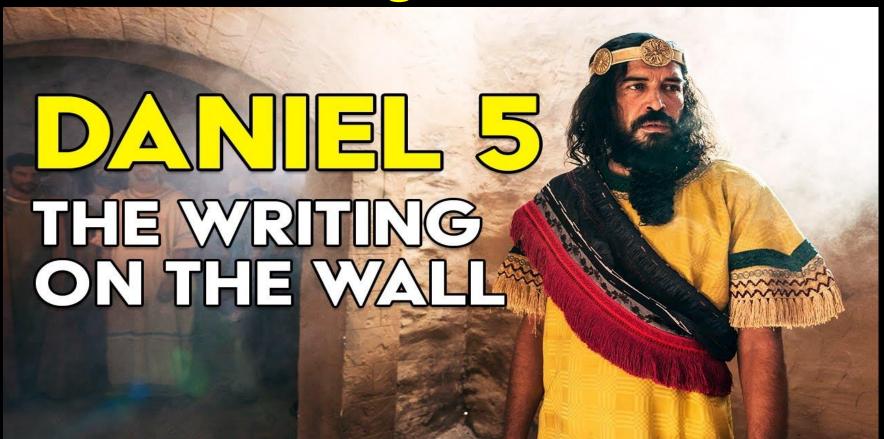
#### Daniel Chapter 5 – Part 1 From Feasting to Fear of Death



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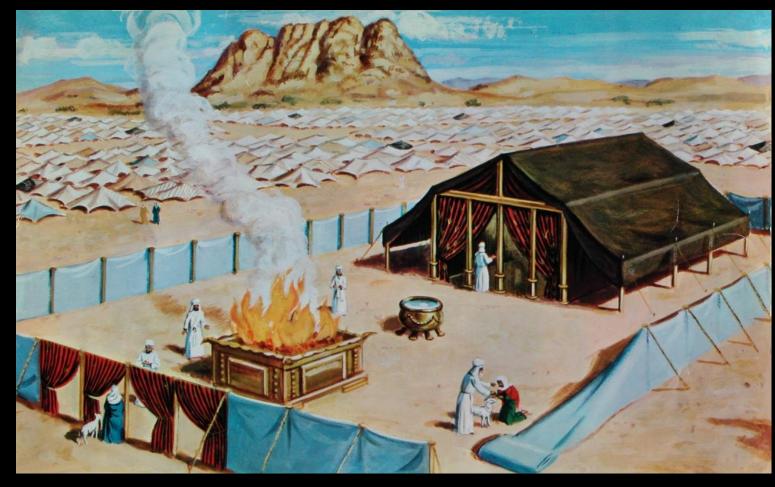
#### Enter The Ark of Hope

# The Great Controversy between God and Satan is primarily over "WORSHIP" Who will you Choose?









And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. – Exodus 25:8

**Psalms 77:13** 



#### Health Snippet – Hydrotherapy: Cold Water

What exactly is Cold Water Therapy? (Seek Medical Advice) Cold water therapy is using water that's ~ 59°F (15°C) to treat or stimulate health benefits. It's also known as cold hydrotherapy. The practice's been around for centuries. Recent adaptations: ice baths, brisk daily showers, outdoor swims, cold water immersions. **Benefits** (proven by science): improves circulation, deepen sleep, spike energy levels, and reduce inflammation in the body. Less muscle soreness: A 2016 study involving 20 athletes who soaked in a pool of cold water (12°C to 15°C) reported less muscle soreness than those who had no hydrotherapy after exercising. Faster cool down if you're overheated: A 2015 meta-analysis of 19 studies concluded that contact with cold water (~ 50°F or 10°C) cooled off overheated people twice as fast as no hydrotherapy. Ease symptoms of depression: Case study of a woman with anxiety and depression since age 17. At 24 years old, she began a trial of weekly open water swimming. A year later, her doctors found that regular swimming - depression symptoms kept at bay. **Boost your immune system**: A Dutch study tested participants exposed to a bacterial infection, influence their immune response by cold water immersion had fewer symptoms & producing more anti-inflammatory chemicals & fewer pro-inflammatory cytokines.

#### COLD SHOWER



STIMULATES IMMUNE SYSTEM

**INCREASES ALERTNESS** 

PREVENTS COLDS

**ANTI-DEPRESSION HORMONES** 

ACCELERATES METABOLISM

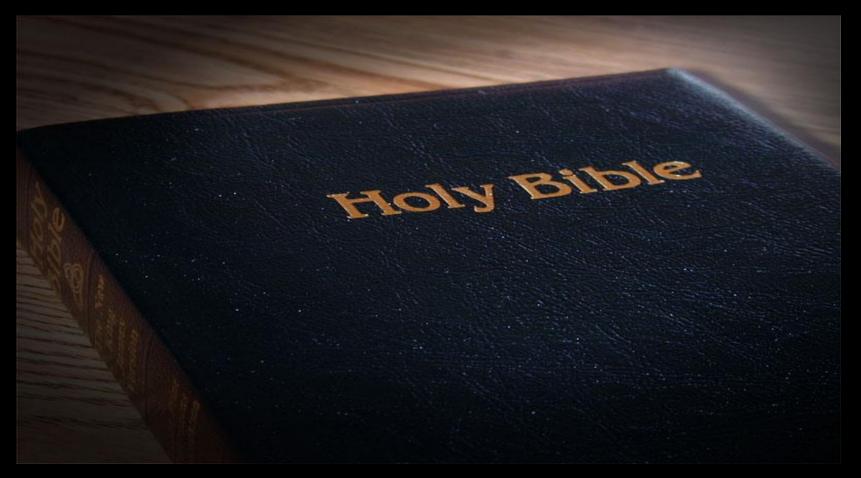
FREES UP THE MIND

**TIGHTENS THE SKIN** 

**REDUCE HAIR LOSS** 

GOOD TO DO IN THE MORNING

# Can We Trust Bible Prophecy?

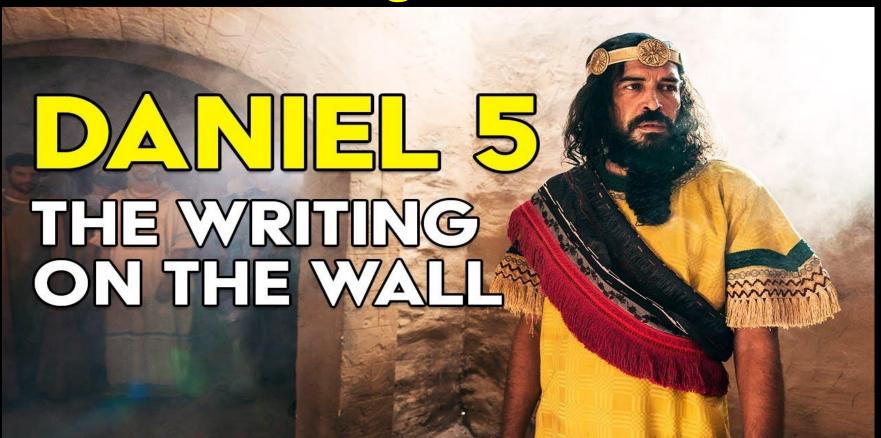


# Yes we Can

Whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

Matthew 10:42

#### Daniel Chapter 5 – Part 1 From Feasting to Fear of Death



#### **Past > Present > Future**



### Introduction

In this chapter the last Babylonian king appears: Belshazzar. In the past, critics had considered the book of Daniel to be historically unreliable. At that time not a single historian nor other material was known to mention Belshazzar. Then the cylinder of Cyrus and a number of clay tablets appeared and confirmed that Belshazzar had lived. He was co-regent with his father Nabonidus. While Nabonidus stayed outside the city of Babylon, Belshazzar was ruling in Babylon, and it is with Belshazzar that Daniel came in contact. So the book of Daniel is reliable. <u>The Biblical sources of Daniel 5</u>: an eyewitness account, And - Isaiah 13-14; Jeremiah 25; Jeremiah 50, 51; Isaiah 47.

The secular sources:

The Cyrus Cylinder (in the British Museum in London). The Nabonidus Chronicle (in the British Museum in London).

Greek historian Herodotus (Histories I. 191) stated that the city fell while the king's court was drinking wine and Xenophon (Cyropaedia VII.5.30) wrote that Cyrus killed the king of Babylon upon his entrance into the city.



# Introduction (cont'd)

The discovery of the Nabonidus Chronicle has resolved all problems of history of Daniel 5. In the Nabonidus Chronicle Belshazzar is mentioned by name. He is spoken of as coregent with his father, Nabonidus, who had gone to the desert oasis of Teima in Arabia to recover from some unexplained illness. In the words of the Verse Account of Nabonidus (British Museum Tablet 38,299):

"He [Nabonidus] entrusted the 'camp' to his oldest (son), the first-born, the troops everywhere in the country he ordered under his (command). He let (everything) go, entrusted the kingship to him and, himself, he started out for a long journey." - Quoted in C. Mervyn Maxwell, God Cares, volume 1, p. 91. This clearly explains the reason why the book of Daniel refers to Daniel as the third in the

kingdom

NABONIDUS CHRONICLE

Inscribed in Akkadian cuneiform

Describes the conquest of Babylon by Persian king Cyrus the Great

provides a rare contemporary account of Cyrus's rise to power

acquired in 1879, Ancient Sippar, Iraq

Written late 6th/early 5th Century B.C.

Cyrus is

mentioned in multiple OT passages including, Ezra 6 & Isa 45:13



### Introduction (cont'd)

Chapter 5 took place in 539 BC when Daniel was about 80 years old. Nebuchadnezzar, one of Daniel's first converts in the Babylonian court, had died. His grandson Belshazzar was now in power.

Daniel 5 points out that Belshazzar rejected the claims of the true God and turned his back on the witness and legacy of his grandfather. Belshazzar boldly led Babylon in rebellion against the true God.

**Chapter 5** reveals the overthrow and ultimate fall of Babylon by the army of the Medo-Persian Empire.

"Admitted to a share in kingly authority at fifteen years of age, Belshazzar gloried in his power and lifted up his heart against the God of heaven." - The Youth's Instructor, May 19, 1898



### Introduction (cont'd)

In Daniel chapter 5, the Word of God gives us a powerful example of human hubris that ends in a stunning and dramatic way. Though one could say that it takes Nebuchadnezzar a long time to learn his lesson, at least he learned it. His grandson, Belshazzar, does not. In using the temple vessels in a palace orgy, Belshazzar desecrates them. Such an act of desecration is tantamount not only to a challenge of God but an attack on God Himself. Thus, Belshazzar fills up the cup of his iniquities, acting in ways similar to the little horn (see Daniel chapter 8), which attacked the foundations of God's sanctuary. By removing dominion from Belshazzar, God prefigures what He will accomplish against the enemies of His people in the very last days. The events narrated in Daniel chapter 5 took place in 539 B.C., on the night Babylon fell before the Medo-Persian army. Here occurs the transition from gold to silver, predicted in Daniel chapter 2. Once more it becomes evident that God rules in the affairs of the world.



#### **Babylon, the Greatest City of Antiquity**

According to the discoveries of archaeologists, Babylon had two sets of walls—the outer walls and the inner walls. Both were actually double walls. The two inner walls were twelve and twenty-two feet wide respectively. The two walls making up the outer defences were twenty-four and twenty-six feet wide. Thus, in order for enemies to get into the inner city where the palace and the main temple were located, they would have had to go through or over close to eighty-five feet of walls and each wall was well defended! We know that horses could actually gallop on top of the outer walls. The city had 53 major temples and 955 smaller sanctuaries or shrines. It had 384 altars throughout the city streets. The greatest temple was the Great Ziggurat, which was built in honor of the patron sun-god Marduk. This temple was 300 feet wide at its base and 300 feet high. Inside the temple the predominant colours were purple and scarlet.

• See Revelation 17:4 – End time Babylon: Papal Rome.



#### Babylon, the Greatest City of Antiquity (cont'd)

#### The city proper covered an area of 12 miles and thus was the second largest city in antiquity. The entrances to the city were guarded by lion sphinxes.

Crucial to the protection of Babylon was the Euphrates River which ran through the centre of the city from north to south. Great brass gates protected the city where the river entered and exited the city (see Isaiah 45:1-3). The Euphrates guaranteed a constant source of water and food for the city. It is also noteworthy that when the city was taken in October by Darius and Cyrus, the Euphrates River was at its lowest ebb.

Nebuchadnezzar had built an elaborate system of canals outside the city to divert the excess water when the river was at flood stage. These channels took the water to a nearby lake.

Babylon was a very rich city (Jeremiah 51:13). It was truly the golden city. Babylon's great banquet hall has also been excavated by archaeologists. It measured 56 X 171 feet.





# The Sins of Babylon

According to the Bible, the kingdom of Babylon was guilty of a catalogue of sins:

#### <u>Sin #1</u>:

Babylon attempted to force all nations to practice her idolatry and false worship. (see Daniel 3; Daniel 5:1-4, 23, 24).

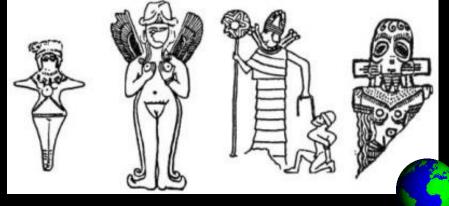
#### <u>Sin #2</u>:

Babylon was involved deeply in occultic practices and each of these practices is based in some way with the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul (see Daniel 5:7; Isaiah 47:9, 12, 13; Revelation 18:23)

#### <u>Sin #3</u>:

One of the greatest sins of Babylon was its persecution of God's people. Babylon is the enemy, par excellence, of God's people (Daniel 1:1-4). It is impossible to study about Babylon without making reference to God's people (Jeremiah 50:6, 7, 11, 23, 28, 33, 34; 51:5, 24, 34-37, 44, 49; Isaiah 14:16, 17).





### Daniel 5:1-4 - Belshazzar's Feast

Daniel 5:1 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.

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.

Belshazzar the king - Nebuchadnezzar had died in 562 B.C., leaving his son Evil-Merodach [Amel-Marduk] to take over the kingdom 562-560 B.C. He was succeeded by Neriglissar 560-556 B.C., who was succeeded by his son Laborosoarchod who ruled for 9 months. Nabonadius ruled next 556-539 B.C. with the last three years, 541-539 B.C. co-jointly with his son Belshazzar. This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah 27:6-8 where Babylon would rule until his son and his son's son, as Nabonadius was Nebuchadnezzar's son and Belshazzar therefore his grandson.



## Examining the verses...

<u>Made a great feast</u> - In 560 B.C., with Neriglissar ruling, war had broken out between the Babylonians and the Medes. Darius, the king of the Medes, summoned his nephew Cyrus, the king of the Persians, to aid him in the war. At the time of Belshazzar, Babylon the city was the only city in the east not under subjection to the Medes and Persians. So Cyrus laid siege to the city of Babylon. But prior to this, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah 51:44-46, a rumour came that Cyrus was coming to lay siege. He had to turn back due to the death of a sacred white horse, but came out again 1 year later 538 B.C.

#### With Belshazzar knowing all this, but being full of pride, still made a great feast as an act of defiance.

For Babylon's walls were too thick to break through and too high to climb, and with approximately 25 years supply of food, plus an abundance of food growing within the walls, and with the Euphrates running through the centre they had an indefinite supply of food.

A thousand of his lords plus wives and concubines were present at the feast.



### **Examining the verses (cont'd)...**

<u>Drank wine before the thousand</u> - The word before can also be translated as against. It would not be unusual for Belshazzar to have been in a drinking contest.

While he tasted the wine - With his reason impeded by the intoxicated state he was in from the fermented wine, he commanded to have the golden and silver vessels, that had been taken from the temple of God at Jerusalem, brought to him so they could drink out of them.

His father Nebuchadnezzar - These were the same vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken when he took over Jerusalem.

As seen already, Nebuchadnezzar was Belshazzar's grandfather. It was customary to call any parental figure by father.

<u>Drank in them</u> - The wives, concubines, king, and princes all drank out of sacred vessels from the house of God.

<u>Praised the gods</u> - They continued in their debased state by praising the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone. In reality, what they were doing was mixing their pagan religion with the true worship of God. We will see the results in the next verse.



# Examining the verses (cont'd)...

Although the Medes and Persians besieged the city, a huge banquet was held at the Babylonian court. What was the problem with the banquet?

- The attendant guests and court officials got terribly drunk.
- They lost their sense of reality, and the group ignored the impeding danger of the siege.
- The party desecrated the holy vessels of the Jerusalem temple (2 Chronicles 36:18–21).

#### Nebuchadnezzar insisted on not blaspheming the God of the Hebrews (Daniel 3:29).

Idols were worshipped.

#### What are the effects of alcohol?

- It decreases inhibitions—for example, with regard to sexuality—and encourages foul speech and blasphemy.
  The capacity of reaction declines.
  Self-control diminishes.

- One's health suffers. In some cases, permanent damage is done.



### Materials of Daniel 2 and Daniel 5

The king commands that the sacred utensils of the Jerusalem temple be used as drinking vessels. Nebuchadnezzar seizes the vessels from the Jerusalem temple, but he places them in the house of his god, which shows that at least he respects their sacred status. But Belshazzar turns the sacred vessels into drinking utensils in a most profane way.

While drinking from the sacred vessels, Belshazzar's lords "praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone" (Daniel 5:4). It is worth noticing that six materials are mentioned. The Babylonians used the sexagesimal system (a system based on the number 60) in contrast to the decimal system used today (based on the number 10). Thus, the six categories of gods represent the totality of the Babylonian deities and, therefore, the fullness of the Babylonian religious system.

Interestingly enough, the order of the materials follows the order of the components of the dream statue of Nebuchadnezzar, except that wood replaces the clay. As in the dream, stone appears last; although here it designates the material composition of idols, stone also evokes God's judgment upon worldly empires (see Daniel 2:44-45), which Babylon symbolizes.

HEAD OF GOLD KINGDOM OF BABYLON CHEST & ARMS OF SILVER KINGDOM OF MEDES & PERSIANS **BELLY & THIGHS** DANIEL 2 OF BRONZE KINGDOM OF ANCIENT GREECE FIGURE OF A MAN LEGS OF IRON KINGDOM OF ANCIENT ROME FEET OF IRON & CLAY KINGDOM OF RESTORED ROME CRUSHING ROCK KINGDOM OF GOD

#### This Feast depicts End-time Babylon

It was Babylon which destroyed the city of Jerusalem, its temple and its wall. God promised that He would punish Babylon as vengeance for 'His temple' (Jeremiah 51:11 and Daniel 8:10-12). In this context God is spoken of as the Goel (redeemer) who will defend the cause of His people (see Ruth 3:9; 2:20; Numbers 35:19; Isaiah 51:9).

Like a shepherd cares for his sheep, the head cares for the body, the husband cares for the wife and the sovereign cares for his vassal, so God will care for His own people.

This feast serves as an apt representation of end-time Babylon as seen in the book of Revelation. Like Belshazzar, the woman in end-time Babylon holds a golden cup and offers polluted drink to the nations. In other words, by means of false doctrines and a distorted worship system, modern Babylon lures the world into evil (Revelation 17:4-6), oblivious to the judgment that will soon fall upon her. One day judgment will come.

What are ways in which our society and culture profane the truth of God's Word? How can we be careful not to take part in that profanation, even in subtle ways?



Babylon - Mother of Harlots

# The Wine of Babylon

Belshazzar and the kingdom of Babylon was immoral, selfish, and pleasure-seeking. Their lifestyle could be summed up in the following words: "If it feels good, do it. Who cares what God thinks? If it tastes good, eat it. If it excites the senses, let go and feel it." During Belshazzar's wild orgy, irreverence and blasphemy raised their ugly heads to defy the living God and defile His holy vessels with the lustful love of the world. Belshazzar defiantly profaned the golden cups of God's sanctuary, using them in his pagan party.

#### Wine:

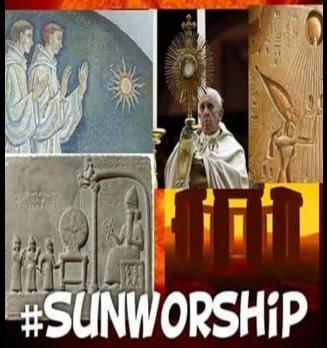
Leviticus 10:9 – Intoxicating wine was forbidden in the sanctuary service.

Proverbs 20:1 – Wine brings deception. Revelation 14:8 – End-time Babylon makes all the nations drink of her fornication.

**Revelation 17:2-5 – End-time Babylon drinks the wine and** corrupts the nations.

**Revelation 18:2-3 – The fall of end-time Babylon is linked to wine** drinking.

The spirit of self-gratification displayed in Babylon is directly opposed to the spirit of self-denial demonstrated and taught by Jesus. (see Luke 9:23 and Daniel 1:8) CHANGING THE SHABBAT TO SUNDAY WASN'T FOR NO REASON



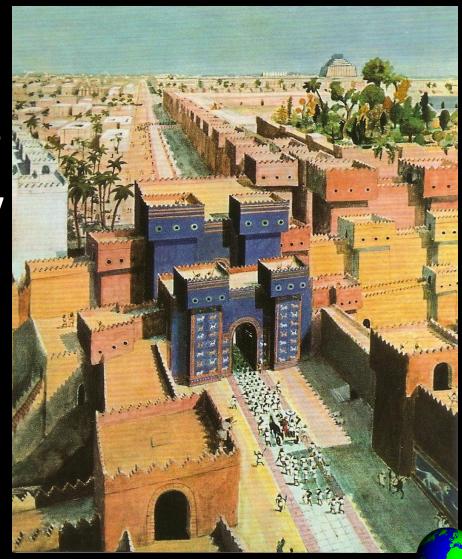
### **Babylon Apparently Inviolable**

When Belshazzar celebrated his banquet, the enemy already had the city surrounded. <u>The question is</u>, why would the king have a banquet when the enemy was at the gates? The simple answer is that Belshazzar considered the city to be invincible and impregnable.

Isaiah 47:7, 8, 10 describes the arrogant self-security of Babylon on its last night. She claimed to be the "I am" and she boastfully denied that she would become a widow or lose her children. It is significant that Babylon in Isaiah 47 is described as being composed of a three-fold union.

<u>The first part</u> of the union was Babylon, the harlot. <u>The second part</u> of Babylon was composed of Babylon's children.

Finally, the last part of Babylon consisted of her lovers with whom she committed fornication. The book of Revelation will pick up on this threefold union (see Isaiah 47:9; Revelation 17:1-5)



## **Daniel 5:5-6 - An Uninvited Guest**

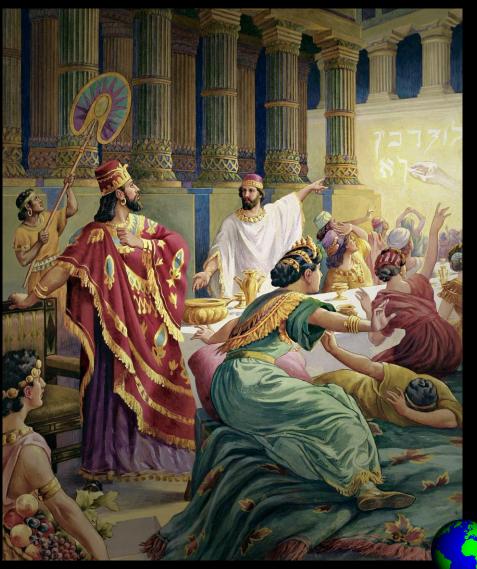
Daniel 5:5 In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.
6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of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

#### Key Point:

Belshazzar's arrogant boasting and mockery of God and of His holy things came to an abrupt end. More than 150 years before this fateful night, Isaiah had prophesied the fall of Babylon:

Isaiah 21:4 - "My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me."

Belshazzar's intended "night of pleasure" turned into a night of terror and judgment.



# Examining the verses...

In the same hour - Hour comes from the Chaldean word sha'ah, which means a moment. In the same moment that they began to use the vessels, which are for the true worship of God, to drink wine out of and praise their gods, the sentence was pronounced. We learn from this that true and false worship do not mix, but endanger a person of closing their probation. Fingers of a man's hand - Obviously the hand of God, as the writing was a judgment from God pronounced upon Babylon. This we will see in Vs 24-28.

<u>Wrote</u> - The finger of God wrote upon the plaster of the wall of the kings palace. Belshazzar saw the hand and the writing which was for all to see.

Countenance was changed...joints of his loins loosed... -This had an immediate reaction upon Belshazzar. It struck so much fear into him that it caused his knees to knock together, a vast change from the drunkenness and revelry of the feast. Looking at the prophecy of Isaiah 21:2-5, we see the same event described by Isaiah. He likens Belshazzar's experience to a woman that is in labour. The onset is sudden and unexpected, the night of his pleasure was turned into fear.



# The Writing on the Wall

Praising the Babylonian gods meant at the same time to blaspheme the God of the Jews. God reacted immediately. Fingers wrote on the wall. However, God does not always react immediately. In some cases the judgment comes later—sometimes only at the final judgment.

Which examples come to mind?

Immediate judgments: Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), Achan (Joshua 7), and the man collecting wood on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32–36)

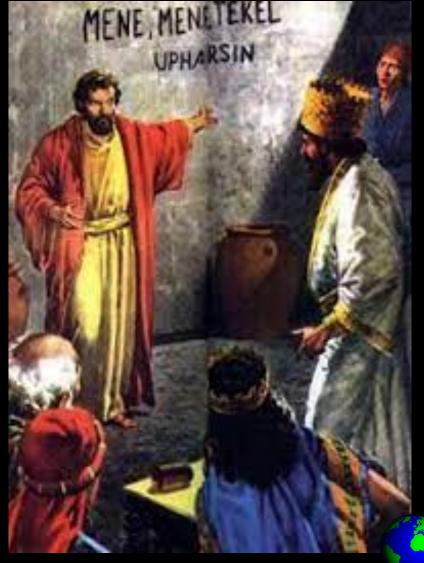
Later judgments: David and the consequences of his adultery (2 Samuel 12–18), Pilate's banishment, Moses' death outside the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 34:4)

**Final judgment**: the murderers of Jesus (Revelation 1:7; 20) What might Belshazzar have felt and thought when he saw

the handwriting on the wall?

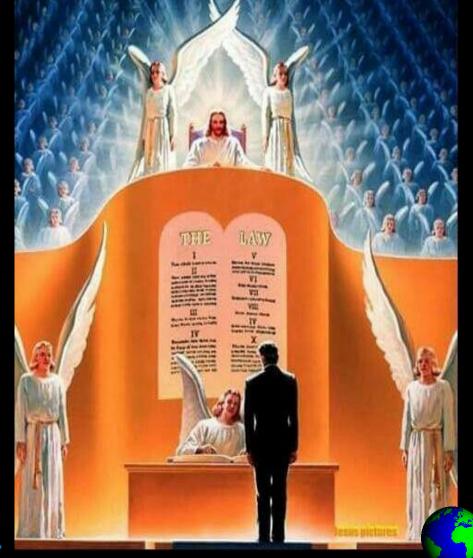
- Horror and fear
- Guilt
- Impotence

He must have been almost paralyzed, and his legs trembled.



#### To us the warning is given...

All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.... As soon as the wicked one had the people under his control, there were exhibitions of a satanic character. The people ate and drank without a thought of God and His mercy, without a thought of the necessity of resisting the devil, who was leading them on to the most shameful deeds. The same spirit was manifested as at the sacrilegious feast of Belshazzar. There was glee and dancing, hilarity and singing, carried to an infatuation that beguiled the senses; then the indulgence in inordinate, lustful affections—all this mingled in that disgraceful scene. God had been dishonoured; His people had become a shame in the sight of the heathen. Judgments were about to fall on that infatuated, besotted multitude.— Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 101.



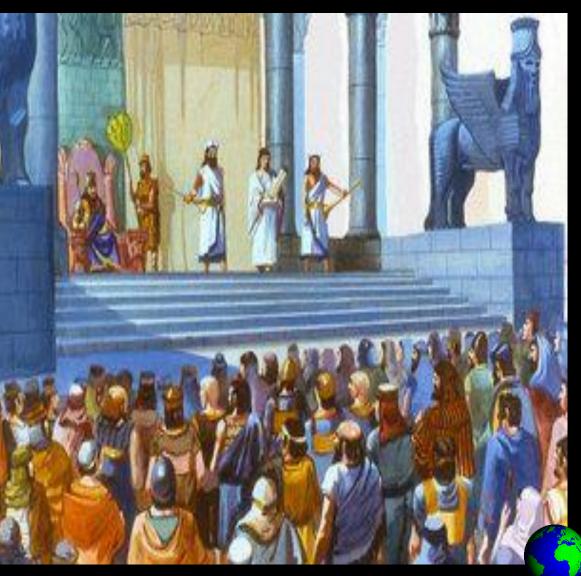
#### Daniel 5:7-9 – Looks to human wisdom

Daniel 5:7 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 astonied.

#### Key Point:

Like his grandfather before him, Belshazzar looked to human wisdom, but once again the wise men of Babylon failed to help.



# Examining the verses...

Bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers -

Belshazzar cried aloud, or with might [margin], to bring in the wise men. Here was a man whose voice would have bellowed throughout the king's palace, crying out to bring in the wise men so they could give him an answer as quickly as possible.

King spake - The king told the wise men that, whoever could read him the writing and give the interpretation thereof would be clothed in scarlet and purple as purple was a symbol of royalty, and have a gold chain about his neck.

<u>Third ruler in the kingdom</u> - Above all of this they were to be promoted to third ruler in the kingdom. But why third and not second? Nabonadius, Belshazzar's father, was still ruling at the time, though he was absent. This made Belshazzar the second in charge, thus the next person would naturally be below him in the third position.

But they could not read.... - They could not even read the writing, thus they could not give the interpretation though such a great reward was on offer. The false system fails again.

<u>Greatly troubled...</u> - All the hopes and confidence that he had in his wise men vanished, which sunk him into a troubled state. His countenance also showing his despair and disappointment.





### **Offer of extravagant Gifts**

As Nebuchadnezzar does in previous crises (Daniel 2:2, Daniel 4:7), Belshazzar calls the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers to clarify the mysterious writing.

And to make sure that they give their best, the king promises them extravagant honours:

- (1) Purple clothing, a colour worn by royalty in ancient times (Esther 8:15);
- (2) A chain of gold, which was a sign of high social status (Genesis 41:42);

(3) The position of third ruler in the kingdom. This last reward reflects accurately the historical circumstances of Babylon at that time. Because Belshazzar was second ruler as co-regent with his father, Nabonadius, he offers the position of third ruler. But despite the tempting rewards, the sages once again fail to provide an explanation.



#### Trying to find wisdom in the wrong place

On top of all his sins, then, the king attempts to find wisdom in the wrong place. The Babylonian experts cannot uncover the meaning of the message. It is written in their own language, Aramaic, as we shall see next study, but they cannot make sense of the words. This might remind us of what the Lord speaks through Isaiah: "For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden" - Isaiah 29:14.

After quoting this verse the apostle Paul states: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" - 1 Corinthians 1:20-21.

Some truths are too important to be left for humans to try to figure out for themselves. That's why God, instead, reveals these truths to us.

WISDOM that is from above is first PURE. then PEACEABLE. GENTLE. EASY TO BE INTREATED. full of MERCY and GOOD FRUITS. WITHOUT Partiality. and WITHOUT Hypocrisy.

James 3:17

### The King in fearful desperation

Belshazzar turned to his astrologers and wise men for an explanation of the phenomenon. He promised the third position in the kingdom to the one able to interpret the writing. (While Pharaoh promised Joseph the second position in the kingdom, Belshazzar was only able to offer the third position. As co-regent with his father he himself was the second ruler.) Again the wise men and magicians proved their inability to interpret divine messages. Why did Belshazzar became more terrified when the wise men had no interpretation?

- It may have dawned on him that this was a supernatural event.
- Obviously, he expected some kind of disaster.

Possibly he feared a god that could harm him.
 The other dignitaries and guests were also affected.

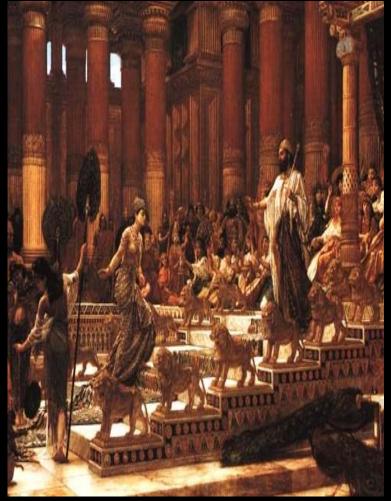


#### Daniel 5:10-12 – The Queen to the rescue

Daniel 5:10 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:

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; 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.

As the banquet hall is thrown into confusion because of the mysterious message on the wall, the queen comes and provides direction to the befuddled king.

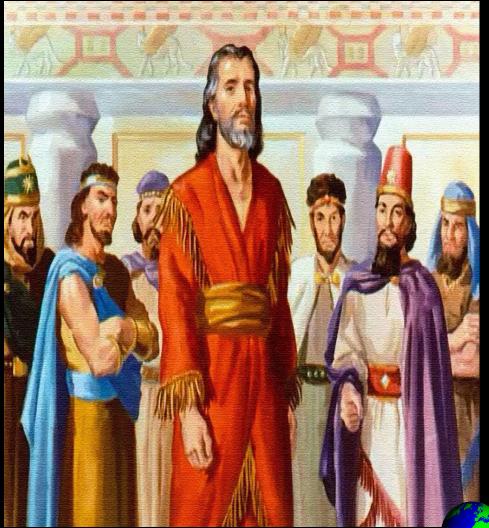


### Examining the verses...

<u>The queen</u> - This is obviously not one of Belshazzar's wives, as they were with him at the banquet Vs 2-3. If we look at what knowledge she has of Daniel, in the days of Belshazzar's father and grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. Plus she would be about the only one, unsummoned, to be allowed to come into him without being killed.

Her recommendation to the king was that of Daniel. The reason being that in him is an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts.

Daniel is a prototype of God's last-day people who understand and explain the prophecies given by God. See Daniel 12:9-10.



## Why was Daniel not with wise men

The queen or queen mother encouraged Belshazzar and pointed him to Daniel. Why was Daniel not one of the wise men brought to the king earlier? According to Daniel 2:48 he was their chief administrator.

- **1.** It is quite likely that he no longer held that position.
- 2. He may have no longer served at the royal court.

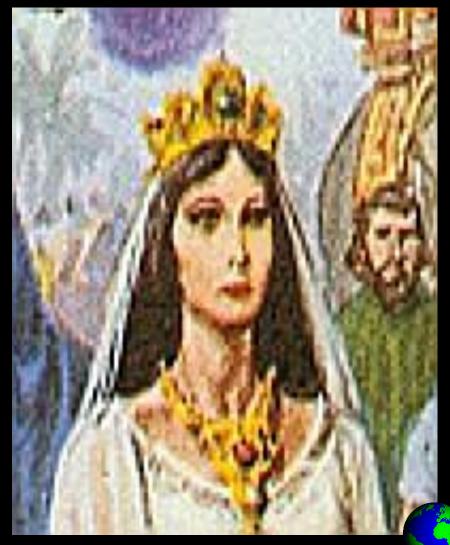
3. Nebuchadnezzar's successors pursued different political goals. They may have known about how God revealed Himself to Nebuchadnezzar but rejected God. So they most likely also rejected Daniel. This may have been a reason why under the Medes and Persians Daniel quickly reacquired a high position.



### Who is this Queen?

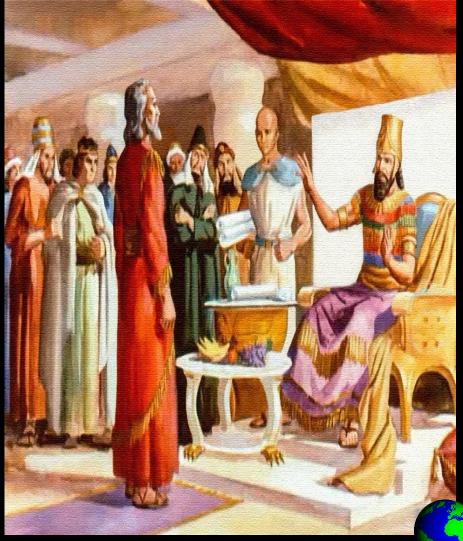
She may have been the Queen mother of Belshazzar, Nabonidus's wife. Nabonidus was co-regent with his eldest son Belshazzar, and was out fighting during the time of Belshazzar's party. King Nabonidus, was Nebuchadnezzar's son. This would make Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, not father. The word father in the Old Testament, simply means ancestor.

For example, many times throughout the Bible when someone would die, it would say, "He slept with his fathers." It is obvious from her high recommendation of Daniel and his reputation that she was influenced by Nebuchadnezzar after his conversion and his godly prime minister Daniel. Most likely she did not take part in the wild party's revelry, as the Bible says, "by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house." She must have heard that the king was troubled and came to tell Belshazzar to call Daniel, "one in whom was the spirit of the holy gods" (Daniel 5:12).



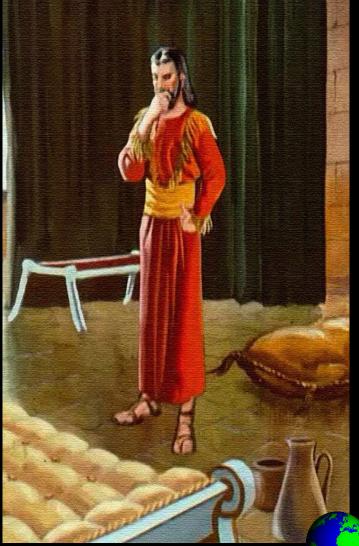
### **Daniel's Testimony is highlighted**

The Queen reminds the king about Daniel, whose ability to interpret dreams and solve mysteries has been demonstrated during the time of Nebuchadnezzar. If Belshazzar were as smart as his predecessor, he would have known where to turn to find the meaning of this mysterious writing. The intervention of the queen proves necessary for the king, who at this point seems utterly at a loss as to what to do next. Her words sound like a rebuke to Belshazzar for overlooking the only person in the kingdom who can interpret the mysterious writing. She also gives the king an oral resume of Daniel: The prophet has the Spirit of the Holy God, light and understanding and divine wisdom, excellent spirit, knowledge; he is capable of understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas; he was chief of the magicians, Chaldeans, astrologers and soothsayers in Nebuchadnezzar's time (Daniel 5:11-12).



### Daniel in all his integrity

At this point, we again wonder why Belshazzar had ignored Daniel. The text does not offer a direct answer to this question, but we presume that at this time Daniel, after serving the king at least until the third year of his reign (Daniel 8:1, Daniel 8:27), is no longer in active service. One factor could be Daniel's age. He is probably around 80 years old, and the king may have wanted to replace the old leadership with a younger generation. The king may have also decided to ignore Daniel because he did not want to commit himself to Daniel's God. But whatever the reason or combination of reasons, it remains striking that someone with such a portfolio as Daniel's could be forgotten so soon. Before that terror-stricken throng, Daniel, unmoved by the promises of the king, stood in the quiet dignity of a servant of the Most High, not to speak words of flattery, but to interpret a message of doom. "Let thy gifts be to thyself," he said, "and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation."—Prophets and Kings, pp. 527–529.



### Daniel 5:13-16 – King's high esteem of Daniel

**Daniel 5:13** 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:

**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.

Daniel is brought in before the king. After a couple of short sentences, the king comes to the all important point. He acknowledges that the wise men have failed in the matter of reading and interpreting the writing on the wall. He also acknowledges Daniel's abilities regarding the situation at hand, and offers to Daniel the same reward as was offered to the wise men.



### The king has no other choice left

Forced by the circumstances, the king resorts to consulting Daniel, but he seems to do so with reluctance. This may tell more about the attitude of the king toward the God of Daniel than toward Daniel himself.

<u>Again Daniel was being discriminated against</u>: In spite of the high position under his grandfather, Belshazzar addressed him as a prisoner.

However, the king admitted his helplessness and mentioned Daniel's wisdom. Again he promised a reward.

### Key Point:

Belshazzar had heard of Daniel. After all, how could Belshazzar have grown up in the royal court of Babylon where Daniel had been for nearly 65 years, and yet not know Daniel? How could he ignore the life of this man of God? Reminding Daniel of his captive status, Belshazzar offered Daniel gold, honor and a position as third ruler in the kingdom, in exchange for interpreting the handwriting on the wall. He offered Daniel to be third ruler because, he was already co-regents with his father, Nabonidus.



# Daniel 5:17 – Daniel now speaks up

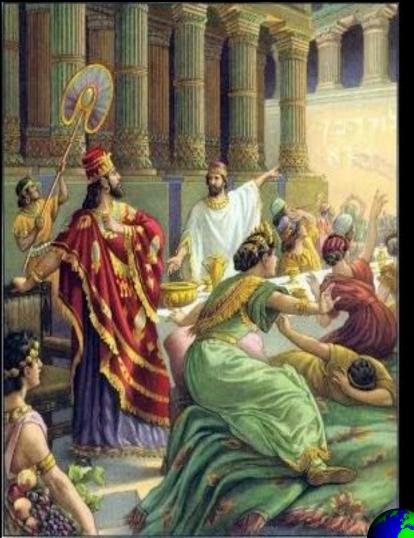
Daniel 5:17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to *him the interpretation.* 

Daniel's answer to the king is one of humbleness. He has no desire of the earthly gain offered by the king, yet he is willing to read the writing and make known the interpretation.

In turn, Daniel's response to the king's offer of reward says a lot about Daniel's priorities and character. It is also likely that Daniel, knowing the meaning of the mysterious words, realizes just how worthless the reward really is.

Why did Daniel reject the reward?

- 1. As a prophet of God he did not work for pay (Micah 3:11-12).
- Belshazzar had blasphemed God.
   Daniel knew about the fall of Babylon. A high office in the Babylonian kingdom could have been dangerous.
   He did not want to become selfish.



### The false security of the King

Ellen White well describes the false security that Babylon felt on its last fateful night:

"It was not long before reverses came. He [Belshazzar] had been defeated in battle by Cyrus, and for two years had been besieged in the city of Babylon. Within that seemingly impregnable fortress, with its massive walls and its gates of brass, protected by the river Euphrates, and supplied with provisions for a twenty years' siege, the voluptuous monarch felt secure, and passed his time in mirth and revelry." -Review and Herald, February 8, 1881 "Babylon was besieged by Cyrus, nephew of Darius the Mede, and commanding

general of the combined armies of the Medes and Persians." - Prophets and Kings, p. 523.

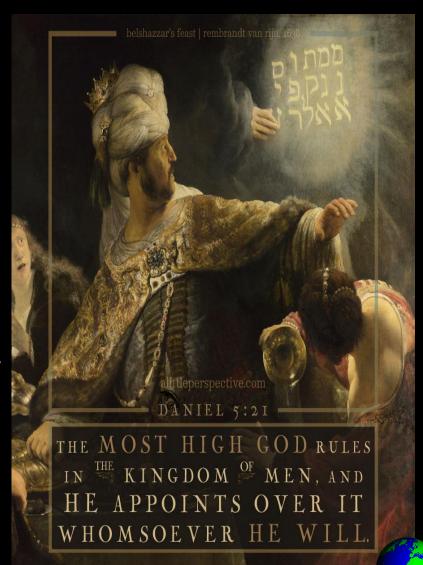


# **Summary**

Belshazzar was afraid. His conscience was awakened. The fear and suspicion that always follow the course of the guilty seized him. When God makes men fear, they cannot hide the intensity of their terror. Alarm seized the great men of the kingdom. Their blasphemous disrespect of sacred things was changed in a moment. A frantic terror overcame all self-control.

#### In vain the king tried to read the burning letters. He had found a power too strong for him. He could not read the writing.—The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, pp. 1170, 1171.

Before that terror-stricken throng, Daniel, unmoved by the promises of the king, stood in the quiet dignity of a servant of the Most High, not to speak words of flattery, but to interpret a message of doom. "Let thy gifts be to thyself," he said, "and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation."— Prophets and Kings, pp. 527–529.



# Summary (cont'd)

In vain the king tried to read the burning letters. But here was a secret he could not fathom, a power he could neither understand nor gainsay. In despair he turned to the wise men of his realm for help. His wild cry rang out in the assembly, calling upon the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers to read the writing.... But of no avail was his appeal to his trusted advisers, with offers of rich awards. Heavenly wisdom cannot be bought or sold. "All the king's wise men ... could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof." They were no more able to read the mysterious characters than had been the wise men of a former generation to interpret the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar.—Prophets and Kings, p. 527.

The pride of Assyria and its fall are to serve as an object lesson to the end of time. Of the nations of earth today who in arrogance and pride array themselves against Him, God inquires, "To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth." - Ezekiel 31:18.





### What does it mean to us today?

Christ would lay before us the danger of making eating and drinking paramount. He reveals the result of giving up to indulgence of appetite. The moral powers are enfeebled so that sin does not appear sinful. Crimes are winked at, and base passions control the mind until general corruption roots out good principles and impulses, and God is blasphemed. All this is the result of eating and drinking to excess. This is the very condition of things which He declares will exist at His second coming.

Will men and women be warned? Will they cherish the light, or will they become slaves to appetite and base passions? Christ presents to us something higher to toil for than merely what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed. Eating, drinking, and dressing are carried to such excess that they become crimes, and are among the marked sins of the last days, and constitute a sign of Christ's soon coming..... It is impossible to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God when they are filled with corruption and disease by our own sinful indulgence. — Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 164.





### God has given all:

# The Power of Choice

### Revelation 12:12

"..... for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

### Enter The Ark of Hope

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

– John 10:16

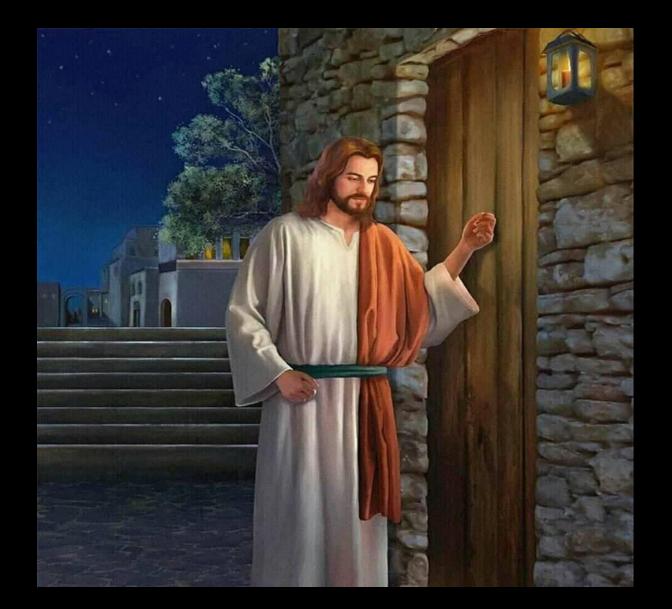
### The Ark of the Covenant







Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. – Revelation 3:20





### **ARE YOU READY TO MEET JESUS?**