

# Daniel 5

“The Writing is on the Wall”



# Daniel 5

- ◆ your number is up
- ◆ the handwriting is on the wall
- ◆ you've been found wanting

- ◆ Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC and was succeeded by Evil-Merodach (562-560)
- ◆ Neriglissar (560-556)
- ◆ Labashi-Marduk (2 months 556)
- ◆ Nabonidus (Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law)
- ◆ Belshazzar (553-539)

- ◆ Nabonídu

- ◆ the king; but no one liked him and he didn't like being king

- ◆ since Nabonídu was out of the picture he left his son, Belshazzar, in charge

- ◆ big mistake

## Daniel 5:1-4

- ◆ 1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.
- ◆ 2 Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

## Daniel 5:1-4

- ◆ 3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.
- ◆ 4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

- ◆ there were 1,000 of his lords present at this party
- ◆ the wine was flowing freely and they were planning to have a good time
- ◆ this feast was all about “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn 2:16)

- ◆ the Persians were on the move and Belshazzar knew it
- ◆ due to pride, he thought that his walls were impregnable and they were safe
- ◆ Belshazzar went to a room across the street and took the sacred vessels that had been brought from Jerusalem when it was sieged
- ◆ this was pagan revelry
- ◆ they began praising their gods while sacrilegiously using the utensils from the Temple of God



- ◆ Belshazzar thought that all was peaceful
- ◆ after all, some of his walls were thought to be over 300 ft. tall
- ◆ 1 Thess 5:3 — For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

- ◆ Belshazzar had been indifferent to the information God had given Nebuchadnezzar in his famous dream (Dan 2)
- ◆ it had been decreed that the head of gold would be replaced by the arms and chest of silver
- ◆ the wicked says (Ps 10:6) — He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.

- ◆ Nebuchadnezzar had decreed that all peoples were to give respect to the God of the Jews (Dan 3:9) and he himself had praised the Lord for His sovereignty and greatness (Dan 4:34-37)
- ◆ but, as the years progressed, the great king's words were forgotten and Belshazzar treated the God of Israel with arrogant disrespect
- ◆ people can defy the will of God and blaspheme His Name only so long and then the hand of the Lord begins to move

## Daniel 5:5-9

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

# Daniel 5:5-9

- ◆ 7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.
- ◆ 8 Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.
- ◆ 9 Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

◆ Job 20:4-7 —

◆ 4 Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, 5 That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? 6 Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; 7 Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?

- ◆ Belshazzar realized that he pushed God too far and he went to pieces
- ◆ suddenly, he sees the Hand appear
- ◆ he can't control his bowels
- ◆ (this was a prophecy to Cyrus in Isaiah 45:1 — Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut)

- ◆ the “wise” men couldn’t read it because they didn’t know Who had sent it
- ◆ Jn 14:16-17 — 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.



## Daniel 5:10-12

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

## Daniel 5:10-12

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

## Daniel 5:10-12

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

- ◆ notice she (the queen mother) was not at this party (probably because she knew the God of Israel after all her husband had gone through)
- ◆ she tells him there is a man in his kingdom that can interpret this writing
- ◆ Daniel was somewhere between 82-86 when this happened
- ◆ you're never too old to be used by God — as long as you're alive and have breath He can use you in season and out of season

## Daniel 5:13-17

- ◆ 13 Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?
- ◆ 14 I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.
- ◆ 15 And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing:

## Daniel 5:13-17

- ◆ 16 And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.
- ◆ 17 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.

# Daniel 5:18-24

- ◆ 18 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: 19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: 21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

# Daniel 5:18-24

- ◆ 22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; 23 But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: 24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.



- ◆ these verses are a summary of Ch. 4 of Daniel
- ◆ Daniel respected the king but wasn't afraid to tell him the truth
- ◆ Daniel knew of the pride of this king and he knew the history of Nebuchadnezzar, so he took advantage to explain it to him

- ◆ Daniel preaches about the king's folly before he gives the interpretation
- ◆ he was basically telling him he was a fool and asking him if he didn't listen to Nebuchadnezzar
- ◆ he was telling him "YOU KNEW!"
  - ◆ this is the folly of all humankind - we know what happens if we make certain decisions and yet, we still make them
  - ◆ so many times we think we can get away with something and not get caught — we just need to think of Belshazzar
    - ◆ Numbers 32:23 — be sure your sin will find you out
  - ◆ this king had turned from the living God to false ones and now he's about to face the consequences

- ◆ Nebuchadnezzar showed his pride by boasting about his achievements and taking credit for what God had helped him accomplish
- ◆ Belshazzar displayed his pride by desecrating the holy vessels from the temple of the Most High God
- ◆ this king was guilty of blasphemy and idolatry

# Daniel 5:25-29

- ◆ 25 And this is the writing that was written, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.
- ◆ 26 This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

# Daniel 5:25-29

- ◆ 27 Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.
- ◆ 28 Peres; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.
- ◆ 29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

- ◆ these words can be measurements for money but Daniel didn't use them this way
- ◆ mina = numbered — it's repeated so it means that it's going to happen soon
- ◆ tekem = weighed — the king himself had been weighed and found wanting — the king's days were numbered as well
- ◆ peres — "divided" and "Persia" — Babylon would be divided between the Medes and Persians, whose armies were at the gate that very night

## Interesting Passages in Scripture

- ◆ Ezekiel 4:1-8 — “And now, son of man, take a large clay brick and set it down in front of you. Then draw a map of the city of Jerusalem on it. 2 Show the city under siege. Build a wall around it so no one can escape. Set up the enemy camp, and surround the city with siege ramps and battering rams. 3 Then take an iron griddle and place it between you and the city. Turn toward the city and demonstrate how harsh the siege will be against Jerusalem. This will be a warning to the people of Israel.

## Interesting Passages in Scripture

- ◆ 4 “Now lie on your left side and place the sins of Israel on yourself. You are to bear their sins for the number of days you lie there on your side. 5 I am requiring you to bear Israel’s sins for 390 days—one day for each year of their sin. 6 After that, turn over and lie on your right side for 40 days—one day for each year of Judah’s sin.
- ◆ 7 “Meanwhile, keep staring at the siege of Jerusalem. Lie there with your arm bared and prophesy her destruction. 8 I will tie you up with ropes so you won’t be able to turn from side to side until the days of your siege have been completed.



# 430 years

- ◆  $390 + 40 = 430$  years
- ◆  $430 - 70$  years (Babylonian captivity) = 360 years unaccounted for
- ◆ Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28 teach us that God would punish them 7 times over for their sin
- ◆  $360$  (years)  $\times 7 = 2520$  years
- ◆  $2520$  years  $\times 360$  days = 907,200 days

# 430 years

- ◆ From the decree of Cyrus to the rebirth of Israel as a nation in 1948 is 2520 years
- ◆ From the decree of Artaxerxes allowing Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall to Jerusalem becoming the capital of Israel once again in June, 1967 is 2520 years

# 2520

- ◆ fascinating number in the Word of God
- ◆  $2520 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days} = 907,200 \text{ days}$
- ◆  $907,200 / 365.25 = 2483.778 \text{ solar years}$
- ◆  $2483.778 - 535$  (end of the 70 yrs captivity since Daniel went to Babylon) = 1948 — Israel becomes a nation again

# 2520

- ◆ Daniel 5:25 — “This is the message that was written: Mene, mene, tekel, and Parsin.
- ◆ mene = a weight or measurement known as a mina; usually 50 shekels
- ◆ mene = 50 shekels
- ◆ tekem = a unit of weight; 1 shekel
- ◆ Upharsin = 1/2 mina or 25 shekels

# 2520

- ◆  $50 + 50 + 1 + 25 = 126$  shekels
- ◆ acc. to Ezekiel 45:12, 1 shekel is equivalent to 20 gerahs (“And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs” — gerah, a weight)
- ◆  $126 \times 20 = 2520$
- ◆ God used Ezekiel and Daniel, 2 prophets of Babylonian captivity, to establish the time frame of the reestablishment of Israel
- ◆ as we saw in a previous slide, 2520 can convert to 1948 — in the mouth of two or three witnesses

## Daniel 5:30-31

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

- ◆ a tunnel was dug that drained off the river into the swamp and when it got down to 4', the troops were ordered and they waded under the walls of Babylon
- ◆ while the king was putting the robe on Daniel, the enemy was inside the walls, clinging out of the river

- ◆ the conquest of Babylon was engineered by Cyrus, king of Persia
- ◆ he was God's chosen servant for the job — Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-4)
- ◆ Darius may have been an important officer in the army of Cyrus, or it may have been a title — Darius can mean "lord"
- ◆ Josephus (Antiquities, XI. 1, 2) said that when Cyrus made his grand entrance, Daniel presented him with an ancient scroll of Isaiah, which contained a personal letter addressing him by name
- ◆ Isaiah had died 150 years prior to Cyrus being born!



## Isaiah 44:27-28

- ◆ Who says to the deep, 'Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers';  
28 Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." '

# Isaiah 45:1-5

- ◆ “Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held— To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: 2 ‘I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron.

# Isaiah 45:1-5

- ◆ 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel. 4 For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me. 5 I am the Lord, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me,

# Cyrus the Great

- ◆ more than a great man that founded an empire
- ◆ seen as the epitome of a great leader
- ◆ 1971 - Iran celebrated 2500th anniversary of his monarchy
- ◆ he established the Medo-Persian empire
- ◆ his father was Persian and his mother was Median — he was part both and this worked to his advantage

# Cyrus the Great

- ◆ he freed the captives and returned vessels that had been plundered from the Temple 70 years earlier
- ◆ he gave the Jews incentives to return to their homeland and rebuild their Temple (2 Chron 36:22; Ezra 1:1-4)
- ◆ he gave them financing to go back home (about 50,000 took advantage of it)
- ◆ he gave them donations to help rebuild their Temple

- ◆ the conquest of Babylon and its destruction had been prophesied by Isaiah (13-14; 21; 47) and Jeremiah (50-51)
- ◆ Babylon had been God's chosen instrument to chasten His people Israel, but the Babylonian army had carried things too far and mistreated the Jews
- ◆ the conquest of Babylon was also God's punishment for what they had done to His Temple