

## TUESDAY

## Belshazzar's Feast

**[LESSON QUOTE]** After the city of Nineveh had been humbled (612 B.C.) by a coalition army that included both Medes and Babylonians (led by Nebuchadnezzar's father), the city of Babylon experienced a revival, the likes of which the city had not seen since the days of Hammurabi, their great lawgiver. Under Nebuchadnezzar, who was now free from the problem of Assyrian raids, the city of Babylon grew in wealth/ influence to the point where the neighboring nations had little choice but to grudgingly acknowledge her dominance. She was queen of the world, and nations who wished to prosper declared their loyalty to her. Meanwhile, as far as we can tell, Nebuchadnezzar died as a believer, professing that Daniel's God is, indeed, the rightful ruler of all nations (*Dan. 4:34–37*). **UNQUOTE**

- Next account Daniel provides is that of Nebuchadnezzar's successor = the vice-regent Belshazzar. **DANIEL 5:1-31**
- Belshazzar's feast = what ultimately tripped up Belshazzar?
  - Story filled w/ lessons about pride / defiance
  - God's sovereign judgment that results in down of Babylon
- Contrasts two types of responses to God—Nebuchadnezzar's heartfelt repentance / Belshazzar's defiant arrogance
- **Arrogance of Belshazzar** = Daniel 5:1-4 opens w/ King Belshazzar hosting lavish feast = for thousand of his nobles
- W/ arrogance/ irreverence = orders sacred vessels confiscated from God's temple /Jerusalem = used for drinking wine/revelry
  - Praised their idols of gold/silver/bronze/iron wood/ stone
- Act of desecration displays Belshazzar's contempt
  - For the God of Israel

- **Dan 5:5-9** midst of feast/ supernatural event halts celebration
  - Fingers of man's hand appears
  - Writes mysterious words on wall
- Belshazzar's arrogance turns to terror
  - Face pales / knees knock / his confidence crumbles
  - None of king's wise men can interpret writing
    - adding to his distress
- **Daniel 5:10-28** Queen reminds Belshazzar of Daniel
  - known for his wisdom / ability to interpret mysteries.
- Summoned before king = Daniel refuses promised rewards
  - but delivers = bold message
- Reminds Belshazzar of Nebuchadnezzar's journey from pride to humility = rebukes king for failing to learn from his predecessor's experiences

**[LESSON QUOTE]** After recounting to the king the downfall and then restoration of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel says to him, **[Daniel 5:22]** "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this." That is, though he had the opportunity to know truth; though he might have even witnessed firsthand what happened to Nebuchadnezzar—he chose to ignore these events and, instead, embarked on the same course that brought his predecessor so much trouble. **UNQUOTE**

- Daniel interprets handwriting on the wall::
  - **Mene:** God has numbered [the days of your reign] and brought your kingdom to an end
  - **Tekel:** You have been weighed in the balances [scales] and found wanting
  - **Upharsin/ Peres:** Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians I

- Daniel’s interpretation emphasized that Belshazzar’s actions have consequences
  - His deliberate defiance of God / misuse of holy items
    - sealed his fate
- That very night = Medes/Persians breached city
- Belshazzar was killed = Babylon fell , fulfilling Daniel’s interpretation/ judgment (Daniel 5:30-31).
- Highlights sovereignty of God over nations = and
  - the inevitability of His justice.
- Contrasting responses of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar provide profound spiritual lessons:
  - **Nebuchadnezzar’s Heartfelt Response:** Though initially proud / self-centered = Nebuchadnezzar was humbled by God. Thru personal trials =came to acknowledge God’s sovereignty = responded w/ heartfelt repentance/worship = His transformation demonstrates power of humility/ contrite heart
  - **Belshazzar’s Head Knowledge:** Contrast = Belshazzar had knowledge of God’s dealings w/Nebuchadnezzar but chose to ignore them. His heart hardened by pride/ defiance. Despite witnessing God’s power = refused to repent = relying on his own understanding /strength.  
His head knowledge of God’s sovereignty was not enough to save him without a corresponding heart response.
- Crucial difference between intellectual acknowledgment of God and heartfelt submission to Him
- **Head** knowledge alone leads to complacency /pride
  - lacks transformative power of genuine faith.
- **Heart** knowledge involves = humility/ repentance /
  - and willingness to follow God’s will

- In earth's final days = ppl given opportunity to know truth
  - Just as Belshazzar knew / but ignored
  - His story serves as warning to all who hear God's message
    - but resist it
- To know **ABOUT** God = not same as knowing Him personally.
- What determines their ultimate end
  - matter of heart knowledge
  - choice to accept God's love = enter into covenant w/Him
  - walking in humility/ submission to His will
  - experiencing transformative grace of God