 QUICK REVIEW

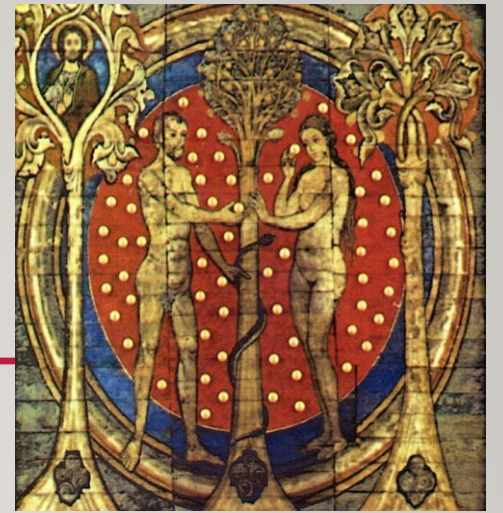


- The new King either does not know what has happened in the past or he does not believe it.
- Possibly youthful arrogance or pride is at work.
- Belshazzar is in charge while his father, the real king is out of town.
- He deliberately disrespects sacred objects and God throwing a wild party.
- God sends a message, by writing on the wall, a hand alone!
- Spooky!

18 REVIEW

- The King is judged and his life is taken that same night.
- The kingdom is taken by the Medes and the new king is indeed a Mede.
- The prophecy has come true...

19 A RECURRING THEME IN THESE FIRST CHAPTERS OF DANIEL



Pride- the source of sin and the fall of kings.

It was the sin of pride which first led Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. In Genesis we read, "Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will surely **not** die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and ***you will be like God***, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

20 SOME NOTES ON PRIDE

- One of the seven deadly sins- the sin of Nebuchadnezzar
- First noted in Proverbs 6:16-19
- “There are six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to him; Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood; A heart that plots wicked schemes, feet that run swiftly to evil, The false witness who utters lies, and he who sows discord among brothers.”

(Haughty eyes =pride)



21 AUGUSTINE ON PRIDE

- St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) wrote, "*Pride is the commencement of all sin* because it was this which overthrew the devil, from whom arose the origin of sin; and afterwards, when his malice and envy pursued man, who was yet standing in his uprightness, it subverted him in the same way in which he himself fell. For the serpent, in fact, only sought for the **door of pride whereby to enter** when he said, 'Ye shall be as gods.'"

22 AKA:THE SEVEN CAPITAL VICES-

- **Pride**

Greek monastic theologian Evagrius of Pontus first drew up a list of eight offenses.

- Envy

- Gluttony

In the late 6th century, Pope Gregory the Great reduced the list to seven items.

- Lust

They are habits of behavior that change our character.

- Anger

- Greed

- Sloth

23 C.S. LEWIS ON PRIDE

- “As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down you cannot see something that is above you.”

— **C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity***



24 LET US PRAY ST. TERESA OF AVILA



St. Teresa of Avila

- O Saint Teresa, thou who on earth didst burn with a love so intense toward God and now glows with a brighter and purer flame in paradise: obtain for me also, I beseech thee, a spark of that same holy fire which shall cause me to forget the world, all things created, and even myself; for thou did avidly desire to see Him loved by all men. Grant that my every thought and desire and affection may be continually directed to doing the will of God, the supreme Good, whether I am in joy or in pain, for He is worthy to be loved and obeyed forever. Obtain for me this grace, you who are so powerfully with God; may I be all on fire, like you, with the holy love of God. Amen