

Lesson 6 Daniel 5

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[0 : 00] So we're in Daniel chapter 5 this morning, and I want to start by just thinking about the fact of all the things that are going on around the world.

And last time we talked, you know, we didn't have the stuff going on in Israel the way it's going on today. But you can add to that, and you can think to yourself, you know, Ernie and I were talking just a while ago about, you know, he said, I think maybe we might end up in a civil war here, and maybe even the World War III.

There's all the potential for these things, and it's very tempting sometimes to try to kind of get the inside track from the Bible to figure out sort of where things are going and what's going to happen and this kind of a thing.

But one of the things that I think we often overlook that we need to be reminded of is something that God said to Moses, through Moses, to the people of Israel.

And it's in Deuteronomy 29, 29, and it says, The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

[1 : 06] Now the reason that I put this up is because there are, I'm going to use a term, and the term is orthodox.

Orthodox. Orthodox. Orthodox. When you say the word orthodox, what you're saying is you're talking about different kinds of Christian beliefs that are Christian indeed, but they may disagree with one another.

Let me give you a couple of examples. If you've got one group of Christians that do not believe in the continuation of the spiritual gifts, and then you have another group of Christians that believe in the continuation of spiritual gifts, both of those beliefs, even though they're contrary, are orthodox.

Which means that believing one or the other does not affect your salvation. Right? If you believe that speaking in tongues is still a real thing, that doesn't mean you're not a Christian.

I disagree with you. I disagree because I think they have ceased. But my view doesn't mean that I'm not a Christian, and your view doesn't mean you're not a Christian.

[2 : 26] And let me give you another example. The end times. How the end times fold out. There is, there are three large camps.

There's what's called pre-millennial, post-millennial, and amillennial. Now, most of us were raised in a pre-millennial view.

If you know Dr. David Jeremiah, John MacArthur, those are all pre-millennial. Here's the thing. All three views are orthodox. That means that you can be a pre-millennial and a Christian.

You can be a post-millennial and a Christian. You can be an amillennial and a Christian. They may disagree with one another, but just because you hold that view of the end doesn't mean you're not a Christian.

Does that make sense what I'm saying? Here's why I'm saying this. As we look at what's unfolding in Israel, it's very tempting, particularly people of the pre-millennial and post-millennial views, to begin to look at Scripture and start saying, oh, this is fulfilling this prophecy and this prophecy and this prophecy.

[3 : 39] But there are people who are godly people right in the middle in the amillennial camp who would say, no, that's not that at all. And what I want to say is that because there is such a vast array of difference of opinion on those kinds of issues, we have to kind of sometimes step back and say, you know, we're not exactly sure what this is.

We're not exactly sure what this is. God knows, and it's perhaps one of the secret things. Bring this into our own personal life.

In my own personal life, what should I do in order to have a successful retirement one day? What should this daughter of mine do about finding her future husband?

These are the secret things that belong to God. There's not a verse of Scripture you can go to that says, thou shalt put thine money in Edward Jones.

Right? That's not there. But what is there are the revealed things, the things of the law. God has told us how we ought to behave.

[4 : 54] He's told us how we ought to trust, how we ought not to fear. And so, as we look at Daniel 5, I think this is encouraging for us because it encourages us to stop trying to peek behind the veil to see the man behind Oz and instead, just walk the path that he has for us to walk.

Because, if we start speculating, we might get into stuff that isn't true, we might stir our hearts up to fear, and we are not supposed to have the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.

And so, we just need to trust the Lord no matter what takes place. And I think that's what Daniel 5 does, is it calls God's people to trust the Lord because he's in charge of everything.

So, as we look at this, I want to break this down into three parts, and we're going to read Daniel 5. We'll just do this in bits and pieces instead of reading the whole thing and then coming back and looking at it.

And so, in Daniel 5, beginning in verse 1, it says this, Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand.

[6 : 11] When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar's father had taken out of the temple, which was in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives, his concubines, might drink from them.

Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God, which was in Jerusalem, and the kings, his nobles, his wives, his concubines, began to drink from them. They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, stone.

Suddenly, the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began riding opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace. And the king saw the back of the hand that did the riding.

Then the king's face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together. The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans, and the diviners.

The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom.

- [7 : 24] Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed.
- His face grew even paler and his nobles were perplexed. I'm calling this section that God frightens his enemies. God frightens his enemies.
- I think that's what we see. But we need to deal with a couple of things. The first thing is we need to deal with the fact that this is King Belshazzar. Who in the world is King Belshazzar?
- The reason that's important is because this is the list of kings of Babylon according to history. I can't see my tablet.
- There we go. So you have Napolosser. He was 21 years. Nebuchadnezzar, 43 years. Amal Marduk, 2 years.
- [8 : 24] The next one, because I can't pronounce his name, 4 years. The next one, 1 year. And then, Nebuchadnezzar, 17 years. But I want you to notice that it's 1556 and Nebuchadnezzar ends 1562.
- That's a real short time, right? What do we got? About 7 years between them? Okay? Okay? So this guy is king in 1556. But look at this.
- 1552 to 15... I mean 15. I'm saying 15. Why am I saying 15? It's confusing. Stop it. 5. 5. 156. 156. 156.
- But they end at the same time. So here's the thing. Before 1880, most people believed that the Bible was making up and giving us a fictitious character named Belshazzar.
- And even people who don't know the archaeology that's been discovered will say, there's no such king as Belshazzar. There's never been a king Belshazzar in Babylon that this was the last king of Babylon.
- [9 : 35] Nemanus. Well, this is from Stephen Miller, his commentary. He says, Until the last half of the 19th century, the name Belshazzar was unattested except for the book of Daniel and the works that depended upon Daniel, such as Baruch and Josephus' writings.
- And from other sources, Nabonidus was known to have been the last king of Babylon and some commentators declared Belshazzar to be a fictional character invented by the author of the book.
- Okay? Now, there's a lot of people today who don't know the archaeological evidence that has been discovered and they still think this about us. So if you get talking to somebody and they say, oh, that was not the king, you're fixing to be loaded up and ready to go.
- Okay? Since that time, abundant evidence has come to light that demonstrates not only that Belshazzar did live, but that he was both the son of and co-regent with Nabonidus.
- Okay? So that's why their reign was at the same time. He was co-regent and his son. According to P.A. Ballou, 37 archival texts dated from the first to the 14th year of Nabonidus now attest to Belshazzar's historicity.
- [10 : 56] Now, what's an archival text? Basically, an archival text is any kind of text that they have found dated to that period that has the guy's name in it. Let me give you a couple examples.
- This, this right here is called a prayer cylinder. Okay? This prayer cylinder was discovered in 1854. There were four of them, actually, that were discovered.
- They were identical in their inscriptions. They were excavated in Ur. These are the Nabonidus cylinders because it contains his prayers to the moon god, Sin, for his Belshazzar, the eldest son, my offspring.
- That's written in there. Belshazzar, my son, my offspring. So that's, that's, that's one of the kinds of things we're talking about when we talk about an archival text.

Okay? The second thing is what's called the Chronicle Tablet. The Chronicle Tablet. This was something that had been found but hadn't been translated. Okay? So it had been found for a long time.

[12 : 01] But in 1882, they translated it. Okay? And when they translated it, it turns out that it is the story or document about Nabonidus and how he was an absentee king spending 10 of his 17 years living in Arabia, some 450 miles away from Babylon, the king left his son, Belshazzar, who was called, this little, this little text here calls Belshazzar the crown prince, right?

Left him to take care of the affairs during that time. The Chronicle also explained that Nabonidus, I'm not, Nabonidus, was away from Babylon when it fell and two days before it fell, he had already fled from the Persians who had taken another city in Babylon.

So, when Belshazzar, when our story begins with Belshazzar, this is who he is, he's the crown prince, his father is away, his father has just, his father has just escaped from an attack by the Persians and Belshazzar is having a party.

That's, that's who we've got here. Does that make sense? Y'all with me here? Any questions? Okay. You're not having just a party, but they're using the same, you're using the only vessel from the temple to have to lick.

That's exactly right. Praise to God, the soul of the soul. The only other question to answer is, why was Nabonidus not in Babylon? And the reason he wasn't in Babylon is because he worshipped the God, the moon God Sin, and all the priests in Babylon worshipped Marduk.

[13 : 53] And so, his son worshipped Marduk as well, and so he didn't get along with everybody there, so he went someplace else. What about this statement in verse 7?

Whoever reads this writing and tells me its interpretation shall be clothed with pearl and have a chain of gold around his neck, and he shall be the third ruler. That's right. Because, because Belshazzar's the second ruler.

He can't place somebody as second because he is second. So that's why he's saying that. So, so you, so you, he's making reference to the fact that he knows somebody's above him, then him, and he can put somebody right beneath him.

Yeah. Um, all right. So, the setting of the story is going to be in Babylon. This is where this is taking place.

This, there's a party that, that he is throwing, but then there's this, this idea that he wants to, once he takes the wine, which I think is the idea that once it kind of gets into his system, right, you've got to drink a little bit before anything happens with it, he wants to bring in the vessels to, uh, to drink from.

[15 : 08] And it's at this point that God frightens him by sending this hand to start riding on the wall. And I want you to notice how he's frightened. In verse six, you see, you see these things.

You see, the king's face grew pale. You see that his thoughts alarmed him. And then you've got this phrase that says that his hip joints went slack.

Okay, now that's a, that's an idiom. An idiom is a colloquial phrase. Okay, like, like, like when I say something, uh, if I eat some food and it's really good, that makes me want to jump up and slap my mama.

Like, that doesn't mean literally I want to jump up and slap my mama, but that means that is so good, right? It is so good. So that's an idiom. It's a, it's a cliché. It's just a colloquial phrase.

It's a saying people have. So that's what this is. This is, his hip joints went slack. Means that he soiled himself. He soiled himself.

[16 : 11] The words literally mean the knots of his hips loosened. And the reason I'm saying this is because this comes back in a little bit when we get into the second point.

That same kind of idea. It says that his knees began to knock and then when you go down to verse 9 you see that he's greatly alarmed. His face grows even paler.

I don't know if you can say paler. Does that be more pale? Probably. Now what causes the fear? Verse 5 tells us the answer. What causes the fear?

The fear is that the fingers of a man's hand emerge. The word emerge there means to come out. So it just like appears out of nowhere. It's the same word that's used for the three Hebrew children that come out of the fiery furnace.

They just pop out, come out, like that. So the fingers begin to write on the wall. They write opposite of the lampstand. So in other words, the light is shining on it so it can be seen.

[17 : 15] And it says that he saw the hand, but it says that he saw the back of the hand. That's what my New American Standard says, that it back of the hand. The King James says it saw part of the hand.

Some don't even translate the word, but the literal rendering of that Aramaic word is palm of the hand. Palm of the hand. So, if that's the case, the possible way that this looks is that he's sitting there in his throne, right?

And he's got his vessels of silver and gold, making a mockery of God, desecrating the things of God, drinking these things down, and a hand appears and comes over him and starts writing on the wall and he's seeing the palm of it as it's over his head and it's writing.

That would be scary. Yeah. Yeah. That would be super scary. scary. So, he calls for his wise men to come and give him knowledge of this and when no one can do it, it perplexes him even more, right?

It causes him more fear that nobody can tell him the interpretation of this. Here's what's interesting to me. Why is it that Belshazzar is having all of this happen to him for using the vessels from the temple of the Lord, but Nebuchadnezzar is the one that took them.

[18 : 46] And it's because of this, Nebuchadnezzar took them, Belshazzar desecrated them, right? He's making a mockery of God, using the things of God to worship his own gods because God is jealous for his name.

God is jealous for his name. And so, when we begin to think then, so what does this mean? Like, if we make application of this, that God frightens his enemies, we've got to remember the context of Daniel, that God's people are in exile, they're under great punishment and oppression, under persecution, and he's writing to them so they know how to live, so they have hope in the middle of these difficult times.

And the hope they have is that the God that created them is the one who frightens and subdues and mocks and punishes his enemies.

God mocks his enemies. He frightens his enemies. He sneers at them in derision.

And we have to understand that because even Psalm 2, Psalm 2 is a messianic psalm, right? It points to Christ. It says, why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing?

[20 : 06] The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us.

He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. He laughs at the nations. He is not worried about the nations.

He is not worried about his enemies. He is not shaking in the knees. He is not weak in constitution. He is not frightened that they might come even close to conquering him or destroying or thwarting his plans.

He is unaffected by them, but instead he frightens them. He takes and he loosens the knots of their hips and they become afraid.

afraid of him. And so as we think then as Christians how should we live, we need to think about who is our enemy. Who is our enemy?

[21 : 10] Our enemy, according to Paul, in Ephesians chapter 6, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. You got to remember that.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. against evil forces of this present darkness. In other words, as we look and we think to ourselves of things like what happened in Canada with James Coates.

He's preaching and trying to maintain having services on the Lord's Day throughout COVID and yet the authorities come and arrest him for holding a worship service.

It would be easy for us to think these government officials, these police, they're our enemies. No, they are just the instruments of our enemy. Our enemy is Satan.

Our enemy is the evil one. Our enemy is sin itself. That is our enemy. You know what's going on with Israel? You know, I remember when 9-11 happened and the Sunday after it happened, Sunday night, the pastor that I was serving with at the time, he got up and he was preaching a sermon, he was trying to give the history of Ishmael and Isaac and all this kind of stuff, and in a fit of emotion, came out with this statement while he was standing in the pulpit and said, well, we just ought to nuke every one of those countries and send all those Muslims to hell.

[22 : 44] That, that makes you, that makes you no better than the lost people. What you're, what you're doing and saying is that your enemy is another human being. While they may be on the enemy's side, and while they may be tools of the enemy, and we may have to pursue justice, our enemy is Satan, and we have got to always remember that.

That's a big scale picture, but you know, it even happens even in the church in our own lives. You can kind of think to yourself, you know, somebody feels like somebody in the church is against you, feels like somebody isn't, you know, there for you, and it's like they're against you, but it's really not them.

They might be being used as a tool, but our enemy is Satan, our enemy is sin, and God is not afraid of that. Instead, he frightens them for us, and one of the things we've got to think, even coming back to the bigger picture, think about our nation, I mean, why does the United States of America exist?

exist, because God wants it to. Let me just say it this way, the blood of our soldiers that have been spilt for freedom did not grant us existence.

God grants us existence. God grants us existence, and the United States will exist for as long as God wants it to.

[24 : 15] Does that mean that we willy-nilly just kind of let things go? No, remember the real things belong to the Lord, the secret things belong to us. So we still march right along doing the things we know we ought to do, but the existence of our country is in the Lord's hands.

So he's the one who frightens the enemies, he's the one who humbles nations, he's the one who sets them up and tears them down. So that's the first part. Second part, then, is verses 10 through 28.

10 through 28, and here's what's interesting, this is God warning his enemies, and there are, this particular section is organized by three speeches.

There's a speech by the queen, there's a speech by Belshazzar, and then there's a speech by Daniel. So that's kind of interesting. So we'll take a look at each one of those separately. So the queen mother.

Now, I think the queen mother is the wife of Nebuchadnezzar. She was probably a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, which is why Daniel says, your father Nebuchadnezzar, because it's easy to say father, and that can mean an ancestor, right?

[25 : 34] Jesus is said to be the son of David, his father is David, but yet how many generations are between them, right? It's the same kind of thing. So the queen entered, this is verse 10, she entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and the nobles.

The queen spoke and said, O king, live forever. Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale. There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods.

And in the days of your father, illumination, insight, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And king Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chiefly of the magicians, conjurers, chaldeans, and diviners.

This was because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge, and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas, solving of difficult problems, were found in this Daniel whom the king named Belchazzar.

Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation. I think this is a fascinating little speech by the queen mother. She's kind of chastising her son just a little bit.

[26 : 40] Well, she was calling him basically an idiot. You should know better, right? You should have known this, right? And that's going to be the theme. I think it's interesting how much she describes Daniel.

Yes. Right? I mean, look at all these things. Spirit of the holy gods. He has illumination, insight, wisdom like the gods. He's chief of the magicians, conjurers, taudeans, diviners. He has extraordinary spirit, knowledge, insight, interpretation of dreams, explaining of enigmas, and solving difficult problems.

Guess what that means? That means loosening difficult knots. Daniel can come and loosen difficult knots.

In other words, he's already been afraid of God once. When Daniel comes, he's going to be afraid some more because God has bad news for him. It's kind of foreshadowing what's going to happen.

I think it's also interesting that she calls him Daniel and only barely mentions his Babylonian name. Right? He's maintained that. Do you think a big deal about that to Nebuchadnezzar that he would only answer to his Judean name, not the Babylonian name?

[27 : 56] No, I've not seen anything that would say that he made a big deal about it to the king. The king called him Belshazzar and he never corrected him. So, all right, let's look at the second speech.

This is Belshazzar and he's talking to Daniel and as I read this, I want you to notice how different, think back to the other chapters and think about how Nebuchadnezzar spoke to Daniel and then think about how Belshazzar is speaking to Daniel.

And there's a big difference. Let's see if you can notice the difference. Then Daniel was brought in before the king. This is verse 13. The king spoke and said to Daniel, are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father, the king brought from Judah?

Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you and that illumination, insight, and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you. Just now the wise men, the conjurers were brought in before me that they might read this inscription and make its interpretation known to me, but they could not declare the interpretation of the message.

But I personally have heard about you that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and wear a necklace of gold around your neck and you will have authority as the third ruler of the kingdom.

[29 : 18] Can you tell the difference between the way Nebuchadnezzar talked to Daniel and the way Belshazzar is talking to Daniel? Well, Belshazzar is saying, look, here's my problem, solve it.

But Nebuchadnezzar said, here's my problem, how can you help me? Yeah, so Nebuchadnezzar is a more respectful tone whereas Belshazzar is very flippant and being like, yeah, hey, let's get to work here.

Yeah. It's interesting that he says, are you Daniel who's one of the exiles of Judah? What did his mother just call him? Chief of the magicians.

So he's really got a lot of scorn for Daniel. He doesn't like Daniel. And so you can see that going like, and I've heard about you that you've got this ability.

It's almost sarcastic. I mean, some commentators will tell you that it's just dripping with sarcasm. But his view of Daniel is that he is nobody special and why should I listen to him?

[30 : 21] But he has no alternative. He has to turn to Daniel. He has to get Daniel to say something to him. And you'll notice that he even says, loosen difficult problems.

For some reason that becomes this theme in the first two speeches. He's already had his hips loosened. Now he wants the problems loosened.

And when it does loosen, what's going to happen is judgment. Right? All right. Third speech then is Daniel. And it's interesting here because you already know what's written on the wall because you've read Daniel 5 before.

But if you had been an Israelite who had never read this before and you were reading it for the first time, you still don't know what the inscription is. is. That's being held all the way to the end.

Because it's really the summation and not really the driving force behind this whole story. So let's look at the third speech.

[31 : 26] Daniel. Daniel. And as I read this, think about what he's doing with the history of chapter 4. Okay?

He's using chapter 4 and the things that happened in chapter 4 and he's bringing them forward and basically stating them again. Okay? So Daniel chapter 5 verse 17. That Daniel answered and said before the king, keep your gifts for yourself.

Quite sassy there. Or give your rewards to someone else. However, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him. O king, the most high God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory, and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father.

Because of the grandeur which he bestowed on him, all the peoples, nations, and men of every language feared and trembled before him. Whomever he wished, he killed, and whomever he wished, he spared alive.

Whomever he wished, he elevated. Whomever he wished, he humbled. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne and his glory was taken away from him.

[32 : 33] He was also driven away from mankind and his heart was made like that of beasts and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys. And he was given grass to eat like cattle and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the most high God is ruler over the realms of mankind and he sets over it whomever he wishes.

And remember that right there. Yet you, his son Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, but you had exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven.

They have brought the vessels of his house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives, your concubines, have been drinking wine from them. You have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see, hear, or understand.

But the God, in whose hand are your life breath and all your ways, you have not glorified. Then the hand was sent from him, and this inscription was written out.

Now this is the inscription that was written out. Mene, mene, tekel, you farsin. This is the interpretation of the message. Now, I want to pause right there, and I just want to say, when the author of the Bible says, this is the interpretation, then what's written on the wall does not mean anything else.

[34 : 07] And I can't tell you the number of people who bend over backwards talking about all kinds of things, about what these things can mean, when it's told to us, right here in black and white, what it does mean.

Okay? This is the interpretation. Mene, God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. Tekel, you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient.

Perez, your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and the Persians. Now, we're going to stop there, and let's just go back and look at a couple of things.

One, you've got him starting off with sarcasm. Daniel's just sarcastic to Belshazzar. Keep your gifts. I'll tell you what you need to know. Then, verses 18 through 21, he's recounting this history from chapter 4 about the dream of the tree and the tree being cut down, right?

And so, he first of all, in that recounting, establishes how God established Nebuchadnezzar's glory. Then, how God humbled Nebuchadnezzar because of his pride, right?

[35 : 21] Because God is the one who's in charge. God is the one, you'll notice that phrase from chapter 4 is brought into chapter 5 that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind because what they're, what they're thinking is that God rules in heaven and men rule upon earth.

And so long as we keep those domains, we're fine. As long as we don't try to be the Tower of Babel and reach to the heavens, we're okay. But the problem is, is that God rules over all things.

He is God of heaven and earth. earth. This is his world. He's the king of this world and Nebuchadnezzar forgot it. Well, so did Belshazzar then.

That's the point. Is that he thinks that he's someone special, that he is okay like Nebuchadnezzar. And so Daniel chastises him saying, you knew this and you didn't humble your heart.

How do we know you didn't humble your heart? Because you went and took the vessels from the house of the Lord and you worshipped your gods by it. So you're judged. You are judged.

[36 : 33] The hand that you fear riding on the wall above you is the hand in which your life breath lives. So you are judged.

And so then Daniel goes to explain the inscription. And I want you to notice Daniel doesn't tell us anything about the hand. Whose hand this is or anything like that.

So it doesn't matter. Okay? Does that make sense? It just doesn't matter about the hand. But then it gets to the words. Okay? And let's talk about these words for a second. Because I do think it's important, even though we know what it means, to kind of understand how Daniel kind of gets there.

Right? So mene mene tekel you farsen. We're dealing with Aramaic words which uses Hebrew letters with Aramaic vowels. Okay?

And if you were to think about it and try to say, okay, in English what would this have looked like on the wall? Okay? In English it would have looked something like this.

[37 : 38] You have to remember that first of all when Hebrew and Aramaic are written they don't have vowels. Vowels come as little tiny marks around the words.

Okay? They're called vowel points. They also cram all the letters together. They don't put any spaces between their words. So when all those magicians and conjurers walked up and looked at the wall they would have been like I have no idea.

I got no idea. Right? What's fascinating is that depending on the kind of vowels that you put here you have Aramaic words or you have Hebrew words.

Okay? Now what Daniel's able to do is he knows what the letters are going to so he could split the letters something like that. And so maybe the first word are the P and D.

Okay? Let's just say that's the way it is for this illustration. So if you start putting vowels with those three consonants you can get words kind of like this.

[38 : 42] You can get pinned pinned pained pawned pound okay? You can get all those kinds of words out of that by just adding a few vowels.

Right? So that's sort of what Daniel's looking at. He's looking at Hebrew consonants he's looking at you know and how should this be read.

What's interesting is the mene tekel parson or eupharsen that that would be measures. Okay?

In Aramaic those would be measures and those measures would be mene would be the heaviest the tekel would be the shekel weight and the parson would be half a shekel and the difference between eupharsen parson and parson has to do with plurality and singular.

Okay? So if we were to take this our example that we have here in English we would have say pound ounce and half a pound something like that.

[39 : 42] Right? It's kind of measures he's just seeing measures there on the wall but what Daniel does is that when he gives us the interpretation he turns these words into passive verbs.

He uses the Hebrew vowels and reads them as passive verbs and so you have you got numbered mene is numbered mene is numbered God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it tekel is weighed tekel is weighed you've been weighed in the scales and found deficient perez means divided your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and the Persians this is the warning that God is giving to his enemies this is what he's saying to his enemies he's telling him this is what's happening the end is here your judgment has arrived and so if you can think of the scene you've got the Medes and the Persians have just attacked his father two days before this surely somebody has told him that they're in vicinity we know from chapter two that there is a coming and end to the

Babylonian kingdom God has a predetermined end to the Babylonian kingdom that's why chapter three Nebuchadnezzar makes an entire statue of himself in gold to be worshipped because he doesn't want his kingdom to come to an end but he can't stop God from bringing his kingdom to an end and so here when we get here we've got somebody who doesn't even realize that the end is coming and is being told here comes the end God is the one who sets up and tears down kingdoms and many times many times he gives them warning but sometimes he doesn't and I want to kind of think of it this way because what I keep saying is that he is frightening and he humbling them he's dealing with them and as the Jewish people are watching this and they're thinking to themselves oh when will this ever come to an end it's almost like oh Babylon has come to an end tonight okay that's the first kingdom check three more kingdoms to go they they can see they can see the progression of history unfold in front of them as they're watching what's going on

God he humbles these leaders he takes think about this where is where is right now where is Hitler where is Mussolini where is Stalin where is Saddam Hussein where is Mao Saddam all dead and gone and why is that because God sets up kingdoms and he tears them down he's the one who's in charge of all things and as he's giving this warning to Belshazzar one of the things that to me kind of rises up is just how much God is declaring himself declaring his intentions and with that declares judgment declares his rulership over all things what I'm saying is this as we think about how we need to move forward when we go to present the gospel often times the way we present the gospel is do you want to go to heaven when you die and that's all we focus on and what I'm saying is that when we present the gospel we are presenting the gospel of the

Lord Jesus Christ who has all authority in heaven and on earth the gospel is not just about a ticket to heaven the gospel is about Jesus who rules all things yes it's about heaven but it's about more than that I mean just right here you can see the great commission is built upon the fact that he has all authority in heaven on earth therefore they can go into all the nations and make disciples right he says in Matthew chapter 11 that all things have been handed over to me by my father and no one knows the son except the father and no one knows the father except the son and anyone to whom he wills to reveal it but he's everything's been handed to him he has all authority I love this verse this is Ephesians chapter 1 Paul's writing it says which he brought about in Christ so he's brought something about in Christ we don't need to know exactly what that is here but when he raised him from the dead so at the resurrection of Christ something was brought about but this resurrection from the dead then was followed by seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places so Jesus rose from the dead he ascended back to the father sitting at the right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named now look at this not only in this age but the age to come there are people who teach that we're waiting for the kingdom of God to come they will look at the things that are happening in Israel and start drawing out a chart and a timeline and say we're waiting for the kingdom of

[45 : 18] God to come and this is telling us the kingdom of God is here and now he's ruling and reigning over all authority and power and dominion in this age and the age to come Philippians chapter 2 for this reason God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee would bow now think about this every knee would bow of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth he is the one who has the name that is to be exalted Colossians 1 16 for by him all things were created both in the heavens and on earth visible and invisible where the thrones are dominions or rulers or authorities all things have been created through him and for him so not only does he rule and reign over them because he's resurrected but he rules and reigns over them because he's created them all earthly powers are by his will they exist by his will

Colossians 2 10 in him we've been in him you have been made complete he is the head over all rule and authority 1 Peter 3 22 he's at the right hand of God having gone into heaven after angels and authorities and powers have been subjected to him his resurrection gave him the right as the God man to have the rulership over all things as the second person of the trinity because he's the creator he had the right over all things but now as the God man resurrected and ascended he now has the right over all of that as well what Adam should have had Christ has so when we present the gospel we want to present the gospel in a faithful way that says that it's not just about having your sins forgiven so you can go to heaven but it's about Christ rulership over all things you're coming into allegiance with the king of the universe there's not one square inch in all the cosmos that Christ does not rule and becoming a Christian is becoming a citizen in that kingdom as we look at life around us that means that it should affect the way we view government it should affect the way we view education it should affect the way we view marriage it should affect the way we view economy it should affect the way we view free time it should affect everything if he rules over everything, there's not one thing in my life that he doesn't have something to say about.

And so, when we present the gospel then, we are doing what he is doing, and that is, we need to give warning of what's going on. Third part of the story, it's the last little bit, and it's that God judges his enemies.

And verse 29 says, then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple, and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as third ruler of the kingdom.

And that same night, Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about age 62. It's so lacking in ceremony.

[48 : 58] It just states it plain out. Belshazzar dies, the Medes and the Persians take over. I was reading on this yesterday, and if they had put people on the wall, but Belshazzar was so confident that no one could breach the walls, that they partied.

But the Medes came in, they rerouted the river, and they came in under the floodgates into the city, and took, well, as anybody in war does, you go to the capital, take over the capital, and everything else falls in line.

So they killed the king, and they were just waiting outside. Well, you know, one of the things that I would say, just to keep us kind of focused where we need to be focused on, is this, that even had they put people on the wall, it was time for Babylon to come to an end.

And God, nothing thwarts the plan of God. And so it is fascinating to me, in God's providence, the things that he uses, such as Belshazzar's arrogance, right?

He uses that. He uses the Medes and the Persians and their ingenuity to bring about the end of this. And one of the things that I thought about as I was looking at this, because, I mean, this is pretty simple and straightforward, what it's saying.

[50 : 31] God had warned Nebuchadnezzar that the kingdom was coming to an end. God was warning Belshazzar that night, it's coming to an end.

And these verses show us that God's faithful to keep his word. He brought it to an end. And what I find fascinating about that is that Belshazzar had no chance, yet God was still proclaiming judgment to him as an opportunity for mercy.

Here's, I guess, what I'm saying. Think about Jonah, the story of Jonah for just a second. Right? Jonah is the one who was supposed to go to Babylon. He was supposed to go to Nineveh, the Assyrians, sorry, not Babylon.

He was supposed to go to Nineveh, to the Assyrians, to proclaim to them judgment. As a matter of fact, in verse 2, he says, Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry against it for their wickedness has come up to me.

And he says in chapter 3, Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and proclaim to it the proclamation, which I'm going to tell you. And Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, and according to the word of the Lord.

[51 : 43] Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days walk. Then Jonah began to go through the city, one day's walk. And he cried and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh will be overthrown.

What I'm saying to you is that God sent Jonah to Nineveh to proclaim judgment is coming. That is what he had to go proclaim.

He didn't offer a way of mercy. He didn't say, If you'll repent. He didn't say anything like that. He just said, Forty days, and you're going to be overthrown.

Now the people repented, and we know what happens in the story there. But what I'm saying is that part of the going and proclaiming the message of God is going and proclaiming a message of judgment.

See, why do we want people to be saved? Why do we want people to go to heaven? Well, we don't want them to judge before the seat of judgment. We don't want them to go to hell. That's right. And you know what hell is?

[52 : 44] It's judgment. It's the judgment of God. So often I hear people talk about hell being separation from God. And in a sense that's true.

But in another sense it's not true. Because what hell is, is the presence of the wrath and the anger and the displeasure of God. When people are saved, they are saved in part from God himself.

And so as he's looking at Belshazzar who has no chance, no chance of mercy or anything because God's already declared he's coming to an end, God still proclaims to him and gives him a warning of the judgment to come.

With Nineveh, God sent Jonah, he proclaimed this mercy and they repented and turned to the Lord. We cannot just preach do you want to go to heaven when you die?

That is a part of it. But that's not the only part of it. And so often we narrow the gospel to something like that so when somebody, you know, seems to be sincere, prays this prayer, but then they don't live like Jesus is king.

[54 : 00] We have nothing to say because we've just told them they can just get a ticket to heaven. We're not telling them, hey, listen, yes, you can have heaven, but also you can have Jesus as your king because he's the rightful ruler of everything and you're either going to be submitted to him or you're going to be destroyed by him.

Those are your options. In the gospel, we need to call people to give their life to Christ who has all authority, he has all power and dominion and he has it right now this very minute.

And you know, even if we have messed up in sharing the gospel with other people so that we've just truncated it and simplified it to one little thing, the good news is that in that gospel, there's forgiveness for us messing that up.

You know what I'm saying? And that is the good thing. So that's the good thing. It's like, okay, I haven't done this right, but it's okay. There's forgiveness for that and now we know there's got to be more to the story.

That's one of the reasons why last summer we went through the gospel presentation that we went through because it deals with judgment to come. It deals with asking the questions about do you think you're a good person?

[55 : 15] The person usually says, yes, and you say, well, let's go through the Ten Commandments and let's test that, right? And so you go to something like have you ever stolen something? And they say, well, yes, yes, I've stolen something.

You say, what does that make you? Well, that makes you a thief. Well, have you ever, you ever been angry with somebody? You know, because Jesus says if you're angry with your brother, you're guilty of hellfire. I say, well, yes, I've been angry.

So what does that make you? That makes me a murderer. He says, well, if God were to judge you on judgment day by the Ten Commandments, would you be guilty or innocent? Guilty. Does that mean heaven or hell?

Well, hell. Does that concern you? You see, that's preaching the judgment, right? That's helping them understand that there's something that they need to be saved from.

And so I just encourage us to take the example that God has here for us and how he's dealt with Belshazzar and as he's bringing comfort to his people that we have an opportunity to declare the truth and the gospel and the message to others as well.

[56 : 20] Thank you.