

Corresponds to Programs 89, 90

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

Daniel 5 – Parts 1 & 2 STUDY GUIDE

DANIEL 5 – PART 1

Daniel 5:1-9

Everything in the government of Babylon under Belshazzar is falling apart, and yet this grandson of Nebuchadnezzar is focused on having a party. Much like our world today, where people are eating and drinking and attempting to ignore impending danger, Belshazzar, with the enemy just outside his gates, throws a wild party. We see Belshazzar and his drunken friends praising the gods of gold, silver, wood, iron, and stone.

Today, these idols translate into money, wealth, houses, vehicles, and lands. Not that there is anything wrong with material possessions as such; we all need some money, a place to live, transportation, etc., yet these material possessions are not to be the center of our lives. God is center. Stuff doesn't fulfill us. We were made for God, not for stuff. We sometimes think that it will make us happy, but the void remains. God allows us to try to fill the place—the place only He alone can occupy—with all the world's stuff, hoping that in time we will feel the need for something more: a heart experience that only He can fill. Material stuff can be helpful, but only as long as we don't allow our possessions to become more important than God and His mission to help people to learn about Him.

Belshazzar's act of drinking wine out of the cups from God's sanctuary finds a parallel in Revelation 14:8 and 17:2, 4, where spiritual Babylon is making all nations and kings drunk with the spiritual wine of unfaithfulness to

God. In drinking wine out of God's sanctuary vessels, Belshazzar has just done something that his grandfather did not do. This act, like spiritual Babylon in Revelation 14:8, leads to Babylon's fall.

Daniel 5:10-16

Daniel is offered a scarlet robe, a golden chain, and position number three in Babylon, if he can make known to the king the writing on the wall. Daniel refuses the gifts, but not the request. He will make known the writing to the king, but not

for earthly rewards. Daniel has his rewards, based on the promises of God, and they are much greater than these earthly trinkets. Daniel has been promised a robe of white in place of his scarlet robe of sin (Isaiah 1:18). In Heaven, gold is pavement, so Daniel will be walking on streets of gold, rather than wearing a mere chain of gold (Revelation 21:21). And in Heaven, Daniel, along with all the redeemed, will sit with Christ on His eternal throne, rather than be third ruler of an earthly kingdom that is about to be overthrown (Revelation 3:21).

There is an important insight in the book of Daniel that shows the contrast between earthly kings and God. God is a micro-organizer, not a micro-manager. Daniel's prophetic visions reveal that God has a plan for your life—for everyone's life—but the choice is yours. God will not force or control you. If you, like Nebuchadnezzar, choose God to be in your life, He will work out that plan for you. If you, like Belshazzar, choose not to have God be in your life, God will ultimately honor that choice.



“...MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”

DANIEL 5:26-28

KEY SCRIPTURES

Dan. 5:3 THEY DRANK FROM THE GOLD VESSELS

Dan. 5:26 GOD HAS NUMBERED YOUR KINGDOM

Dan. 5:8 THE WISE MEN COULDN'T READ THE WRITING

Dan. 5:28 YOUR KINGDOM HAS BEEN DIVIDED

God's plan brings us hope, healing, health, and eternal happiness. Our plans and choices, apart from God, bring us and others evil, pain, sorrow, and ultimately death (Romans 6:23; Jeremiah 29:11). The evil, pain, sorrow, and death in this present world, find their source in the devil and those who follow him. God intends to deliver us from all of it (John 10:10; Matthew 6:13; Revelation 21:1-5).

Daniel 5:17-23

Daniel is reminding Belshazzar about the gospel that he knows, but has somehow brushed aside. This last text reminds us of the words of Christ and Paul. Christ insists that our heavenly Father cares for all of us: that every hair is numbered and not a sparrow falls without His notice. Paul speaks to the Greek philosophers in Acts 17, insisting that God gives all people life, breath, and all things. God does this so that we might seek after Him and find Him, for He is not far from every one of us.

This is the last appeal to Belshazzar to remember the God of his grandfather and turn to Him, but the king refuses. Rather than humbly acknowledge the God Nebuchadnezzar exalted as the God of gods, Belshazzar gives Daniel the material articles promised, reaffirming his allegiance to the gods of gold, silver, and material things. One verse later, the end comes, Babylon falls, and Belshazzar is slain. It is a sad ending to a grandson who had been given so much light by his grandfather, and a sad thought to realize that Nebuchadnezzar will not see his grandson saved in Heaven. Let's not make this our reality.

DANIEL 5 - PART 2

Daniel 5:24-31

Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin is changed from how it reads in verse 25 to how it reads in the interpretation in verse 28.

- **Mene** is the same, meaning "numbered and finished."
- **Tekel** is the same, meaning "weighed in the balances and found wanting."
- **Upharsin** is now **Peres** (a plural form of Upharsin) and it means "your kingdom is given to the Medes and Persians."

Isaiah 44:26-28; Isaiah 45:1, 2

These prophetic verses make a direct connection to Daniel 5, predicting the very events that took place as foretold by God through Isaiah. Cyrus dried up the deep or the waters of the Euphrates, building a dam and diverting the waters. His army then marched down the riverbed and found the gates leading into Babylon were unlocked. Also noted in this prophecy is the predication that the king's loins were to be loosed. This is exactly what we read earlier when Belshazzar saw the hand writing on the wall (Daniel 5:6). Then we have the predication that sets the Hebrews free to return to their

hometown and rebuild the temple and the city. All of this is laid out in these prophetic verses of Isaiah and fulfilled in the history recorded by Daniel and the later Bible writers, like Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 7; Daniel 9:25).

Isaiah 61:1-4

This is a prophecy that Jesus read and applied to Himself just after His baptism and anointing. It also applies in the historical context to Cyrus, a type of Christ. Cyrus was also anointed to bring deliverance to God's people in Babylon, and bid them rebuild the city and the temple.

Christ also quoted Isaiah 61 because He, as God's anointed, came to set the captives free. And, like Cyrus, who dried up the river and went down into the earth to undo the gates of Babylon, so Jesus went down into the earth to undo the gates of death and set his captives free. Belshazzar mocked God by misusing the holy vessels of the sanctuary. The devil mocked God by misusing the Holy One of God and crucifying Him outside the city. Yet Christ, like Cyrus, though outside the city, gained the victory over the devil and brought his kingdom to an end, as Cyrus gained the victory over Belshazzar and brought Babylon to an end. "It is finished" was the judgment brought against Babylon, and "it is finished" was the judgment pronounced by Christ as He died a conqueror on Calvary's cross. Truly the loins of the devil were loosed and his knees smote together as Jesus died with the cry of victory upon His lips. So now, as with Cyrus to the Hebrews, the proclamation is made to all: who will go up to Jerusalem? Whoever will let him go up to the heavenly Jerusalem and sit with Christ in the heavenly places (Ezra 1:2, 3; Ephesians 2:6; Revelation 14:1).

Ultimately, Bible prophecy is all about Jesus. Jesus is typified throughout the Old Testament stories, not excluding the prophetic book of Daniel. Even Daniel 6 hints at the burial of Jesus when Daniel is placed in a den of lions to die, with a stone rolled against the entrance and the king's seal placed upon it.

We saw this same truth in Revelation, where each one of the four prophetic cycles, the seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials, all begin with a picture of Jesus. In the seven churches, Christ is walking among the churches, representing His incarnation. In the seven seals, Christ is symbolized as a lamb slain, representing His death on the cross for our sins. In the seven trumpets, Christ is pictured as an angel mingling His merit with the prayers of the saints, symbolizing His heavenly mediation as our high priest. And in the fourth and final prophetic cycle, Christ is seen as a child that is brought forth from the woman and then caught up to God, representing His resurrection.

RECAP OF DANIEL CHAPTERS 1-5

Following the pattern of the king of the north, noting the Divine design that is present in the book of Daniel:

Daniel 1— the king of the south pushes against the king of the north (Egypt tries to help Jerusalem by warring against Babylon). The king of the north goes out to meet the king of the south and defeats Egypt. Then the king of the north turns back against Jerusalem and the land of God's people. He takes God's people captive and seeks to have them drink the wine of Babylon.

Daniel 2— Nebuchadnezzar hears tidings from the north and east that trouble him (dream of coming kingdoms).

Daniel 3— Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the north, goes forth to destroy the Hebrews who refuse to bow to a false prophetic narrative.

Daniel 4— Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the north, is glorifying himself in his palace, when a message comes that brings an end to his reign.

Daniel 5— Babylon falls. Cyrus, God's anointed (a type of Christ), stands up to deliver God's people. He opens the gates of Babylon, the prison house for God's people, and directs them to a new Jerusalem.

Revelation 16:12

In Revelation 16, the kings of the east are a borrowed typology from the story of Darius and Cyrus, the kings of Medo/Persia: the kings of the east who dried up the river Euphrates

and conquered Babylon. Thus they delivered God's people, initiating the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Matthew 24:27; 26:64

Jesus and the Father are the Kings who return to earth from the east, dry up the spiritual Euphrates, and deliver God's people, taking them to the New Jerusalem.

Matthew 27:50-53

Jesus came down to this earth and experienced hell for us so that we could go up to Heaven and experience eternal life in Him. The prophecies of Daniel are all about the plan of salvation.

Summary

As we saw in Daniel 4, God saved and transformed Nebuchadnezzar. Yet as noted in the story of Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, the choice to be saved is always left up to the individual. It is up to us to make a choice for God over the wealth, prestige, and positions of power offered to us by this present world. We see in the stories of Daniel powerful insights to the plan of salvation. And we see the ultimate purpose of God: to deliver us from the spiritual wine of Babylon through God's anointed, Jesus Christ. Our prayer is may each one of us choose the heavenly Jerusalem over the things of this earth. In Jesus' name, amen. ★