

Belshazzar's Feast and the Fall of Babylon

by John F. Walvoord

John F. Walvoord's sermon explores the historical and prophetic significance of Belshazzar's feast and the fall of Babylon as depicted in the Book of Daniel.

Scripture: Psalm 2:1, Isaiah 13:17, Isaiah 21:2, Jeremiah 51:33, Jeremiah 51:57, Daniel 5:25, 1 Thessalonians 5:1

Topics: "Divine Judgment", "God's Authority"

Description

John F. Walvoord preaches on the downfall of Belshazzar and the fall of Babylon as prophesied in the book of Daniel. The sermon highlights the divine judgment on the wicked world, illustrating how human pride and security are defenseless against God's judgment. The narrative serves as a warning that the honors and security of this world are short-lived and futile compared to God's ultimate authority and wisdom.

Transcript

Almost seventy years have passed since the events of chapter 1 of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar himself had died in 562 B.C. Daniel does not record his immediate successors, and extrabiblical literature is somewhat confused. A plausible account of Berosus, in his third book, found in a fragment preserved by Josephus summarizes the history between Nebuchadnezzar's death in 562 B.C. and the fall of Babylon 539 B.C.

According to Berosus, Nebuchadnezzar died after a reign of 43 years and was followed by his son Evil-Merodach. Because his rule was arbitrary and licentious, he was assassinated by Neriglissar after he had reigned only two years. The next four years Neriglissar occupied the throne. At his death his son Laborosoarchod, who was only a child, reigned for nine months until a conspiracy resulted in his being beaten to death. The conspirators appointed Nabonidus, one of their number, who reigned for seventeen years before being defeated by Cyrus the Persian. Nabonidus fleeing Babylon went to Borsippa but was forced to surrender to Cyrus. Nabonidus was allowed to live in Carmania until the time of his death, but he was not allowed to come to Babylonia.²⁴⁵

The account of Berosus preserved by Josephus is supported by other evidence such as the short fragment of Abydenus preserved by Eusebius.²⁴⁶

Until the discovery of the Nabonidus Cylinder, no mention of Belshazzar, whom Daniel declares to be king of Babylon, had been found in extrabiblical literature. Critics of the authenticity and historicity of Daniel accordingly were free to question whether any such person as Belshazzar existed. Since the publication of

Raymond Dougherty's scholarly research .on Nabonidus and Belshazzar, based on the Nabonidus Cylinder and other sources, there is no ground for questioning the general historicity of Belshazzar; and only the details of the scriptural account unverified by extrabiblical sources can be challenged by the critics.²⁴⁷ Montgomery states that the story is "unhistorical" but "nevertheless contains indubitable reminiscences of actual history."²⁴⁸

On the other hand, such a careful scholar as Edward J. Young states, "The identity of Belshazzar has long caused difficulty to commentators. Some have denied his historicity... The king's name, however, has now appeared upon the cuneiform documents, so that there can be no question as to his historicity. This is the first point at which this ch. exhibits its remarkable accuracy."²⁴⁹ The controversy over Belshazzar, because of the extensive investigation and great variety of findings, has become one of the most complicated problems in the entire book, but the problem itself is comparatively simple. Was Belshazzar actually king of Babylon and was he murdered on the night that Babylon was conquered?

A solution of the problem has depended largely on the premises of the scholars dealing with it. Those critical of the authenticity and accuracy of Daniel, especially those zealous to prove second-century authorship, proceed on the premise that Daniel must be in error until he is proved otherwise. Here the discussion is lost in a maze of conflicting facts in extrabiblical literature concerning which the critics themselves are not agreed. Although such ancient records are notoriously inaccurate and at best are fragmentary, the argument of the critics was that Belshazzar never existed because his name did not appear in any of the ancient records. This omission, however, was later remedied, as mentioned above, by the discovery of the name of Bel-shar-usur (Belshazzar) on cylinders in which he is called the son of Nabonidus. Critics, having to recede from their former position that no such person existed, have since centered their attack on the fact that the word king does not occur in connection with Belshazzar on any extant Babylonian records.²⁵⁰ The establishment of Nabonidus as the father of Belshazzar, or at least his stepfather, nullifies most of the critical objections, although Rowley in an extensive discussion maintains stoutly that to call Belshazzar a king "must still be pronounced a grave historical error."²⁵¹

Since Rowley, however, even liberal scholars have tended to accept the explanation that Belshazzar acted as a regent under his father, Nabonidus. Norman Porteous, for instance, writes, "On the other hand it is known that Belshazzar was a historical person, the son of the last Babylonian king Nabonidus, who acted as regent of Babylon for several years before its fall, while his father was absent at the oasis of Teima in Arabia."²⁵² This would begin Belshazzar's regency about 553 B.C., when Nabonidus went to Teima. Not only the record in Daniel but also the external evidence is now sufficient to support the conclusion that Belshazzar's coregency is almost beyond question. This is another illustration of how critical objections based on lack of external evidence are frequently overthrown when the evidence is uncovered.²⁵³

Additional evidence that Nabonidus was away from Babylon on the night of Daniel 5 is given in the fragment from Berosus, previously cited, which indicates that Nabonidus had left Babylon only to be vanquished in battle and flee to Borsippa. This would involve the premise that Nabonidus, although usually living at Teima, had returned to Babylon for a visit just prior to the siege of Babylon, had gone out to battle before Babylon was actually surrounded, and then was defeated, thereby permitting the Persians to besiege Babylon itself. Under these circumstances, Belshazzar would indeed be king of Babylon in the absence of his father. Problems of his relationship will be considered at the proper place in the exposition, including the possibility that Belshazzar's mother was a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar and thus in the royal line, whereas Nabonidus was not. There are actually so many plausible possibilities in Daniel's account,

supported by the evidence cited, that the storm of objections can hardly be taken seriously.²⁵⁴

Belshazzar's Feast in Honor of the Gods of Babylon

5:1-4 Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while 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. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

About seventy years had elapsed since the capture of Jerusalem recorded in Daniel 1. In the interpretation of the image in chapter 2, Daniel had predicted to Nebuchadnezzar, "After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (Dan 2:39). Now, in chapter 5, this prophecy is about to be fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar's humiliating experience in chapter 4 had been followed by his death in 562 b.c. Approximately twenty-three years elapsed between chapter 4 and chapter 5. In this period, a number of monarchs had succeeded Nebuchadnezzar. According to Berosus, Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son, Evil-Merodach, also known as Amel-Marduk, who was killed in 560 b.c. He was followed by Neriglissar, also spelled Nergal-shar-usur, a son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar who died in 556 b.c. of natural causes. He was succeeded by Laborosoarchad, also known as Labashi-Marduk, a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, who was assassinated after less than a year. Nabonidus assumed the throne in 556 b.c. and reigned until 539 b.c. when conquered by the Medes. Belshazzar is best identified as his son, whose mother was either a wife or a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar and thereby strengthened the claim of Nabonidus to the throne. This explains why Belshazzar in the lineal descent from Nebuchadnezzar was honored as a coruler under Nabonidus. Although there are alternative explanations and some dates vary, this succession of kings and identification of characters seems to have reasonable justification. Most expositors disagree with Keil, who identifies Belshazzar with Evil-Merodach, preferring the identification of a son of Nabonidus, based on later evidence not available to Keil.²⁵⁵ The identifications of Leupold are more satisfactory.²⁵⁶

In the quarter of a century which elapsed between chapter 4 and chapter 5, the further revelations given to Daniel in chapters 7 and 8 occurred. Chapter 7 was revealed to Daniel "in the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon" (Dan 7:1) and the vision of the ram and he-goat in chapter 8 occurred "in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar" (Dan 8:1). The information embodied in these two visions, insofar as Daniel understood it, therefore was known to Daniel before the event of chapter 5 which chronologically came after chapters 7 and 8. If Belshazzar began his reign in 553 b.c, when Nabonidus went to Teima, the visions of chapters 7 and 8 actually occurred about twelve years before the events of chapter 5.

Verse 1 of chapter 5 introduces the fact that Belshazzar as king of Babylon had made a great feast to which a thousand of his lords had been invited with their wives. That such a large feast should be held by a monarch like Belshazzar is not at all strange. Leupold cites the ancient historian Ktesias to the effect that Persian monarchs frequently were known to dine daily with 15,000 people.²⁵⁷ M. E. 50:Mallowan mentions the great feast that Ashurnasirpal II gave to 69,574 guests when he dedicated his new capital city of Calah (Nimrud) in 879 b.c.²⁵⁸

Although the size of the banquet is not amazing, the situation was most unusual. If the setting can be reconstructed, Nabonidus previously had gone forth from Babylon to fight the Medes and the Persians and had already been captured. The whole surrounding territory of the city of Babylon and the related provinces already had been conquered. Only Babylon with its massive walls and fortifications remained intact. Possibly to reassert their faith in their Babylonian gods and to bolster their own courage, this feast in the form of a festival had been ordered. The storehouses of Babylon were still abundant with food and wine, and there is evidence that there was plenty of both at this feast. The expression "drunk wine before the thousand" indicates that Belshazzar was probably on a platform at a higher level than other guests and led them in drinking toasts to their deities. Under the stimulus of wine, the thought occurred to Belshazzar to bring in the gold and silver vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar almost seventy years before. The implication in the clause "while he tasted the wine" is that Belshazzar in his right mind probably would not have committed this sacrilegious act.

Drinking bouts such as characterized Babylon were also common among other peoples, such as the Persians. Athenaeus quotes Heracleides of Cumae, the author of Persian History, in describing in detail the custom of drinking to excess after dinner.²⁵⁹ The luxury of both the drinking and the eating is also illustrated in Athenaeus in describing dinners among the Persians of high station as follows: "For one thousand animals are slaughtered daily for the king; these comprise horses, camels, oxen, asses, deer, and most of the smaller animals; many birds also are consumed, including Arabian ostriches--and the creature is large--geese, and cocks."²⁶⁰

Much has been made of the reference of Belshazzar's relationship to Nebuchadnezzar, who is described as "his father" in verse 2; and even Keil is influenced by this to consider Belshazzar a literal son of Nebuchadnezzar.²⁶¹ This is not entirely impossible, of course, for as Leupold shows,²⁶² Nabonidus could have married a widow of Nebuchadnezzar who had a son by Nebuchadnezzar who then could be adopted by Nabonidus by way of strengthening his own hold upon the throne. As Nabonidus assumed the throne in 556 B.C., only six years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar was probably at least a teenager when Nebuchadnezzar died--if he was old enough to be coregent with Nabonidus in 553 B.C.-- it is possible that he was a genuine son of Nebuchadnezzar and that his mother, after Nebuchadnezzar's death, was married to Nabonidus. This, however, is conjecture; and probably it is more natural to consider Belshazzar a son of Nabonidus himself.

Although the precise identity of Belshazzar may continue to be debated, available facts support accepting Daniel's designation of Belshazzar as king. The reference to father may be construed as "grandfather." As Pusey states, "Neither in Hebrew, nor in Chaldee, is there any-word for 'grandfather,' 'grandson.' Forefathers are called 'fathers' or 'fathers' fathers.' But a single grandfather, or forefather, is never called 'father's father' but always 'father' only."²⁶³

The sacred vessels taken from Jerusalem had apparently been kept in storage without sacrilegious use from Nebuchadnezzar's day until the occasion of this feast. Now these holy vessels are distributed among the crowd and used as vessels from which to drink wine. Verse 2 cites that "the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines" drink from them; and this fact is restated in the actual act in verse 3 where only the golden vessels are mentioned. The Revised Standard Version, following the Vulgate, adds in verse 3 "and silver vessels." This act of sacrilege was an intentioned religious gesture in praise of the gods of Babylon mentioned in descending order of importance as "gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." That Belshazzar well knew the blasphemous character of his act is evident from Daniel 5:13, 22. He knew Daniel and knew the history of Nebuchadnezzar's experience with God's

chastening. Some have found, in the six materials mentioned, a typical reference to "the number of the world amenable to judgment because of its hostility to God."²⁶⁴ In the original, the gods of gold and silver are separated by the conjunction "and," not true of the listing of the gods of brass, iron, wood, and stone, as if there were two classes of deities. This distinction is supported by Keil.²⁶⁵

Their pride in their deities may have been bolstered by the magnificence of the city of Babylon itself, interpreted as an evidence of the power of their gods. Herodotus gives a glowing account of Babylon as a monument to the genius of Nebuchadnezzar and undoubtedly a source of much pride to all the Babylonians. According to Herodotus, Babylon was about fourteen miles square, with great outer walls 87 feet thick and 350 feet high, with a hundred great bronze gates in the walls. A system of inner and outer walls with a water moat between the walls made the city very secure. So broad and strong were the walls that chariots four abreast could parade around its top. Herodotus pictures hundreds of towers at appropriate intervals reaching another 100 feet into the air above the top of the wall.²⁶⁶

Modern interpreters view Herodotus' figures as greatly exaggerated, with the real dimensions only about one-fourth of what Herodotus claimed. The outer wall seems to have been only seventeen miles in circumference, instead of about fifty-six as Herodotus claimed, with much fewer towers and gates; and probably even the towers were not more than 100 feet tall. While the dimensions may be questioned, the magnificence of the city was not seriously exaggerated.²⁶⁷

The great Euphrates River flowed through the middle of the city in a general north-south direction and was bordered by walls on each side to protect the city from attack from the river. Within these walls were beautiful avenues, parks, and palaces. Many of the streets were lined with buildings three and four stories high. Among these buildings were the Temple of Bel, an eight-story structure, and the magnificent palace of the king, actually a complex of buildings, which have now been excavated. A great bridge spanned the Euphrates River, connecting the eastern section and the western or new section of the city. The bridge was later supplemented by a tunnel mentioned by Diodorus. The famed "hanging gardens" of Babylon were large enough to support trees.

Although Babylon has been only partially excavated with but a small part of the original city recovered, the system of mounds which mark the city today more or less indicate its boundaries. Archeological research is complicated by a change in the course of the Euphrates River and a higher water level, but more than 10,000 inscribed texts have been discovered.

In many respects, Babylon was the most fabulous city of the ancient world both for the beauty of its architecture and for the safety of its huge walls and fortifications. It was hard for the Babylonians to believe that even the Medes and the Persians who had surrounded their beloved city could possibly breach the fortifications or exhaust their supplies which were intended to be ample for a siege of many years. Their confidence in their gods was bolstered by their confidence in their city.

The Handwriting on the Wall 5:5-9

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. 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. 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. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

While the feast was in progress with its drinking of wine and shouting of praises to the gods of Babylon, suddenly there appeared the fingers of a man's hand which wrote on the plastered wall of the palace. With only the fingers of the hand visible and producing writing upon the wall, the spectacle immediately attracted attention.

In the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace archeologists have uncovered a large throne room 56 feet wide and 173 feet long which probably was the scene of this banquet. Midway in the long wall opposite the entrance there was a niche in front of which the king may well have been seated. Interestingly, the wall behind the niche was covered with white plaster as described by Daniel, which would make an excellent background for such a writing.²⁶⁸

If the scene can be reconstructed, it is probable that the banquet was illuminated by torches which not only produced smoke but fitful light that would only partially illuminate the great hall. As the writing according to Daniel was written "over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace," it may have appeared in an area of greater illumination than the rest of the room and thus also have attracted more attention.

The effect upon the king and his associates was immediate. According to Daniel, his countenance changed, that is, changed color and became pale. His thin courage, bolstered by wine drunk from vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had plundered and were seemingly a symbol of the power of the gods of Babylon, now deserted him. He was instead filled with terror to the point that "the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." In his excitement, he no longer could sit down but hardly had the strength to stand. Probably before the babble of conversation in the banquet room had subsided, the king began to cry aloud "to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers." Only three classes of wise men are mentioned, but it is doubtful whether any class was intentionally omitted as verse 8 refers to "all the king's wise men." The astrologers were actually the magicians; the Chaldeans were a broad class of scholars and learned men in the lore of the Babylonians; and the soothsayers corresponded more closely to the modern concept of astrologers, although they may have also practiced sorcery. It is possible in the decline of the Babylonian Empire that the number of the wise men was far more limited at this point in history than it was under Nebuchadnezzar's reign. In any event, there is no proof for the suggestion discussed by Keil that the classification of wise men mentioned purposely excluded Daniel. As Keil points out, the king was ready to listen to anyone who could interpret the writing.²⁶⁹

As soon as a suitable number of the wise men had assembled, the king addressed them offering the reward that, if one of them could read the writing and show the interpretation, he would be clothed with scarlet and have a chain of gold about his neck and become third ruler in the kingdom. To be clothed in scarlet and to wear a chain of gold about the neck were special tokens of the king's favor and certainly would have been coveted by any of the wise men.

Much speculation has arisen concerning the expression that he offered them the position of being "the third ruler in the kingdom." There is some question as to whether the Aramaic indicates specifically "the third ruler." The ordinal numeral would be *tȳli,ta,,y* (as in Dan 2:39) whereas the Aramaic here is actually *talti,*. Scholars are not agreed as to the precise meaning of this term, but the suggestion is made that it

may be a title for an office of honor which did not necessarily correspond precisely to the meaning of the word. As Keil expresses it, "It is not quite certain what the princely situation is which was promised to the interpreter of the writing... That it is not the ordinal of the number third, is, since Havernick, now generally acknowledged."²⁷⁰ However, recent scholarship has tended to confirm the translation "the third ruler." Franz Rosenthal, for instance, confidently translates the term "one-third (ruler), triumvir."²⁷¹

In spite of the problem in the word, it is probable that the offer of honor was that of being the third ruler. Belshazzar under Nabonidus was considered the second ruler, and the position of a third ruler would be the highest that he could offer. Belshazzar was evidently in no mood to bargain but was terrified and desperately desired to know the meaning of the writing.

The large reward that was offered, however, was to no avail, for the wise men who assembled could not read the writing nor interpret it. This implies a twofold difficulty. Some have claimed that the text does not plainly indicate the language. Charles, for instance, suggests that the writing was in unfamiliar ideograms.²⁷² This, however, is mere conjecture. The probability is that the writing was in Aramaic and therefore not entirely unknown to the wise men.

In any case Daniel read the writing as Aramaic, and the suggestion of puns in the language (see later discussion) depends upon the Aramaic. The difficulty of the wise men in reading the writing may have been that it was written in Aramaic script without the vowels being supplied; but if written in cuneiform, the vowels would have been included. Daniel does not explain the difficulty in reading the writing on the wall, but the problem apparently was not that it was a strange language but rather what the words signified prophetically. For further discussion, see exposition of Daniel 5:25-27.

The inability of the wise men to decipher the writing only increased the concern of Belshazzar. Perhaps the full force of his wickedness in using the vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem had begun to dawn upon him, or the fears suppressed concerning the presence of the armies which surrounded Babylon may have now emerged. His concern was shared by the entire assembly.

Belshazzar's predicament is another illustration of the insecurity and powerlessness of the rulers of this world when confronted by the power and wisdom of God. How God holds in derision the rulers of the world who take counsel against Him (Ps 2:1-4)! Like Nebuchadnezzar before him, Belshazzar was soon to experience divine judgment but without the happy ending.

Daniel Suggested as the Interpreter

5:10-12 Now the queen 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. There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, 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 show the interpretation.

The crisis produced by the inability of the wise men to interpret the handwriting on the wall is met by the entrance of one described as "the queen." Much speculation surrounds the identity of this person as it is related to the larger question of Belshazzar's lineage. Keil and Leupold both consider her to be a wife of

Nebuchadnezzar and the mother of Belshazzar.²⁷³ As the wives of the lords and the king himself had earlier been declared to be at the banquet (v. 3) one who had the role of "queen" would most probably be Belshazzar's mother. She had not attended the banquet. This would be understandable if she was elderly and the widow of Nebuchadnezzar. If she were the wife of Nabonidus who was in captivity she probably would not have desired to come alone. Hearing the unusual clamor at the banquet and learning of the distress of her son, because of her position she was able to enter the banquet hall freely and speak to the king. Her address is courteous, "O king, live for ever," but directly to the point. Like a mother, she told her son in effect to pull himself together because there must be some solution to his problem. As one holding her position was normally highly regarded and treated with respect, she could speak out in a way that no other could do. Honoring of parents was characteristic of the Israelites (Ex 20:12; 1 Ki 2:13-20; 2 Ki 24:12-15). The same was true in the Gentile world, and the dowager queen was able to enter the banquet hall without an invitation.

Montgomery, opposing the idea that the queen is Belshazzar's wife, comments, "Also the lady's masterful appearance on the scene betokens rather the queen-mother than the consort."²⁷⁴ Jeffery, likewise, writes, "...she speaks to him of his father in a way that suggests a mother speaking to a son rather than a wife to a husband."²⁷⁵

The solution to the problem which the queen suggested was that they invite Daniel the prophet, who had been discovered as a man of wisdom by Nebuchadnezzar, to interpret the writing. The queen uses the very words which presumably she had heard Nebuchadnezzar express (Dan 4:8, 9, 18). According to the queen, Daniel had "the spirit of the holy gods." In the time of Nebuchadnezzar, to whom she refers as "thy father," Daniel had been found to have the wisdom of gods and possessing "light," that is, enlightenment, "understanding" or insight, and in general wisdom comparable to the wisdom of the gods. So great was his genius that Nebuchadnezzar had made him "master" or chief of his wise men, which in itself was a remarkable position for one who was not a Chaldean; and this honor placed upon him testified to the confidence of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel's abilities. The reference to Nebuchadnezzar as the father of Belshazzar, as previously indicated, should probably be either grandfather or greatgrandfather as the same term would be used for any of these designations. It does imply, however, that Belshazzar was in descent from Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel's excellent qualities manifested themselves in "an excellent spirit," unusual knowledge and understanding, and the ability to interpret dreams, difficult sentences, and "dissolving of doubts," that is, solutions to problems. The word for doubts (qit̄yri,n) is actually knots, joints, difficult problems. Daniel had not been assembled with the other wise men because he probably was in semiretirement and was no longer chief of the wise men. The queen urged, however, that now he be brought in to solve the present problem.

Daniel Called Before the King

5:13-16 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? 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. 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 show the interpretation of the thing: 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, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

When Daniel was brought before the king, he addressed a natural question to reassure himself of the identity of Daniel. It seems clear that Belshazzar knew something of Daniel, for his form of address in verse 13 goes beyond the information supplied by his mother. He knew for instance that Daniel was of the captivity of Judah and that he was one of the captives which Nebuchadnezzar had brought out of Jerusalem. It may well be that because of awareness of his ancestry and religious convictions that Daniel had been demoted by Belshazzar himself. Now Belshazzar was all too eager to have the gifts of this man exercised to interpret the writing. Belshazzar goes on in verse 14 to repeat what his mother had said concerning Daniel's wisdom.

Belshazzar informs Daniel of the inability of all the wise men either to read or to interpret the writing. Belshazzar then offers Daniel the same promise he made to the others of being clothed with scarlet and having a chain of gold and the privilege of being "the third ruler in the kingdom," that is, the triumvir. As in the previous instances in Daniel 2 and 4, the wisdom of the world is demonstrated to be totally unable to solve its major problems and to understand either the present or the future. Daniel as the prophet of God is the channel through which divine revelation would come, and Belshazzar in his extremity was willing to listen.

Too often the world, like Belshazzar, is not willing to seek the wisdom of God until its own bankruptcy becomes evident. Then help is sought too late, as in the case of Belshazzar, and the cumulative sin and unbelief which precipitated the crisis in the first place becomes the occasion of downfall.

The situation before Belshazzar had all the elements of a great drama. Here was Daniel, an old man well in his eighties, with the marks of godly living evident in his bearing--in sharp contrast to the wine-flushed faces of the crowd. In the midst of this atmosphere of consternation, apprehension, and fear, Daniel's countenance alone reflected the deep peace of God founded on confidence in God and His divine revelation.

Daniel's Rebuke of Belshazzar

5:17-23 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: 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. 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. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this: 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:

Daniel's reply to the king is properly called a sermon, and as King says, "What a great sermon it is!"²⁷⁶ Daniel begins by disavowing any interest in the gifts or rewards which the king offered. This was not prompted by disrespect nor by the evident fact that they would be short-lived. What Daniel is saying is that he will give an unprejudiced interpretation with no attempt to seek favor from the king. He promises both to read and to make known the interpretation.

In addressing the king, Daniel does not begin with a formal salutation as he does for instance in connection with Darius in Daniel 6:21 where he says, "O king, live for ever." No doubt Daniel holds Belshazzar in contempt for his desecration of the sacred vessels. However, the narration here must be considered in the form of a condensation; and probably Daniel addressed the king in a formal way. A parallel is found in Daniel 2:27, where Daniel addresses Nebuchadnezzar without formal greeting, and in Daniel 4:19, where Daniel replies to Nebuchadnezzar simply with the expression, "My lord." This was hardly a time in any case for Daniel to greet Belshazzar with such an expression as he gave to Darius, "O king, live for ever," when as a matter of fact, Belshazzar's hours were numbered. Instead, in verse 18 he recognizes him as king but then immediately delivers his prophetic message of condemnation.

Daniel first reminds Belshazzar that God gave Nebuchadnezzar his great kingdom and the honor that went with it. Daniel describes graphically in verse 19 how Nebuchadnezzar was feared and had absolute authority of life and death over his people and, accordingly, was an absolute sovereign. As Young points out, however, the very character of this absolute authority delegated to Nebuchadnezzar by God also made Nebuchadnezzar responsible.²⁷⁷ This is demonstrated and supported by Nebuchadnezzar's experience of insanity in Daniel 4 when, as Daniel expresses it, "he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him." Daniel then itemizes in detail the characteristics of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity, how he lived with the wild beasts, ate grass like the ox, and was wet with the dew of heaven. All of this proved that God was greater than Nebuchadnezzar and held him responsible for his authority. Only when Nebuchadnezzar was properly humbled did God restore him to his" glory and kingdom.

These facts are pertinent to Belshazzar's situation as they were well known by everyone as Daniel expresses it in verse 22, "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this." The contrast between the supreme power of Nebuchadnezzar and the very limited power of Belshazzar is also evident. Belshazzar was not even the first ruler in the kingdom and was humiliated by the fact that Babylon was besieged and had already lost its power over the provinces surrounding the city.

Belshazzar's situation and his knowledge of Nebuchadnezzar's humbling made all the more blasphemous his taking of the vessels captured in Jerusalem from the house of the Lord and using them to drink wine in praising the gods of Babylon. With what eloquent scorn Daniel declares that Belshazzar, his lords, wives and concubines had drunk wine from these sacred vessels and had "praised 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."²⁷⁸

Although the Scriptures do not state so expressly, it is probable that the message of Daniel to the king was heard by the entire company. It would have been quite improper for the entire company to keep on talking, especially in these dramatic circumstances, when Daniel was reporting to the king. They would naturally want to hear what he had to say. One can well imagine the tense moment as these ringing words reached every ear in the vast hall in the deathlike silence that greeted Daniel's prophetic utterance. Here was a man who did not fear man and feared only God. Daniel spoke in measured tones the condemnation of that

which was blasphemous in the sight of the holy God. There was, however, nothing insolent or discourteous in Daniel's address to the king; and the charges were stated in a factual and objective way. In any case, the king was in no position to dispute with Daniel, even though Daniel's words brought even greater fear and apprehension to his heart.

Daniel's Interpretation of the Writing

5:24-28 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.

In beginning his explanation of the handwriting on the wall, Daniel first of all reads the writing; and for the first time, the words are introduced into the text of this chapter. Transliterated into English, they are given as "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." There has been almost endless critical discussion as to what the meaning of this inscription is, and the interpretation is complicated by a number of factors.²⁷⁹ In the book of Daniel the words are given in Aramaic, but some have questioned this.²⁸⁰ If it was written in Aramaic script, however, only the consonants may have appeared. If in cuneiform, the vowels would be included. While in ordinary discourse the lack of vowels could normally be supplied rather easily, in a cryptic statement such as this the addition of vowels is a problem. The inscription on the wall may have appeared like this, "MN' MN' TQL UPRSN." The order of the letters in the Aramaic, of course, would be the reverse of this, that is, from right to left.

Young suggests, after some of the rabbis, that the characters may have been written vertically,²⁸¹ and in that case in the Aramaic order they would have appeared as follows:

P T M M

R Q N N

S L ''

If, in addition to the complications of the Aramaic, a language which was known, some unfamiliar form of their characters was used, it would indeed have required divine revelation to give a suitable explanation and interpretation, and may account for the difficulty in reading the writing.

Because of the variety of words that could be identified merely by the consonants, another suggestion has been made. MENE could be considered equivalent to the maneh of Ezekiel 45:12; Ezra 2:69. TEQEL could be considered as representing the Hebrew shekeL PERES could be read as PERAS, or a half-maneh, although this identification is questionable. Under this interpretation, the writing would read, "A maneh, a marieh, a shekel, and a half-maneh." Having arrived at this conclusion, however, it still remains to be determined what it means. Young in his discussion on this point gives J. Dymeley Prince²⁸² the credit for the suggestion that the maneh refers to Nebuchadnezzar, the shekel (of much less value) to Belshazzar, and the half-minas refers to the Medes and the Persians.²⁸³ Daniel's explanation, however, is far more cogent and reasonable, and does not give any indication that the words mean other than he indicates.

The word MENE means "numbered," and Daniel interprets this in verse 26 as indicating "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it." It is in keeping with the idea that man's days are numbered, and

the repetition of the word twice is probably for emphasis. Like the other words, it is a passive participle.

TEQEL means "weighed," with the thought that Belshazzar has been put into the balances and found wanting, that is, short of true weight.

PERES means "divided," and is merely another form for UPHARSIN as in verse 25 having the u, which is equivalent to the English and, with PHARSIN being the plural of PERES. Leupold suggests that PHARSIN could be understood by changing the vowels to be "Persians"²⁸⁴ and might have a double meaning as indicated by Daniel's explanation "given to the Medes and Persians." A pun may be intended on this third word. Having been interpreted to mean "divided," it is also understood as a reference to the Aramaic word for Persian, thereby hinting a Persian victory over Babylon.

The interpretation of Daniel is clear and much more satisfactory than the alternatives offered by some expositors. Belshazzar is made to understand that Babylon will be given to the Medes and the Persians. 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.

Daniel's Reward and the Prophecy Fulfilled

5:29-31 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. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

The drama of the writing on the wall and its interpretation is now brought to its fulfillment as Belshazzar keeps his promise. Daniel is clothed with scarlet, a chain of gold put about his neck, and a proclamation issued that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. All of these honors, however, were short-lived and useless, as Daniel well knew, and typical of the honors of this world. In its rise to power the Babylonian Empire had conquered Jerusalem, taken its inhabitants into captivity, looted its beautiful temple, and completely destroyed the city. Yet this empire was to have as its last official act the honoring of one of these captives who by divine revelation predicted not only the downfall of Babylon but the course of the times of the Gentiles until the Son of man should come from heaven. Man may have the first word, but God will have the last word.

Herodotus gives an interesting account of the circumstances surrounding the capture of Babylon:

"Cyrus... then advanced against Babylon. But the Babylonians, having taken the field, awaited his coming; and when he had advanced near the city, the Babylonians gave battle, and, being defeated, were shut up in the city. But as they had been long aware of the restless spirit of Cyrus, and saw that he attacked all nations alike, they had laid up provisions for many years, and therefore were under no apprehensions about a siege. On the other hand, Cyrus found himself in difficulty, since much time had elapsed, and his affairs were not at all advanced. Whether, therefore, someone else made the suggestion to him in his perplexity, or whether he himself devised the plan, he had recourse to the following stratagem. Having stationed the bulk of his army near the passage of the river where it enters Babylon, and again having stationed another division beyond the city, where the river makes its exit, he gave order to his forces to enter the city as soon as they should see the stream fordable. Having stationed his forces and given these directions, he himself marched away with the ineffective part of his army; and having come to the lake, Cyrus did the same with respect to the river and the lake as the queen of the Babylonians had done; for

having diverted the river, by means of a canal, into the lake, which was before a swamp, he made the ancient channel fordable by the sinking of the river. When this took place, the Persians who were appointed to that purpose close to the stream of the river, which had now subsided to about the middle of a man's thigh, entered Babylon by this passage. If, however, the Babylonians had been aware of it beforehand, or had known what Cyrus was about, they would not have suffered the Persians to enter the city, but would have utterly destroyed them; for, having shut all the little gates that lead to the river, and mounting the walls that extend along the banks of the river, they would have caught them as in a net; whereas the Persians came upon them by surprise. It is related by the people who inhabited this city, that, by reason of its great extent, when they who were at the extremities were taken, those of the Babylonians who inhabited the centre knew nothing of the capture (for it happened to be a festival); but they were dancing at the time, and enjoying themselves, till they received certain information of the truth. And thus Babylon was taken for the first time."²⁸⁵

Keil discusses at length both Herodotus' account and that of Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia*, which is similar, and summarizes the arguments of Kranichfeld discounting these records. Discoveries since Keil tend to support Herodotus and Xenophon, although not accounting for Darius the Mede. The battle probably took place much as Herodotus records it.²⁸⁶

Prophecy anticipating the fall of Babylon is found in both Isaiah and Jeremiah, written many years before. Isaiah and Jeremiah had prophesied that Babylon would fall to the Medes on just such a night of revelry as Daniel records (Is 13:17-22; 21:1-10; Jer 51:33-58). Some of these prophecies may have their ultimate fulfillment in the future (Rev 17-18). More specifically of the invasion of the Medes, Isaiah writes, "Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media" (Is 21:2), and continues, after describing their dismay, "My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me. Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield" (Is 21:4-5). Finally, the tidings come, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground" (Is 21:9). Jeremiah is explicit, "And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire" (Jer 51:57-58).

The account of Cyrus, himself, of the fall of Babylon has now been recovered in an inscription on a clay barrel:

Marduk, the great lord, a protector of his people/worshipers, beheld with pleasure his (i.e., Cyrus') good deeds and his upright mind (lit.: heart) (and therefore) ordered him to march against his city Babylon... He made him set out on the road to Babylon... going at his side like a real friend. His widespread troops--their number, like that of the water of a river, could not be established--strolled along, their weapons packed away. Without any battle, he made him enter his town Babylon,... sparing Babylon... any calamity. He delivered into his (i.e., Cyrus') hands Nabonidus, the king who did not worship him (i.e., Marduk).²⁸⁷

Daniel himself records with graphic simplicity the fulfillment of his prophecy in the words, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain." The concluding verse of the chapter in English versification records how Darius the Median became ruler of Babylon at the age of 62 years. The identity of this conqueror, unknown outside the Bible by this name, has touched off endless controversy and discussion which will be considered in the next chapter.

The long chapter devoted to this incident which brought the Babylonian Empire to its close is undoubtedly recorded in the Word of God not only for its historic fulfillment of the prophecies relative to the Babylonian Empire but also as an illustration of divine dealing with a wicked world. The downfall of Babylon is in type the downfall of the unbelieving world. In many respects, modern civilization is much like ancient Babylon, resplendent with its monuments of architectural triumph, as secure as human hands and ingenuity could make it, and yet defenseless against the judgment of God at the proper hour. Contemporary civilization is similar to ancient Babylon in that it has much to foster human pride but little to provide human security. Much as Babylon fell on that sixteenth day of Tishri (Oc. 11 or 12) 539 B.C., as indicated in the Nabonidus Chronicle,²⁸⁸ so the world will be overtaken by disaster when the day of the Lord comes (1 Th 5:1-3). The disaster of the world, however, does not overtake the child of God; Daniel survives the purge and emerges triumphant as one of the presidents of the new kingdom in chapter 6.

245 The actual text of Berosus is as follows: "After beginning the wall of which I have spoken, Nabuchodonosor fell sick and died, after a reign of forty-three years, and the realm passed to his son Evilmaraduch. This prince, whose government was arbitrary and licentious, fell a victim to a plot, being assassinated by his sister's husband, Neriglisar, after a reign of two years. On his death Neriglisar, his murderer, succeeded to the throne and reigned four years. His son, Laborosoardoch, a mere boy, occupied it for nine months, when, owing to the depraved disposition which he showed, a conspiracy was formed against him, and he was beaten to death by his friends. After his murder the conspirators held a meeting, and by common consent conferred the kingdom upon Nabonnedus, a Babylonian and one of their gang. In his reign the walls of Babylon abutting on the river were magnificently built with baked brick and bitumen. In the seventeenth year of his reign Cyrus advanced from Persia with a large army, and, after subjugating the rest of the kingdom, marched upon Babylonia. Apprised of his coming, Nabonnedus led his army to meet him, fought and was defeated, whereupon he fled with a few followers and shut himself up in the town of Borsippa. Cyrus took Babylon, and after giving orders to raze the outer walls of the city, because it resented a very redoubtable and formidable appearance, proceeded to Borsippa to besiege Nabonnedus. The latter surrendering, without waiting for investment, was humanely treated by Cyrus, who dismissed him from Babylonia, but gave him Car-mania for his residence. There Nabonnedus spent the remainder of his life, and there he died" [^] Flavius Josephus. "Against Apion," in Josephus 1:221-25. For discussion of Josephus' account, see Keil, pp. 164-71.

246 Eusebius, *Praepar. Ev.* 9:41, cited by C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, p. 164.

247 See Raymond P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*.

248 James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, p. 249.

249 According to J. A. Brinkman, "Probably the first recorded mention of Belshazzar, Prince of Babylonia under Nabonnedus" is in a cuneiform text 135 in a collection at the Archaeological Museum in Florence published in 1958-60 by Professor Karl Oberhuber of the University of Innsbruck. The text is definitely from the sixth century B.C. This text indicates that a person known as Bel-sarra-usur was a *res sarri*, an officer of the king, under Neriglissar who came to the throne in 560 B.C., as had been earlier pointed out in a text YBC 3765:2 published by R. P. Dougherty in 1929 in *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, pp. 67-68. This, no doubt, prepared the way for the co-regency under Nabonidus which probably began 553 B.C., supporting Daniel 5. (Cf. J. A. Brinkman, "Neo-Babylonian Texts in the Archaeological Museum at Florence," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 25:202-9.)

E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 115.

250 Cf. H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, p. 210; and George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible*, p. 481 ff.

251 H. H. Rowley, "The Historicity of the Fifth Chapter of Daniel," *Journal of Theological Studies* 32:12.

252 N. W. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 76.

253 The new evidence confirming the theory that Nabonidus was absent is found in the statement in the "Prayer of Nabonidus" that Nabonidus was at the oasis of Teima in Arabia at this time. See J. T. Milik, " 'Priere de Nabonide' et autres ecrits d'un cycle de Daniel," *Revue Biblique* 63:407-15. Although it is possible to question the historicity of portions of the "Prayer of Nabonidus," as it is undoubtedly apocryphal, the consensus of both liberal and conservative scholarship seems to take the account as repeating in the main a true story. Cf. Norman Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 76.

254 For further discussion of this problem, see Young, pp. 115-19; Keil, pp. 162-79; and Leupold, pp. 208-14. Cf. the interesting discussion of Belshazzar by C. Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, pp. 114 ff.

255 Keil, pp. 165-76.

256 Leupold, pp. 208-13.

257 Montgomery mentions a marriage feast of Alexander with 10,000 guests (Montgomery, p. 250).

Ibid., p. 214. See also Keil, p. 179, citing Athenaeus, as does Young, p. 118.

258 M. E. L. Mallowan, "Nimrud," in *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, p. 62.

259 Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* IV, 145.

260 *Ibid.*, p. 165.

261 Keil, pp. 174-75.

262 Leupold, p. 211.

263 Edward B. Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. 346. See also Leupold, pp. 216-17, who discusses this quotation from Pusey.

264 Otto Zockler, *Daniel, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, p. 126.

265 Keil, p. 181.

266 Herodotus, *History of the Persian Wars*, 1:178-83.

267 Cf. Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, pp. 115-16; and T. G. Pinches, "Babel, Babylon," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1:350. For a map of Babylon in sixth century B.C., see D. J. Wiseman, "Babylon," in *The New Bible Dictionary*, pp. 117-20. For pictures and further details, see R. K. Harrison, "Babylon," in *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, pp. 89-93.

268 Cf. Montgomery, p. 253, citing Koldewey, *Das wieder erstehende Babylon*; and E. G. Kraeling, *Rand McNally Bible Atlas*, p. 327.

269 Keil, pp. 182-83.

270 *Ibid.*, p. 184.

271 F. Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, p. 71.

272 R. H. Charles, *The Book of Daniel*, pp. 57-59; cf. Keil, pp. 184-85.

273 Keil, p. 185; Leupold, pp. 224-25.

274 Montgomery, p. 258.

275 Arthur Jeffery, "The Book of Daniel, Introduction and Exegesis," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, 6:426.

276 G. R. King, *Daniel*, p. 148.

277 Young, p. 124.

278 There is a remarkably close parallel to the language of 5:23 in the "Prayer of Nabonidus" found in Qumran Cave 4: See J. T. Milik, pp. 407-15.

279 In the end, even the critics accept either the interpretation of Daniel (mene, "numbered"; tekem, "weighed"; peres, "divided"); or the reading, "a maneh, a maneh, a shekel, and a half-maneh," see exposition.

Cf. Montgomery, pp. 262-64.

280 Charles, pp. 57-59; Keil, p. 126.

281 Young, pp. 125-26.

282 Since Prince, who wrote his commentary in 1899, many others have followed the suggestion of Clermont-Ganneau (*Journal Asiatique*) 1886, that the inscription contained a string of weight names. E. G. Kraeling ("The Handwriting on the Wall," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 63 [1944]: 11-18) assuming that five kings are in view--i.e., mene is given twice and the upharsin equals two half-minas--suggests that the five kings following Nebuchadnezzar were intended, viz., Evil-Merodach, Neriglissar, Labashi-Marduk, Nabonidus and Belshazzar. D. N. Freedman ("Prayer of Nabonidus," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 145 [1957]: 32) identifies the three kings as Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus and Belshazzar. Freedman cites H. Louis Ginsberg (*Studies in Daniel*, pp. 24-26) as holding that only three kings are referred to, viz., Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach and Belshazzar.

283 *Ibid.*, p. 126; cf. Montgomery, pp. 263-64.

284 Leupold, p. 235.

285 Herodotus, 1:190-91.

286 Keil, pp. 171-72.

287 J. B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, pp. 315-16.

288 John C. Whitcomb, Jr., Darius the Mede, p. 73.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-f-walvoord/belshazzars-feast-and-the-fall-of-babylon/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net