

**October 29**

**Scriptures:** Read Daniel 5 & 6

**Key Verse:** “He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” (Daniel 6:27)

### **Overview**

The events recorded in chapter 5 take place on the last night before the fall of the Babylonian Empire, when it was replaced by the “silver” kingdom of the Medes and Persians (2:32, 39). The Lord had used the Babylonians as instruments to destroy nations and punish His people and His city (Jer. 27:5-8), yet because of their pride and defiance of Him, the Lord purposed to destroy them. This chapter not only presents an historical event, but it is also a lesson about sin and its consequences.

Belshazzar was either the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar or was related to him through marriage. He was a co-regent with his father Nabonidus, who at the time was in another part of their kingdom fighting with the Persians. At such a crucial time, with the approach of the enemy army on the city of Babylon, Belshazzar was very foolish to be having an orgy (cf. Prov. 5:21-23; 31:4-5). It had been about twenty-five years since Nebuchadnezzar had died, but Belshazzar would have been familiar with the events of his life, including all the miracles of the Most High God. Even so, he openly defied and mocked God by praising the heathen gods while using the sacred goblets that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem (1:2; 5:2-3, 23-24; Rev. 9:20; Rom. 1:18-25). They defiled those vessels that had once been consecrated to God for His service and glory, and they provoked the wrath of God.

At the height of their party, the mood suddenly changed when Belshazzar saw the handwriting upon the wall. The 1,000 great men with him could not save him from the judgment of God, nor could the whole Babylonian army. Indeed, “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31). At the very time they were drinking, and while Daniel was explaining the miraculous writing on the wall, the army of the Medes and Persians were making their way under the city wall through a tunnel of a dried up river bed.

By this time, Daniel must have been in his eighties, but he was still brave and bold in pronouncing God’s judgment. Although the words written upon the wall could be understood by the king’s wisemen, they still did not know their prophetic meaning. Once again, that was a secret to be revealed only to Daniel. Daniel explained the three words translated “numbered”, “weighed”, and “divided”. The days of Belshazzar’s kingdom had been numbered, but had now expired. Belshazzar had not measured up on God’s scales. Now his kingdom was to be divided and given into the hands of the dual kingdom of the Medes and Persians. Belshazzar immediately promoted Daniel to being the third ruler, under him and his father. This was a promotion Daniel had previously declined, knowing that it was worthless (5:17, 29). The Lord was directing history, and in His plan the conqueror, King Cyrus of Persia (under whom Darius was a Median sub-king), was soon to issue the decree which would end Judah’s seventy-year captivity (Ezra 1:1-4).

When Darius came into power, he recognized the value of having Daniel in a high leadership position (ch. 6). His wisdom, experience, respect, and trustworthiness were qualities in demand. What a remarkable testimony it was that the envious men who sought to get rid of Daniel could find no fault with him, The only way to trap Daniel was to make a new law regarding religious worship, for they knew that Daniel's devotion and obedience to God superceded his loyalty to the king. Daniel's godliness, righteousness, and closeness to God was a well known fact (cf. Ezek. 14:14).

Because of his pride, the king was tricked into signing the decree that no one may pray to any other god or man, only to him. Daniel still knew he had to obey God, just as many years earlier his friends had remained true to God and disobeyed Nebuchadnezzar's law (3:18). As believers, we are to obey the laws of our governments, but if they be in opposition to God's law, "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Once Darius had discovered the foolishness in signing such a law, there was no way he could change it nor pardon any offenders; under the Persian law, a signed decree could not be revoked (6:8, 12). Since Daniel was so faithful to his God, Darius believed that God would intervene and deliver him (6:16). Perhaps Darius had heard of the past miracles of the God of Israel, Indeed the Lord did not disappoint Daniel or Darius, that His name might be glorified by Darius' confession and decree (6:25-27), by Daniel's reward and prosperity (6:28), and by the destruction of Daniel's wicked enemies (6:24). Those hungry lions got their meal after all!

## **Prayer**

God Almighty, we pray that we would be like Daniel May our testimony, like his, be such that others would not be able to find fault with us from sin, evil or foolishness in our lives. We ask for Your wisdom and guidance today, that we might be effective witnesses for You.