

# The Writing on the Wall

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[ 0 : 00 ] One welcome to our service this evening. A special welcome to any who are visiting with us as we come together to worship God.

We look to him to place our time hearing his word and seeking his help to pay attention to what is being said in it.

We can begin by singing from Psalm 119 and at verse 33. Psalm 119 and verse 33, singing to the verse 40.

Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy peace of the divine, and to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline. Give understanding unto me, so keep thy law shall I, yea, even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully.

In thy lost path make me to go, for I delight therein, my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to greed incline. Turn thou away my sight and eyes from viewing vanity, and in thy good and holy way be pleased to quicken me.

[ 1 : 25 ] Confident to me thy gracious word, which I did gladly hear, even to thy servant, Lord, who is devoted to thy fear. Turn thou away my feared reproach, for good thy judgments be.

Lo, for thy precepts I have longed, in thy truth quicken me. And so on, we can sing this section of Psalm 119, verse 33.

Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy precepts divine. Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy precepts divine.

And to all seven, till the end, I shall my heart incline.

Give understanding unto me, so keep thy law shall I.

[ 2 : 53 ] Give me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy God.

God, the perfect way of thy God. Give me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy God. Give me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy God. My heart unto thy testimonies, and not to greed incline.

Turn thou away my sight and eyes from you in vanity.

And in thy good and holy way. And in thy good and holy way.

Be pleased to question me. Confirm to me, thy gracious word.

[ 4 : 35 ] Which I did, Maria. But he who is beloved to thy heart.

Thank you, O Lord. I hope you would love me. Turn thou away, my dear free brood, or could thy trust rest be?

No, for I fear that I have longed that thy truth weaken me.

Let us join together in prayer. O Lord, O God, as we come before you in this act of worship, once again we cry out of our sins of our need, soliciting the help of heaven itself, so that our worship would be acceptable, and that it would be received by the God to whom it is offered.

Such was the sense that they had of their own guilt-ridden lives before the eyes of a holy God.

[ 6 : 51 ] And we acknowledge that that must be true of us, because it is true that your word tells us that we have sinned and come short of your glory.

That we sinned daily in thought, in word, and in deed. These words come readily from our lips, so much so that we fear that we have lost sight of what they truly mean.

Help us to overcome the lethargy of spirit, the darkness that has overtaken us with regard even to our most holy things.

That we have lost sight of our own opinions. That we are so elevated in our own opinions.

In our eyes, we are so elevated in our own opinions. In our eyes, we are but little gods, and there is no sense of the one and only living and true God.

[ 7 : 54 ] We are, at times, so full of our own self-importance. We regulate our lives as if we have the last word with regard to our activities and the conclusions thereof.

And yet again and again you teach us that we do not know what they are ours will bring. We are reminded, often at the expense of our fellow creatures, that we are just a breath away from our life being extinct.

And we pray for Houston to be ready. Be ready not just for the call of God upon our lives taking us from the sin of time, but to be ready for in such an hour as you know not, your word says, the Son of Man will come.

And when he comes, whether we are ready or not, he will consider our lives in the light of his own word to us.

And we acknowledge that we are beneficiaries of that word. You have sealed our faith in many respects by giving to us your word. Many of us here have lived our lives in the land of the gospel.

[ 9 : 29 ] We have been taught from our youth. Our early days in school were days where we began that school day with prayer.

And we were taught from our lives. And we were encouraged much against our will to learn these words of scripture upon our hearts.

These things will be held upon our account. And we will answer to you for what we have done with what we have received.

Help us to appreciate the good things that we have received from you. Do not allow us to be numbered amongst those who despise the things that we have enjoyed by reason of the gospel.

Indeed, there are many who are too willing to stand and to declare the negative aspect of being raised within a community that feared God.

[ 10 : 33 ] But the day will come when each one who has been brought up in such an environment will find that the good things that they despised will be the very things that will be held against them.

And the things that they thought evil will be held against them. And the things that they thought evil will be the very things that will be held against them. Will be before their mind throughout eternity.

And the loss that they suffered will be accentuated. So as we come before you in prayer, waiting upon your blessing, upon your word, may we do so with longing and seeking the blessing of God upon all we do.

As we pray for ourselves and upon your blessing upon our service, we pray for others. Some who may not be mindful of the need to pray for themselves.

There are many, but we do pray for them as we are afforded the privilege. Especially at this time, our minds are drawn to the royal family.

- [ 11 : 44 ] And we bring them to you as we are obliged to do, but because we cannot but remember them. As they mourn the passing of one who was our queen for so long.
- We mourn with them, although clearly we cannot do so with the same intensity. But we do feel for them and we do grieve with them.
- And we are mindful of the impact this sudden death had. Even though we were able to see for ourselves how the ravages of time were paying a toll upon her life.
- It was so evident in her posture and her demeanour. And yet, she joyfully to the end undertook the business that was her to perform.
- But now she is taken from time into eternity. Others must take up the mantle that she has had to lay aside. And we pray for them as they do so.
- [ 12 : 50 ] We pray for King Charles and we ask. However, it may seem to us that such a title does not come easily from our lips.
- It is his title and his sovereign will to perform it to the best of his ability. These duties that are his to perform give him grace to do so.
- As he is described as the head of the Church of England. May that headship bring its own weight to bear upon his shoulders and upon his heart and mind.
- So that he knows that he is but a vassal. There is a king of kings who is king of church. And whoever is supposedly head of any church are but those who are appointed to that.
- If that is the case, your word alone is the word to which we look to describe to us what we must do or not do. And we are obligated to that word to perform all that we do in the light of what your word declares.
- [ 14 : 04 ] We give thanks for the scripture that encourages us to bear one another's burdens. So we do that as we pray for the royal family.
- Those who mourn the passing of our mother. Our grandmother. Even our great grandmother. Every other connection that there is that we normally pray for.
- Pray for when grief intrudes into our lives. We do continue to pray for them also. We remember the grieving and the sorrowful within our own community and beyond.
- We are in a world where death has made its mark. And that is inevitably so. Because the day when our first parents tasted the forbidden fruit was the day that they entered into the experience of death.
- That moment of disobedience introduced them to the physical death. Because death began its inroads into their life at that moment.
- [ 15 : 11 ] They experienced spiritual death. Because they were separated from you, their God. And they were under the shadow of the prospect of eternal death.
- Because your word decreed that that is what sin deserves. Every sin deserves the wrath and curse of God. And no one but no one dare ignore that truth.
- Help us then. As we wait upon you. Seeking your blessing upon your word. That it may be impressed upon our hearts and minds here in this place and every other place.
- That Jesus Christ's name is proclaimed from the pulpits of our land and beyond. Those who have gone out with the great message of the gospel. As entrusted to them by Christ.
- We give thanks for the way that you equip your people. To proclaim him to whomsoever. That they may come and partake of the life that is his to bestow.
- [ 16 : 18 ] We pray for all who are travelling throughout the world with the missionary mandate upon their lips. Speaking to men and women, great or small.
- Young or old. With regard to the needs of their soul. Wilt thou not remember them and encourage them? Give them souls for their hire what we crave for ourselves.

We pray Lord for the people who are under the shadow of the heel of oppression. Countries that are opposed to the gospel.

Who despise the Christ of the gospel. Who serve and follow false gods in abundance. And yet these gods which your word declares to us are but.

Made of the product of man's hands. Be they gold. Be they silver. Or precious stones. Be they wood. Be they whatever. Stone.

[ 17 : 16 ] Whatever they are created from. They are but idols. They have not the power to speak. Or to see. Or to hear. You are not like they. We pray that you would hear us.

And that you would speak to us. And that we would hear your voice. And that our eyes would be open to see. The marvels of your willingness to do for us what no other can.

Remember those we commit to your care and keeping this evening. Any amongst us who may be concerned for their health. Or for those who are suffering from unhealth. We remember them wherever their lot is cast.

Be it at home or in hospital. Those who have been cared for. Who are elderly and frail. Those who have terminal illness to deal with. We remember in your presence.

Thankful for the comfort that your word is able to bring. Remember those who are caring for them. Doctors and nurses. And all members of the caring professions.

[ 18 : 19 ] Those who are dedicated to our well-being. In whatever capacity. Whether they are part of the armed forces. Or others who have to do with the care of the community.

Be the police force, fire service, ambulance service. We remember them to you. And thank you for them. And ask Lord that whatever is their role.

That it may be observed and followed with due diligence. Bless us now for the short time you're together. Help us to wait upon you.

Direct us in the path of life. With your glory in view. In Jesus name we ask. For the forgiveness of sin in him. Amen. We're reading this evening from the Old Testament Scriptures and the book of Daniel.

And we're reading chapter 5. We're reading the whole chapter. Daniel chapter 5. Belshazzar the king.

[ 19 : 52 ] 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 stone.

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. Then the king's countenance was changed. And his thoughts troubled him so that the joints of his loins were loosed and his knees smocked one against another.

The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayer. And the king spake and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whoever shall read this writing and show me the interpretation thereof shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold above to snake, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

[ 21 : 08 ] Then came in all the king's wise men, but they could not read the writing, nor make note to the king the interpretation thereof.

Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in it. And his lords were astonished. 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 forever. 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, life 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 southerers.

For as much as an excellent spirit and knowledge and understanding, interpreting of dreams and showing of hard sentences and dissolving of doubts were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar, now let Daniel be called and he will show the interpretation.

[ 22 : 29 ] 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 interpretations 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 above thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

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.

[ 24 : 01 ] Whom he woad he slew, and whom he woad he kept alive, and whom he woad he set up, and whom he woad 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 appointed, pointed over it whomsoever he willed. And thou, whose son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knowest 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 no, nor hear, nor know.

And the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways hast thou not glorified. Then was the part of the hand sent from him.

[ 25 : 30 ] And this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written. Many, many, take ill a person. This is the interpretation of the thing.

Many, God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Take ill thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Peris, thy kingdom is divided and given to the maids and Persians.

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 Chaldean slain. And Darius the median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word, and to his name be the praise. We shall sing now verses from Psalm 76.

[ 26 : 33 ] Psalm 76, we're singing from verse 7 to the end of the psalm. Thou, Lord, even thou art he that should be feared.

And who is he that may stand up before thy sight if one so angry be? From heaven thou judgment caused be heard. The earth was still with fear.

When God to judgment rose, to save all meek on earth that were. Surely the very wrath of man unto thy praise redoubts. Thou to the remnant of his wrath wilt set restraining bounds.

Vow to the Lord your God, and pay all ye that near him be. Bring gifts and presents unto him, for to be feared is he. By him the spirits shall be cut off, of those that princes are.

And to the kings that are on earth he fearful doth appear. We can sing these verses, Psalm 76, from verse 7 to the end of the psalm.

[ 27 : 40 ] Thou, Lord, even thou art he that should be feared. And who is he? Thou, Lord, even thou art he that should be feared.

And who is he? Thou, Lord, even thou art he be.

From heaven thou judgment caused be heard.

The earth was still with fear. When God to judgment rose to save.

Only God at the end. Truly the very wrath of man.

[ 29 : 14 ] Until thy praise regains. Thou, Lord, even thou art he that should be heard.

Thou, Lord, even thou art he that near him be.

Bring gifts and presents unto him.

For to be feared is he. By him the spirits shall be cut off, of those that princes are.

even thou art he that are on earth he fearful doth appear.

[ 30 : 59 ] I'm going to turn to the passage read now the book of Daniel in the Old Testament Scripture chapter 5 we're going to just scan this whole chapter very briefly we can read verse 23 just to remind ourselves of what we have read read verse 22 and 23 thou his son O Belshazzar hast not humbled thine heart for 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 thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold and of brass iron, wood and stone which see not hear nor know and the God in whose hands thy breath is and whose are all thy ways hast thou not glorified and the God in whose hands thy breath is and whose are all thy ways hast thou not glorified and whose hands thy word is it is always a danger when you look at a part of Scripture that you are familiar with that you immediately switch off when it's a part of Scripture that you grew up knowing many of us I'm sure are familiar with the story of Daniel much of what is in here in the book is ideal passages for young children to be taught and to read and to have an interest in because of what takes place Daniel in the lion's den

Daniel's friends when they were in the fiery furnace and this passage here the writing on the wall and I think we looked at this passage not so long ago but I thought well working your way through the book and I have a choice you either skip over chapter 5 and move on or you go back to it and keep the course that you run and I chose the latter but that means it's harder to bring to your attention material that maybe you are not so familiar with that's not the important part I don't think of a preacher's remit to preach with new material or to preach with things just to satisfy curiosity or to deal with the scripture so that novelty is present

I think that I think that is the danger of our own generation if it's not novel if it's not new if it's not different if it's not any of these things then it's not really worth going over it again and we have to guard against that I'm not making an apology for myself but I do think that that is the kind of mindset many people have if it's not different if it's not new then what is there to be learned we've already learned it but we learned something in the morning I hope that Jesus said to his disciples it was not enough for them to know something they had to do what they knew they had to be able to put into practice what they knew and that's always the approach that we should take as we read the scripture what is there here for me to learn what is there here even though I may have heard it before how can I take what I've heard before and apply it perhaps in a new way or perhaps apply it in a way that we haven't really applied it as we ought now I think the approach to this passage usually is it's a passage that lends itself to an evangelistic application because it focuses on judgment it focuses not just on judgment but temporal judgment

God bringing his wrath to bear on an individual certainly and as far as he was concerned unexpectedly but it is however familiar with it we are with it a solemn passage we're familiar with the words the writing on the wall you should be we all should be many people use that phrase but I wondered how many of them go back to the book of Daniel how many of them actually know what the setting for that phrase is like many other phrases that are extracted from the Bible they may have an origin there that's quite distinct and yet people have imbibed that extracted phrase from the scripture and probably applied it inappropriately or in a way that is not at all meant well with that as a background

I suppose as a preamble to what we're going to look at we're confronted initially with a problem as we begin reading this chapter because those of you who were with us last Sunday we saw how the chapter before chapter 5 ended it ended with the passion of the king Nebuchadnezzar he praised and extolled and honoured the king of heaven he exalted God and clearly his confession or profession was one where he appears to have come to an awareness of who God is and that's how chapter 4 ends and then it begins the following chapter with the words Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords and drank wine before the thousand we're not given any explanation as to who this person

[ 38 : 40 ] Belshazzar the king is how can he be king where did king Nebuchadnezzar go when did he stop being king there's no information given to us in the scripture concerning that and many of the commentators very helpfully help us understand something of what must have happened and I think this is something that we can helpfully take on board I'm sure you've already been aware of it that as far as the scripture is concerned it doesn't give us the information necessary to expand on our understanding of what had to take place before this happened but historically and especially the history that's derived from archaeology that supplied information that the scripture did not but it's interesting myself and probably for many of you to understand that the information that the scriptures supplied was considered wrong by a great many of the archaeologists and the historians who built the framework of their history upon their understanding of the region and what the artifacts in the region provided to them so that the source of their information was bound up in that and there was nothing within their knowledge their broader knowledge outside of the scripture that spoke of this passion that the bible spoke of so their instinct was to dismiss what the bible said and because you look at the chapter and you find there's something that is clearly miraculous it is obvious canon for that as it were it's obvious just material that you can readily discard first of all there's a miracle that can't be explained in normal parents and also we have the strong evidence of the history that the world possesses that does not allow for this person

Belshazzar to exist but the commentators those who are explaining the scripture help us understand that there came a point in the late 19th century when archaeologists made a discovery where cuneiform writings came to speak about the existence of this king that is spoken of here previously that these artifacts were not available to the world they hadn't been discovered and they not only spoke of such a king but the reason for his role was in the kingdom at this time now I would never argue from the point of view that if archaeologists say it's right then the bible can be believed if the bible says it even if the archaeologists have not discovered it or believed it the bible as far as I'm concerned is the word of god it is the word of god from genesis to revelation what it says whether we can understand it or not is the truth whether we can believe it or not it is the truth whether we can when we find ourselves contradicted by history or by geography even an understanding of it then there is something that needs to be realigned and through time god has always found in his own way ways of proving his word now he's not obliged to do so and in this case he wasn't providing evidence just to satisfy the curiosity of people who didn't agree with the book of

Daniel or the words that it contained but I think that has to be understood as a background and that many people prior to this revelation from the archaeologist people did find it difficult to believe this part of the scripture because the evidence seemed to be stacked against it one of the commentators just to summarize what was discovered is that David Helen just to quote the point at which this took place was 23 years approximately after the death of Nebuchadnezzar and the king of Babylon at the time was a king called Nabonitis and he was fourth in line after

Nebuchadnezzar in other words there were three other kings who reigned after Nebuchadnezzar died but that doesn't answer who Belshazzar was and the answer to that question seems to be that he was either a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar maybe or again those who have an interest in this have a divided opinion as to what the exact relationship with Nabonitis was whether he was his son or his brother or some other relationship it's not clear but what seems to be clearly held as an opinion by many is that he was a co-regent that he shared the kingship that he had he was and there's a suggestion of that that you'll have noticed in the passage you know when Daniel was elevated by the king when he was when he was rewarded he wasn't as



Nebuchadnezzar did he wasn't elevated to the second in command second he wasn't given this privilege when you remember going back to the life of Joseph Pharaoh gave Joseph a very elevated position now here we are told that Daniel is given the role of being third in line third in command as it were under the king and under who else well if we understand the reading of what various theologians tell us if Nebonidas was the king and Belshazzar was his under king as it were somebody who was second in command then Daniel would come after these two it's only a surmise or a suggestion but it seems that that supports it but that's a part of the history and it has to be dealt with because it can't be ignored because you go from

[ 46 : 56 ] Nebuchadnezzar to Belshazzar without explanation you've got to ask the question who is this person where does he come from what is his role and his role clearly as far as he's concerned he's in charge and being in charge allows him to to carry out a great feast a feast to a thousand of his lords it's not just a party it's an event and the event is an event that clearly as far as we're concerned seems to get out of control not only do they drink excessive wine the excess leads them into a passage of behaviour that is dishonouring to God and that is the reason why God brings judgment to bear upon the banquet becomes a licence for a debauched kind of behaviour part of it is given over to idolatrous practices they begin to worship their gods and you can see that there's a number of them gold silver precious jewels they're all kinds of gods and they're all featuring in their worship whatever their worship was and very often the practices that that worship entailed were debauched they were of the hedonistic and they were of the unpleasant kind of behaviour that you would associate with people who had no sense of the divine just an ignorant understanding of what the worship of idols should involve and this is how the banquet descended and to crown it all they bring the sacred vessels that had been taken from the temple in

Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar had invaded the land he lifted the temple and took these vessels which God had sanctified for use in his service why he did it probably just to show that he was king he was powerful and remember we've seen what kind of person Nebuchadnezzar was he had a very lofty opinion of himself and God had said that to him and dealt with him accordingly but that was probably the reason why he took these vessels because you know in the mind of many who are there the gods of the people there is a lot of power vested in there that is where they have their power from if you remember when the

Israelites left Egypt they met all kinds of nations who were idolaters and the reason for Israel's advance was down to their gods in the eyes of these nations they couldn't conceive of one god they couldn't think of one living and true god they had myriad gods themselves and they worshipped them accordingly but Nebuchadnezzar took these vessels and just to add insult to injury they included these vessels in their false worship and the profanity and the insult and the offense that it causes god i don't know what you think of it when you read this you say to yourself well surely god has seen much worse than that surely god has witnessed much worse than that in this fallen world and doubtless he has and that's why the question may occur to you if this god similarly punished this king what was it that necessitated such an action on the part of god and i suppose if you're asking that question you're asking because of a failure to understand that god is holy and the very fact that he is holy and a god of mercy and a god of grace and a god who is long suffering a god who is kind should never make us forget the fact that just because god holds back from judging an individual or judging even a nation similarly forthwith out and out at once when he sees an evil perpetrated doesn't mean that he doesn't care and the fact that he chose to do this is probably explained in what happens but you know it seems from the reading here in verse four they drank wine praise the gods of gold of silver of brass iron of wood and stone in the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand and roped over against the candlestick upon the plaster it's almost instant there's no forewarning there's no there's no fanfare there's no idea of judgment you know repentant

I won't do this Jonah was sent with a message to Nunavid to repent or God would judge them and surely they're not doing anything worse than the Nunavides and they deserve to have some kind of preparation but God looks as we said in the morning he looks at the big picture he sees things minutely and he sees things against a background of the whole of men's lives and what he sees there is not a person who is engaging in an act of ignorance but somebody who is engaging in an act of defiance against God and that's not something a person can enter into lightly there are many people who think that they can defy God and

God will just permit them to go on as if nothing ever happened but that is not the case that can never be the case because if God is willing to ignore the wrongdoings of individuals or of society constantly then what does that say about his own character yes you're saying God is a God of mercy he's a God of grace he's a God who is long suffering but he's also a God who is holy he's a judge of the wicked he's a God who will ultimately bend to account those who behave as they should not in in the same hour came forth fingers of a man sand and wrote over against the candlestick and so on now the king asks for explanation he wants to understand what's happening but one thing is clear

[ 55 : 46 ] I think and he knows something supernatural has happened of any descriptions we have in the Bible of somebody being moved by an act of God this is somebody who is moved by it the king's countenance was changed his thoughts troubled and the joints of his loins were loosed his knees smoked one against another it's a very graphic picture of somebody who is just terrified at what he has seen now the terror that he experiences and is described to us like that is he able at that moment of terror to recognize that this is God who is doing this and well I don't know if I can answer that question he asks for an interpretation and then when you read on and when the queen mother who seems to be the queen mother whatever role she has whether she was

Nabonidus' mother or Belshazzar's mother she has a role as queen and she's identified as queen she comes with information I don't think it's new information to the king it's not something he's ignorant of he knows of this Daniel he knows of the god of Daniel when he speaks to Daniel he says to him 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 now he's not dealing with somebody who who is unaware of now that might appear trivial to you and there are a lot of people who make out that they lack sufficient information to act upon when it comes to god that if they knew more if they had experienced more if they were better more enlightened then their behaviour would change accordingly but this man

I don't think this information comes entirely from the queen he probably forgot what he had heard he probably discarded what he knew the king had experienced he discounted it as important or of any relevance to himself oh you ask yourself the question how long does it take you to forget something that god does how long does it take you to forget something that you have experienced that you can only attribute to god being involved in your life the lord's people can answer that question because if the lord's people they're aware of god working in their lives but having worked in our lives doesn't mean that we're always going to remember every experience every encounter every moment that god spoke directly into our lives and into our situations because anything if anything the bible teaches us that we have we need teachable hearts we need to have a good foundation upon which to build and often our memory lets us down we neglect the things that we know that god has done in our lives for a person who's a christian they're not a christian without experience they're not a christian without being made aware of what it was like for the light of god to come into the dark heart that had no time for god prior to that the very majority of people who have become christians have no sense of what it was like to live their life without god and the change that was wrought by him and the nature of that change the vast difference that that change brought into their experience but how long does that experience live with us we can and we do go back in our lives to the point at which we came to know the

Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour but how much of the experience of doing that or knowing that or coming to see that for ourselves do we retain do we remember the minutiae of the detail or does it need to be brought to mind now if it's true of a Christian that that we can let slip some of the things that God did in our lives that we have now fallen prey to as something that we do not grasp or remember as clearly as we could what do you think it's like for a person who doesn't know God who doesn't serve God who doesn't follow God and this person was clearly of that ilk when Daniel is brought to the fore he is brought to somebody who should have known who he was and should not have had to be reminded of who he was well we may pose that question at a national level we may pose that question at a local level but should we not pose it at a personal level should we not ask ourselves the question how much of what

God has done in my life is known in the filing cabinet gathering dust and why do you think that's important well I think it's important because if we let these things slip we are letting slip the very things that should be a reminder to us of the might and the power and the inexhaustible grace that God possesses that touched our lives that reached out to us when we were in extremes where God was excluded to our way of thinking and yet he came to us where we were and took us to himself and these are the things that we should think of and if we do that we will remember not only the blessing it is to ourselves but to others that we can commend such a God to them and encourage them to think of such a the moving finger writes and that's an amazing picture it's interesting talking to little children and you ask them to describe this and

[ 63 : 50 ] I always had this picture in my mind of I've seen pictures of it a hand and it writes on the wall and it's a very strange thing but this is what he saw he saw a hand and the handwriting and what he wrote he needed to understand he wants to bribe Daniel he wants to give Daniel a part of his kingdom he wants to allow Daniel to benefit from the knowledge that God gives to him but there's a contrast made between the king Nebuchadnezzar and the king Nebuchadnezzar we are told in

Veshit Veshit O thou king the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom a majesty and glory and honor and for the majesty that he gave him all nations and languages trembled and feared before him whom he would he slew and whom he kept alive and whom he set up and whom he put down that's an interesting picture is it not picture of a king but God did this for him God made him that kind of king God set him up and then when he forgot that 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 God did that as well and that's the contrast that's made between the way

God dealt with Nebuchadnezzar and the way he dealt with this person and the judgment of God upon him is because this man did not learn from what God had done in the life of Nebuchadnezzar though his son O Belshazzar has not humbled your heart though you knew all this the emphasis placed upon the knowledge that he had of God which he chose to discount which he chose to disregard which he chose to ignore and go on this merry way living his life to the exclusion of God and to the inclusion of deities and divinities that were none of these things so that's the message that comes to the sky God has fixed your boundaries mainly he says

God has numbered thy kingdom and finished it not one moment can be added to your life beyond what God has decreed when God says that what happens to our plans well you can forget your plans perhaps the king meant for the banquet to continue but God said no your account is closed chaste and it's a mystery why God permits some to live as if it were with their account overdrawn and we've already said his patience is apparent but it can be exhausted and there is no going back I would not want anybody to get to that point thinking well who lives their lives like this thinking I can push on and push on and God will be patient with me

God is a God who is incalculably gracious he is willing to come again and again and again there is a story told of someone who lived in the same village as myself in his old age God mercifully came into his life and he was on his knees upstairs probably I don't know if it was upstairs in the room anyway in the house and he was crying out for mercy he was crying out for mercy and he meant it and down in the other part of the of the house his partner, his wife said oh too late too late you left it too late but she was wrong she was wrong because his cry for mercy was heard but does that mean that you can you can expect the God of mercy to allow you to run out your candle to the last flickering flame and think that at that point when it's beginning to wisp into a dark smoke that is going to hear your cry for mercy then well what if you made a mistake what if you got it wrong what if God says the account is closed we can't afford to do that it was too late for this man take it he said the scales of judgment are often in use but the weights and measures are not the true measures how do we measure ourselves in the scales we use these weights we use the weights of popularity we use the weight of personal opinion we use the weight of modern thinking but when God weighs a person in the balances the weights and the measures that he uses are exclusively his own and they will not be tilted one way beyond the exact measure that he wishes to see and in strict accord with his word his word tells us that if we are not covered if we are not clothed if we are not found covered by the righteousness of Christ then we will be found wanting we will be found wanting this is the God who is the searcher of hearts this is the God who tries the reins this is the God who knows exactly what we are and where we are verse 28

[ 71 : 36 ] Paris or Dupartia what you claim as your own will be taken from you and given to someone else in his case it was the Persians Belshazzar did not believe that he went on as before promising gifts I think this is a remarkable story here he is one step away from eternity and he is promising Daniel I am going to give you all these gifts and they weren't his to give soon they would be taken from him soon he would be left destitute some he would be forfeiting his own soul and yet he was promising Daniel that he could have whatever he wanted you know there is a story that Jesus tells about himself when he is tested in the wilderness by the devil and the devil comes to him tempting him and he says

I will give you I am going to give you these things to come up to the pinnacle of the temple to come up to the highest mountain all of these I will give you to where and to is to give but it doesn't mean that he won't promise and he does the same to you as well he promises you much and you have no idea whether what he promises whether you'll draw breath to receive even the reward you think that is waiting for you Stuart Oliot writes who knows when God will say to a person one more sin and it will be your last then the writing will be on the wall for you the fool who was building his barns heard the word of God say to him thou fool tonight your soul will be required of you the story of Daniel it's a very graphic illustration of the need that there is to be right with God when God comes not to provoke God to wrath because no one wants an angry God to deal with and I pray that God would bless the story that you're familiar with and that some of these thoughts however much you've heard them before will bring you to your knees before God and seek from him further light upon the story that tells you what kind of God we have and what kind of prospect is in store for those who are strangers to him let us pray

Lord be merciful to us even as sinners in need of salvation do not allow us to defer the day of grace it's not ours to abuse cleanse us from sin we pray we ask all in Jesus name Amen our closing psalm is Psalm 62 Psalm 62 and we're going to sing from verse 9 surely mean men are vanity and great men are alive in balance laid they wholly are more light and vanity trust ye not in oppression in robbery be not vain on wealth set not your hearts when as increased as you gain God hath spoken once to me yea this I held again the power that power to almighty God alone doth appertain yea mercy also unto thee belongs

O Lord alone for thou according to his work rewardest every one these verses verse 9 to 12 surely mean men are vanity and great men are alive canción wouldah Jimmy honor denke Alight in balance with the holy hour For life and humanity Trust ye not in the revelation

Never repeat the pain And well said God Your heart's way has In peace it is your gain God  
has his soul Been one to me Is it I have Again The power to the almighty God

[ 77 : 52 ] Alone Alight in Je mercy of So unto thee Beholds O Lord For how the Lord Bring to his  
word Rewardess everyone Now may grace, mercy and peace From God the Father, the  
Son and the Holy Spirit Rest and abide with you all

Never and always Amen