

# GODLY LIVING IN A GODLESS WORLD

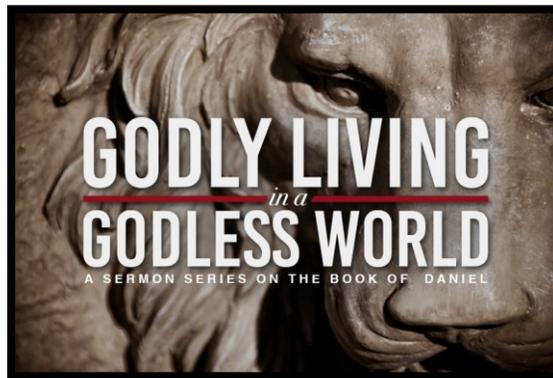
## Expositional Study Of Daniel

Daniel 5:17-31

Written By

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**M**ark Steyn, a skilled Canadian political author, conservative political analyst and articulate radio commentator, addresses what will logically happen to America in the near future in his unnerving book *After America: Get Ready for Armageddon*. Interestingly enough, he builds his premise of our eventual demise, providing we fail to make radical course corrections (which currently does not look very like given our political, constitutional, spiritual, sexual, educational, financial, immigration balkanization), on God's handwriting on the wall during the drunken party of Belshazzar. As in the days of the ill-fated Babylonian prideful potentate, Steyn demonstrates with logical clarity how our leaders do not have a clue how to read the current handwriting on the wall as we party on.

For Steyn, the twice repeated ancient monetary term MENE-MENE, which is contextually translated, "God has numbered your kingdom," readily applies to our unsustainable national debt. He posits that our "public debt will rise from 44 percent of the GDP in 2008 to 716 percent by 2080. Then again, the CBO's 'extended-baseline scenario,' which assumes there will be no changes to current policy, says public debt will only rise to 280 percent by 2080."<sup>1</sup> The financial conclusion is clear: When you spend way more than you take in, and you do it in an out-of-control fashion, one day everything has to collapse. It is just simple book-keeping math.

Looking at the Hebrew judgmental word TEKEL, which means, "You have been weighed on the scales and found deficient," Steyn relates this to our vacuous financial portfolio and our

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Steyn, *After America: Get Ready for Armageddon* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2011), 23.

suicidal departure from constitutionalism while embracing the misguided notion of globalization.

UPHARSIN, which means, “Your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians,” is, according to Steyn the modern equivalent of the Russians, Chinese, and Islamic radical ideologues who cannot wait to carve up the western world which will be increasingly incapable of defending itself in the face of utterly implacable foes. Even now the last group is perpetually testing our resolve to effectively repel and eradicate them, as we see from the divisive and heated national discussion of how to respond to the Islamic terrorist attack in Orlando last week. Sadly, but not shockingly, the best we can propose to deal with an enemy determined to murder us with weapons purchased on our soil is to pass laws to keep weapons from law-abiding citizens.

Study world history. You will quickly learn that nations are not eternal entities. They come and go, and they usually and slowly engage in self-destructive activities. At first, those immoral, anti-God, anti-logic activities do not garner too much attention, nor do they raise too many eyebrows; however, as you head further down that road of decay, eventually you pick up sinister, hair-raising speed as you head toward the cliff of chaos.

As Americans, we are citizens of this great land built by the sacrifice and sweat of our forefathers, our family members, and our countrymen and women, but, as believers in Christ, we are, first and foremost, citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20). With our heavenly citizenship comes a grave responsibility to be God’s voice, to be His spiritual light to the nation, its leaders and its people who have the pedal to the metal on a vehicle called godlessness and immorality. We should not miss an opportunity to remind them of the timeless divine message of Daniel chapter 5 . . .

## Unchecked Sinful Slides Are Costly—Nationally & Personally (Daniel 5:1-31)

Nations and people who disregard God and God’s truths sow the seeds of their own destruction. From what we have seen from the last night of the once glorious Babylonian empire, there is always a noticeable structure to the fatal fracture (to mix metaphors).

- *You’ll Witness A Denial* (Daniel 5:1). This is the arrogant notion you can live like you want with no negative repercussions. You might need to rethink this position, quickly.
- *You’ll Witness A Desecration* (Daniel 5:2-4). With God and His life-giving teachings extracted and placed off to the side as some type of inferior soil, the nation or person logically attacks and belittles that which is sacred as they bask in their seemingly endless debauchery. Instead of basking, you should start permitting God to start blasting, blasting away at your hardened pride.
- *You’ll Witness A Declaration* (Daniel 5:5). God is patient, but He is also holy, which means He will tolerate your sin for a time; however, there always comes the time when He says, “Time’s up. The canyon awaits you.” The

Babylonian elites received this message as God's hand wrote an ominous message on the wall where they partied: Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.

- *You'll Witness A Diversion* (Daniel 5:6-9). As the sinful nation or person brushes up against a definitive and disciplinary wake up word from the Almighty, the typical knee-jerk reaction is to seek counsel from the godless counselors who helped erode the soil around your tree in the first place. This is what King Belshazzar did when he asked the sorcerers to explain the writing of God. He contacted the wrong people because he ultimately did not want to hear from God. How hard is the human heart? This hard.
- *You'll Witness A Distinction* (Daniel 5:10-17). As societal and spiritual darkness descends, bold believers stand out as great points of light. Hardened unbelievers, on the contrary, will typically increase their commitment to advancing evil in its various forms. Courageous believers will not be intimidated by this illogical push toward further perversion but will, like Daniel, stand up and speak out for God with love, compassion, and logic.

A sixth, and final, concept one encounters in a nation or person who has purposefully gone off the proverbial rails through destructive (progressive) choices is embedded in Daniel 5, verses 17 through 31.

### You'll Witness A Doom (Daniel 5:17-31)

The doom is divine in nature and it is never without divine warning:

Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life (Galatians 6:7-8).

Sow unrighteousness and you will reap righteous judgment from a holy God. Sow righteousness by being rightly related to God through His Son, Jesus Christ, and you will reap abundant life in the here and now and in the hereafter. It is a timeless principle woven through all the books of the Bible and is applicable to nations and individuals.

Structurally, as we study these inspired verses from Daniel's pen, we can readily identify a flow to the last night of the out-of-control, self-absorbed, overly self-confident Babylonian kingdom.

*The Doom Averted With King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 5:17-21)*. Mark well the bold, courageous words of the octogenarian Daniel, God's chosen prophet for a pivotal time in world history. His example should make you ask yourself, regardless of your age, some pointed practical questions: Am I prepared to tell the spiritual truth to those who openly oppose it to their own detriment? Am I willing to risk banishment, ridicule, imprisonment, loneliness, and being called vile names all for the sake of God's life giving truth? Daniel was always that man all the way to the end of his amazing life.

<sup>17</sup> Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him. <sup>18</sup> O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father. <sup>19</sup> 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; and whomever he wished he elevated and whomever he wished he humbled. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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. 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 realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes.

Before Daniel told King Belshazzar that his kingdom would crumble that very evening, he laid the foundation for why divine judgment was coming by giving the carnal, clueless king a brief family history lesson.

With verse 18, Daniel underscores the sovereign *power* of the living God of the Jews, a God he calls “the Most High God” (vv. 18, 21). Belshazzar, like a good polytheist, wrongly thought his gods were gods. Such a premise is not defensible nor logical. Why? Ultimately, there can only be one living God, not many. Why? God, by definition, is perfect and lacks absolutely nothing. In order for there to be two, three, or a thousand so-called gods, they would have to differ from each other (as the Babylonians gods, in fact, did). If they differed, then a lack existed among them. If a lack was present, then, by definition, none of them could be the true God. That God is best described by the Jews as a monotheistic God they rightfully identify, by His revelatory direction, as “the Most High God.” And, as “the Most High God,” this living God, by definition, is beyond time and space and knows all choices and possible outcomes from the free-will choices of His personal creation, man. Further, this God sovereignly works in all the minute components of life to make sure all choices and events eventually fulfill His kingdom/messianic plans. As Belshazzar should have realized from his regal family tree, this great God had given his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, his throne and power (“granted” echoes the same divine sovereign motif in Daniel 2:37). It was a concept Nebuchadnezzar, unfortunately, would learn the hard way.

Verse 19 tells us that King Nebuchadnezzar governed like most godless, totalitarian potentates do: he ruled with an iron fist, not a loving, caring hand, resulting in creating fear, not healthy respect, in the lives of his subjects. His *performance* was sadly . . . sinister. He used his God-given power to wrongly execute anyone he felt needed to be removed, while he blessed whoever he thought warranted positive treatment. Does this not describe a plethora of politicians in our world today? Indeed. Instead of using their God-given power to bless and protect people and to advance godly concerns, they misuse their power to advance themselves and their fellow ideologues, as well as push their false worldview(s) and vapid, destructive political/moral/economic philosophy(ies). God, conversely, is not content to let perverse people continue in the wrong direction without a word from Him. No, out of love for them, He will

attempt to get their attention so they can move from pride to humility, from eternal destruction to eternal life. Such is what we encounter in verses 20 through 21.

From verse 20, God, through Daniel, isolates the core *problem* to King Nebuchadnezzar's rule and reign: PRIDE. Seemingly unlimited power led to unlimited pride. He started thinking he was some kind of man, unlike any other before him. He became absorbed with the concept of his greatness, leaving no room for a humble relationship with the God who really entrusted all this power and wealth to him. Pride is a terrible sin, is it not? Concerning pride, C.S. Lewis remarks with his usual insightfulness, "According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind."<sup>2</sup> Lewis is spot on. God is opposed to the proud (1 Peter 5:5) because it is this characteristic which is the contaminated soil of all the fruit of sin.

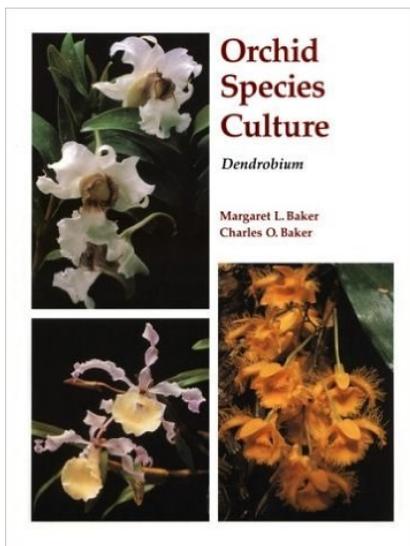
Desiring, like a good shepherd, to woo the narcissistic king to his fold (John 10), God brought sovereign directed *punishment* on King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 5:21). How could King Belshazzar have forgotten how his grandfather suddenly became like a wild animal for seven years during his reign? Had the story not been told to him on countless occasions? No doubt. Nebuchadnezzar lived like an animal as a leader, so God sovereignly gave him a disease which made him not only lose control of his empire but he became a proverbial wild man. Put differently, out of love for the soul of Nebuchadnezzar, God took drastic disciplinary action to attempt to wake him up spiritually . . . one last time. The pain and suffering worked because King Nebuchadnezzar traded pride for faith in "the Most High God."

Doom was prophesied for this head of gold of the great Babylonian empire; however, that doom was averted when the king bowed before THE King, i.e., God.

And this intrigue probably all occurred under the watchful eye of a little grandson, Belshazzar. And even if it did not, as we see in verses 19 through 31, the reckless, wicked king most certainly knew about the details of the conversion story. The question for his life could not have been clearer from God: Will you humble yourself before Me in light of what you have seen and heard about your grandfather's faith journey? Sadly, the grandson was not about to learn from what God taught his grandfather.

All of this should stop and make you ask a logical practical question: *Am I learning from how God has worked in my family to wake various people up spiritually?* My mother, Sue, came to faith as a young girl. Her sister, my aunt Roberta, did not

come to faith until she reached her forties. For this former valedictorian, analytical thinker, and wealthy Californian, it took longer for her to see her need of a personal relationship with "the Most High God," Jesus, the Christ. My uncle Charles, an intellectually gifted orchid scientist and scientific writer on everything pertaining to orchids, never dropped his academic guard to learn from what God had done in the lives of his sisters, and he slipped into eternity without God. His brother, my uncle Ray, a former Air Force pilot in Vietnam, an attorney, an educator



<sup>2</sup>Mark Water, compiler, *The New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 826.

and another sibling with a genius IQ, he, too, would not drop his pride either even as cancer forced him to face his own mortality. Wake up! God is working overtime in your family line get your attention so you can secure forgiveness of sin and enjoy the reality of eternal life in His glorious presence (John 3:36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 4). Nebuchadnezzar bowed in faith. Will you? He bowed and judgment was averted politically and spiritually.

As Daniel demonstrates in his blunt conversation with Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar, the response to God was quite different.

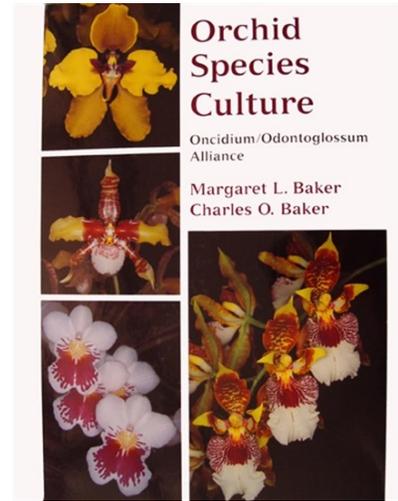
*The Doom Actualized With King Belshazzar (Daniel 5:19-31).*

Despite all the incontrovertible miraculous evidences “the Most High God” performed in King Nebuchadnezzar's life to guide him to a point of spiritual conversion, his grandson completely disregarded that evidence so he could enjoy pride and its fruits to the fullest:

<sup>22</sup> Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, <sup>23</sup> but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and 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.

The *problem* in Belshazzar's life resembled that of his grandfather. It involved personal and political pride of colossal proportions. However, God's response to Belshazzar's sinful love affair with pride met with a different appraisal and response from God. All the words Daniel employs here in Hebrew are grammatically emphatic: “Yet you” is the coordinating conjunction “and” wedded to a personal pronoun, thereby creating a disjunctive clause filled with oratorical emphasis. Place heavy verbal, finger pointing emphasis on this word combination: “Yet YOU,” *w<sup>c</sup>antah*, וְאַתָּה, willfully chose the live arrogantly despite all of this spiritual evidence God gave you. Verse 23 is equally grammatically emphatic by the uniting of the coordinating conjunction (waw) with a preposition: “but YOU,” *w<sup>c</sup>al*, וְעַל, “exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven.” How did he exalt himself? By taking the holy temple vessels of God, vessels he knew were tied to the worship of the living God, and desecrating them by using them in his drunken political and military party. He even willfully went one step further and led the people to worship gods which were no gods. As mathematician and biblical author John Lennox rightly remarks, “It would be hard to imagine a more spectacular breach of the first commandment: You shall have no other gods before me.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed.

Such is the nature of unchecked pride. It moves a person to erroneously think, like Satan at his fall (Isaiah 14), that they can, pretty much, get away with anything, even mocking



<sup>3</sup>John Lennox, *Against the Flow* (Oxford, Monarch Books, 2015), 182.

God and holy things. He thought wrong. Ironically, God uses the same type of disjunctive sentence to describe the divine punishment He will level against this prideful king, who most certainly represents the Anti-Christ revealed as the final “king” in Daniel’s detailed prophecy (Daniel 7:15-28). Daniel shouts, “but to God,” *w<sup>e</sup>lelaha*, וְלֵאלֹהִים, which is emphatic by nature of wedding the coordinating conjunction (waw) to the preposition (le), and, then, tying this to the word for God, *elah*. Belshazzar willfully threw divine truth to the wind, and conveniently forgot that this God, unlike his gods, did (does) *see*, *hear*, and *know* and He holds the kings very life in his hands (Job 12:10). Sobering thoughts humble people know, but ones fools mock to their own detriment.

How many political leaders in our own country are walking in the sinful sandals of Belshazzar? Too many. They, like their blind followers, mock God by embracing darkness over light, by calling darkness light and light darkness, by belittling Christ and Christianity in countless ways, by, well, you can fill in the blank, I’m sure (Isaiah 5 describes their path well). How many people, your countrymen and women, live for themselves, for the next party, for the next novel and godless ideology, while eschewing and eviscerating everything related to Christ and Christianity? Too many. Pay attention, please. *There is a limit to how much prideful perversion God will put up with from those who have incontrovertible evidence of His existence, coupled with His eternal teaching as vouchsafed in Bible.* Judgment always comes from the hand of the true King of Kings who loves righteousness and hates evil (Deuteronomy 12:31; Psalms 11:7; 33:5; 99:4; Proverbs 6:16-19; 15:9).

Everything Daniel had said to this point, builds to the reason for the divine writing on the wall. The very words speak of divine *punishment* for this culture’s love affair with pride, wealth, materialism, hedonism, and false theology.

<sup>24</sup> Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out. <sup>25</sup> Now this is the inscription that was written out: ‘MENĒ, MENĒ, TEKĒL, UPHARSIN.’ <sup>26</sup> This is the interpretation of the message: ‘MENĒ’—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. <sup>27</sup> ‘TEKĒL’—you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. <sup>28</sup> ‘PERĒS’—your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.”

Once again, emphatic times called for emphatic words, which is exactly what we encounter with opening “then,” *bedayin*, בְּאַיִן, which is another preposition wedded to a non-verb/adverbial conjunction. God speaks with emphasis here not to wake the sinner up to but inform the sinner that the perverse party is over for him and his godless, off-the-rails nation. Three words, one stated twice for added emphasis, describe the divine punishment God ordered for this godless society. Because they had sinned against ample revelatory knowledge from God, their judgment would be more severe.

MENE, is a participle whose root means “to be numbered.” Interestingly enough, it is lexically related to the coinage word called a mina.<sup>4</sup> By writing it two times in succession, God

<sup>4</sup>S. R. Driver and Charles A Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon*, ed. Francis Brown (Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers and Authors, INC, 1981), 1101. †מְנָה S<sup>4484</sup> TWOT<sup>2835a</sup> n. [m.] **maneh, mina**, a weight (v. BH; Old Aramaic מנה SAC<sup>75</sup> Lzb<sup>313</sup>);—abs. Dn 5:25<sup>0</sup>, 26, v. ClGann

heavily underscores the fact that He has been keeping spiritual tabs on the leaders and people of Babylon over the years, and that now He is through counting their activities and has determined that all counting is over. The figures add up to say their number is up because of their perpetual pride and perversion. Logically, also, there would be no grace and no extension of mercy. Christ warns us in His Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25) there is coming another time when He will say the number is up, but this time it will be for all the godless nations who have opposed Him. As assuredly as Babylon met with God's judgment, so shall future peoples who flagrantly and foolishly reject His salvific revelation. Personally, this word should cause you, who are currently living large, to sober up and ask yourself: How close am I to God saying MENE, MENE to me? How close is our nation to hearing their bone-chilling words from the Almighty? Might we pray for revival to sweep through our land like a mighty, refreshing wind.

TEKEL, is another participle, but its lexical meaning is different. It has a two-fold nuance. On the one hand, it means "to be weighed" as if on scales. As with the former word, it, too, is equated with coinage since it is associated with the familiar word *shekel* (תִּקְלָל).<sup>5</sup> Ostensibly and contextually it means that Belshazzar's loose life, like coinage, was laid on God's divine scales of justice and was found to be insufficient to please His perfect holiness. Belshazzar should have taken note from how God dealt with his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. From this running historical narrative he should have learned that "the Most High God" is one who constantly weighs the actions of people and will typically work through punishment to deliver them or to destroy them based on their faith response to him, or lack thereof. As you might expect, the Old Testament is replete with teaching on this facet of God's character (Genesis 18:25; 1 Samuel 2:3; Job 31:6; Psalm 62:9; Proverbs 16:2; Matthew 5:28). He is always weighing so that when He does move in judgment His actions are the epitome of justice.

Another lexical meaning of this Hebrew word, TEKEL, is most instructive. It means, "to be light."<sup>6</sup> Applied to King Belshazzar it speaks of his moral, spiritual lightness. When placed on God's scale of measurement, the king's morality was like a cotton ball (if even that) as compared to the Rock of Gibraltar nature of God's morality. In every way, therefore, he was found wanting. From what we learn from what Christ says about people on judgment day in Matthew 7, there will be many who will flaunt their religious works in behalf of God's name. Unfortunately, their works will be TEKEL to Him because the only work He is pleased with is the one performed by His Son, Jesus, on the cross and in the empty tomb.<sup>7</sup> Is your life ready to

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Juillet-Août, 1886, 36 ff. נֹס i. 414 f. Dr al.; its connexion in Dn with מְנָה is due to word-play; v. also פָּרַס, תִּקְלָל.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>5</sup>S. R. Driver and Charles A Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon*, ed. Francis Brown (Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers and Authors, INC, 1981), 1118.

<sup>6</sup>C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume 9 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 189. In תִּקְלָל there lies the double sense that the word תִּקְלָל, *to weigh*, accords with the Niphal of קָלַל, *to be light, to be found light* (cf. תִּקְלָל, Gen. 16:4). The interpretation presents this double meaning: *Thou art weighed in the balances (תִּקְלָלְתָּ) and art found too light* (like the תִּקְלָל). תִּסְרִיר, *wanting in necessary weight*, i.e., deficient in moral worth. תִּקְלָלְתָּ, a *perf.* formed from the *partic. Piel*; cf. Winer, § 13, 2. As to the figure of the balance, cf. Job 31:6, Ps. 62:10 (9).

<sup>7</sup>Matthew 7: <sup>21</sup>"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>"Many will say to Me on <sup>b</sup>that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many <sup>1</sup>miracles?' <sup>23</sup>"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; <sup>a</sup>depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' <sup>24</sup>"Therefore <sup>a</sup>everyone who hears these words of Mine, and <sup>1</sup>acts upon them, <sup>2</sup>may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. <sup>25</sup>"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for

be placed on God's perfect scales? The only way to get ready is to have a faith relationship with the Savior, Jesus, As Peter states in Acts,

<sup>10</sup> let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead - by this *name* this man stands here before you in good health. <sup>11</sup> He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, *but* which became the very corner *stone*. <sup>12</sup> And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved (Acts 4).

Read the divine handwriting on the wall of your life today and get prepared to meet the living God. Belshazzar was not prepared. Don't follow in his footsteps.

Finally, UPHARSIN is a third participle which means "to be broken" or "divided." It is built on the word PERES (פָּרַס), which speaks of a half of a mina.<sup>8</sup> The implication and interpretation, according to Daniel the prophet, is once great Babylonian empire would be shortly divided and given to an invading nation/army. There is, no doubt, a play on words here with the word for Persia or Persians: *parash* (פָּרַשׁ), which is very similar to *peresh*. In Brown and Drivers Hebrew Lexicon the words actually follow each other in the entries. As Daniel reveals, the kingdom would be divided up amongst the Medes and Persians. Medes are listed first because for a brief time they were the more powerful force in this alliance; however, that was short-lived as Cyrus, the Persian rose to military prominence from within their ranks (Daniel 6:8, 12). The Scriptures are historically exact down to the smallest detail, and they historically were fulfilled just like God has prophesied.

Daniel has faithfully delivered the sober truth of God's revelatory word to a man who had lived his whole life shaking his fist in God's face while he enjoyed the season of his sin. But now the gig was up. The head of gold, Babylon (606-539 B.C.), *would be* replaced by the chest and arms of silver, Medo-Persia (539-331 B.C.), and it would occur that night! What about you? Will you, like Daniel say what needs saying to our Babylonian culture?

As you might expect, not even this powerful and supernatural word from the living God awakened Belshazzar from his spiritual stupor. No, he carried on with business as usual instead of hitting the wine-stained floor with his knees in repentance:

<sup>29</sup> 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 the third ruler in the kingdom.

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it had been founded upon the rock. <sup>26</sup> "And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. <sup>27</sup> "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall."

<sup>8</sup>S. R. Driver and Charles A Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon*, ed. Francis Brown (Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers and Authors, INC, 1981), 1108: פָּרַס (read פָּרַס? M 78\* f) prob. **n.[m.] halfmina** (NH פָּרַס, Old Aramaic פַּרַשׁ, Lzb 354 SAC 99 Cooke 176, 406; v. מְנַא and reff.);—abs. פ' Dn 5:28; pl. פָּרַסִּין (י) [read פָּרַסִּין? v. M] v 25.<sup>8</sup>

Earlier, Daniel has said he did not want these gifts, and even though they are offered here it does not say the godly aged saint accepted them. I think he did not for he knew they were ultimately worthless in light of what God was about to do. And what did God do? Read on.

<sup>30</sup> That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. <sup>31</sup> So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.

That same night, viz., October 12, 539 B.C., fortress Babylon and its people fell when they least expected it. How did it occur? Herodotus, the ancient Greek historian, tells us in his book *Histories* that Cyrus' army diverted the mighty Euphrates river which bisected the city, thereby lowering the water table so his troops could slip in under the protective gates undetected. Shocking. A people thought their mighty city/fortress was virtually impregnable, and who basked in the fact they had twenty years of food stored to help them withstand any invasion, THEY FELL as God said they would. A people who thought they could live and flaunt God's laws, morality, and spiritually and not face any negative repercussions because of their defenses, THEY FELL. Sixty-five years before this invasion occurred, Jeremiah prophesied the fall with exactness for God (Jeremiah 51:62-64) . . . and THEY FELL.

Unchecked sin is costly . . . for nations and for people. Wake up. All nations and all people will have their last night on planet earth. Further, all nations and all people will have to give account to the living God for how they responded to the divine light He gave them. Yes, there is a divine handwriting on the walls of all nations and all peoples. There is also the voice of God calling out for sinners to come to Him and be saved. As Paul, who had his share of sin written on the wall of his life, writes in his letter to the church in Colossae:

<sup>13</sup> When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, <sup>14</sup> having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross (Colossians 2).

Either God erases your sin now when you humble yourself and placed your faith in His Son as your Savior, or He will judge the sin He has fastidiously kept track of so His judgment is pure and just. Which will it be in your life? What will it be for our country?