

Daniel Chapter 5

[This chapter contains a type of endtime events. The filling of the vessels of God with alcohol represents the end time attempt to force God's people into accepting the wine of Babylon, her false doctrine]

1 Belshazzar [Belshazzar = “Bel [a pagan god] protect the king”] the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand [led them by his example].

2 Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father [grandfather. All previous male relative were called 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.

3 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.

4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold [1], and of silver [2], of brass [3], of iron [4], of wood [5], and of stone [6]. Six gods are listed as in v 23. Six was a special number in Babylon cf. Dan 3:1].

5 In the same hour [the first use of the word “hour” in Scripture is in the book of Daniel (Dan 3:6, 15; 4:19, 33; 5:5). Daniel's book is the only O.T. book that contains the word “hour.”] came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against [in view of] the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall [the mention of plaister may be significant. See on v 25] of the king's palace [When the ruins of Babylon were excavated the palace was found to be lined with plaister] : and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

6 Then the king's countenance [appearance] was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed [weak in the hips], and his knees smote one against another.

7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. [And] the king spake, and said to the wise [men] of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and [have] a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom [As Belshazzar was co-ruler with his father Nabonidus he was only able to offer a third part in the kingdom].

8 Then came in all the king's wise [men]: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

9 Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled [It is understandable that he would wish to know the meaning of the supernatural message], and his countenance was

changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

10 [Now] the queen [possibly queen mother], by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: [and] the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:

11 There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom [is] the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father [grandfather - Nebuchadnezzar] light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father [grandfather], the king, [I say], thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, [and] soothsayers;

12 Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams [cf. Dan 2], and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

13 Then was Daniel brought in before the king. [And] the king spake and said unto Daniel, [Art] thou that Daniel, which [art] of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry [Clearly Belshazzar was not familiar with Daniel. Therefore Daniel had not been involved with this king in government]?

14 I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods [is] in thee, and [that] light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.

15 And now the wise [men], the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing:

16 And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet [A red or purple. The colour of the State ruler throughout time], and [have] a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom [cf. v7 Probation for Babylon was closed when this request was made. So will it be when the wicked fall at the feet of the saints and worship them].

17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another [Daniel did not interpret the writing for gain] ; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

18 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father [grandfather] a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour:

19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages,

trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

20 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:

21 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.

22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this [Belshazzar knew of his father's experience but it had not brought him to honour God];

23 But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath [is], and whose [are] all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

25 And this [is] the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN [In Aramaic, the inscription consisted of a series of four words. Because Aramaic, like Hebrew, was written only with consonants, the way in which the words were read depended on which vowels the reader supplied. To the wise men, the letters MNMNTQLPRSN did not make sense.

The fact that the first word is repeated to give solemn emphasis suggests that Jesus was the writer. In the New Testament Jesus frequently said, "Verily, verily."

In Scripture Jesus is recorded as writing three times:

1. The Ten Commandments (Exo 32:16; cf. Mark 2:27-28) - The standard in the judgment. Written on stone to show its permanence.

2. The Judgment on Babylon (Dan 5:6) - A declaration of Judgment. Written on plaster (v 5) to show that Babylon's sin was incurable.

If rot was seen in the plastered walls of a house the offending bricks were removed, the house was scraped, new rocks used and it was replastered.. If the rot showed up in the plaster again the house was condemned. See Lev 14:43-45. The 'rot' of self exaltation was seen in Nebuchadnezzar whom God humbled. He appears to have been saved but the 'rot' showed up again in Babylon in the form of his son [grandson] Belshazzar and God wrote his and his kingdom's condemnation on the plaster wall.

3. The sins in the sand (Joh 8:6-11; cf. Jer 17:13) - A records of sins to be considered in the judgment. Jesus wrote the sins of a woman's accusers in the dust. Written in dust to show that through Christ it may be erased].

26 This [is] the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it [Jesus is called *Palmoni* in Dan 9:13 which is from two words, *Pele* - Wonderful, see Isa 9:6 where it refers to Jesus, and *Mene* - Numbered. See Dan 5:26 where another judgment is pronounced].

27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting [Weighing moral worth in ballances was a pagan concept. As God had used an idol for an idolator in Dan 2, He here used ballances for the judgment of a king who believed in moral ballances.

AN END-TIME TYPE

God hath numbered thy kingdom. When the number of the beast is made up probation will close. On the other side the number of the faithful. will be made up - 144,000

Mene, Mene - cf. Babylon is fallen is fallen (Rev 14:8)

Weighed in the balances - The judgment (Rev 14:7)

Kingdom divided - Babylon will be divided into three just prior to Christ's return (Rev 16:19).

Given to the Medes & Persians. The leader of the Medes & Persians was Cyrus who captured the city and then set Darius in command. Cyrus typified Christ who will take the kingdom when Herereturns. As Cyrus set Darius over Babylon so Christ will set His saints over the world (Matt 5:5).

Dan 5

Vessels to be filled with wine
(doctrine)

Literal Babylon

Kingdom numbered

Kingdom overthrown by Cyrus

Darius set over Babylon

Rev 13

Vessels (souls) to be filled with wine (false

Spiritual Babylon

Kingdom numbered - 666

Kingdom overthrown by Christ

Saints set over the world].

28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians [The last word of the inscription was 'Upharsin' but Daniel here translates it, 'Peres.' 'Peres' is the root word from which Upharsin comes and it means "divided."

There is a word play here. In the original Aramaic 'Peres' is actually 'PRS,' because Aramaic was written using consonants only. In Aramaic the word Persian (paras) was also written 'PRS.' Thus Peres (literally PRS) suggested that not only would Babylon be divided but that it would be divided to the Medes & the Persians!].

29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and [put] a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

30 In that night [even as the explanation of the vision was being given the armies that would overthrow Babylon were about to enter the city] **was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain [THE OVERTHROW OF BABYLON**

Medo Persia conquered Babylon in the following way:
“[Babylon had] stored provisions enough for very many years; so they cared nothing for the siege; and Cyrus knew not what to do... whether, then someone advised him in his difficulty, or he perceived himself what to do, I know not, but this is what he did... drawing off the river by canal... he made the stream to sink till its former channel could be forded. When this happened the Persians who were posted with this intent made their way into Babylon by the channel of the Euphrates... and brought them to a miserable end.”

Herodotus, Book 1, sec 191; A.D. Godley, Loeb Classical Library, p239].

31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, [being] about threescore and two years old. [DARIUS THE MEDE - Cyrus the Great (553-530B.C.) conquered Media in 553, Lydia in 547, and Babylonia in 539B.C. Apparently Cyrus appointed Darius the Mede to rule Babylon. This would be understandable; for at the time Cyrus was consolidating the vast empire he had taken over.

Critics have stated that Darius never existed because they have not yet unearthed any record of anyone by this name. This they claim shows that Daniel was not written in the days of the Babylonian empire but some time later by someone pretending to be writing predictive prophecy.

Darius was Cyrus's uncle PK 523. Darius died within about two years of the fall of Babylon PK 556-7. See Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, VII.5.30. says “The impious king of Babylon was slain when Gobryas entered the Palace.”

Gobryas is probably another name for the Biblical Darius of Dan 5:31.

According to the well attested Nabonidus-Chronicle an important cuniform tablet describing the fall of Babylon Gobryas was also called Ugbaru. The chronicle says he appointed governors in Babylonia until he died there one month before the title “King of Babylon” was addressed to Cyrus. Darius could have been Ugbaru's throne name

“The title ‘King of Babylon’ was not used for Cyrus in the contract tablets dated to him during the first year after Babylon's conquest in October 539B.C. Only the title ‘King of Lands’ was used for him, and this referred to him in his capacity as king of the Persian empire. Late in 538B.C., however, the scribes added the title ‘King of Babylon’ to his titulary, and it continued to be in use through the rest of his reign and those of his successors down to the time of Xerxes.

There are only two possibilities here. Either there was an interregnum [period when there was no ruler] and the throne of Babylon went unoccupied for a year, or somebody else besides Cyrus occupied the throne for that period of time. In my opinion, the prime candidate for this other king of Babylon is Ugbaru, the general whose troops conquered Babylon for Cyrus. According to the Nabonidus Chronicle, he appointed governors in Babylonia (cf. Dan 6:1) and he resided in Babylon until he died there a year later, one month before the title ‘King of Babylon’ was added to Cyrus' titulary.”

William H. Shea, Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation, Daniel & Revelation Committee Series, Vol. 1, [1982] p29].