

# Daniel 5 - The Writing on the Wall

**Daniel 5** is a living parable of our days. Belshazzar's feast typifies the drunken revelry and blasphemy at the time of the end. The feast also typifies the rejoicing of the Roman Catholic system at her seemingly successful efforts to revive Papal power in the latter days: **Rev 18:3,7**. Some latter day prophecies are based on **Daniel 5**:

**Luke 21:24-36** Jesus Christ warns of events in our days as times of *partying, drunkenness and perplexity with men's hearts failing for fear*. Christ's coming will be like a *snare* (ie. trap). The same term is used to describe Babylon's fall in **Isa. 24:17-18; Jer 50:24**.

**Rev 16:12-16** A final appeal by Christ as Armageddon approaches. In taking historic Babylon, Cyrus diverted the Euphrates: **Isa 44:27**. **Isaiah 45:1-5** describes Cyrus as a *king of the east* and presents him as a type of Christ. In **Revelation 16** the river Euphrates dries up to prepare the way for *the kings of the east* (the saints).

**1 Thess 5:1-9** Many obvious allusions are used by Paul here:

1 THESSALONIANS 5	DANIEL 5
"of the times and seasons" <b>5:1</b>	"changes times and seasons..." <b>2:21</b>
"the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" <b>5:2</b>	Cyrus came as a thief in the night, when Belshazzar least expected it
"when they shall say peace and safety... sudden destruction" <b>5:3</b>	Peace and safety within the feast hall - sudden destruction came that night
"ye are the children of light" <b>5:5</b>	"light" <b>5:11</b> "candlestick" <b>5:5</b>
"let us watch and be sober" <b>5:6</b>	Daniel was not at the party that night
"drunken in the night" <b>5:7</b>	"drank wine" <b>5:1,2,4,23</b>
"God hath not appointed us to wrath, but obtain salvation" <b>5:9</b>	Cyrus overthrows Babylon, a type of Christ's victory over Babylon the Great

**Isaiah 21** tells of the dramatic fall of Babylon and the words of that chapter are quoted to refer to the fall of Babylon the Great in **Rev 14:8; 18:2** "Babylon is fallen, is fallen". Read also **Isaiah 47:1-9**.

**The writing is on the wall today**. Only Daniel could read and interpret the writing. The candlestick illuminated the writing – God's Word! Likewise, **Revelation** is the writing on the wall for Babylon the Great. There is a remarkable parallel between the fall of Babylon in **Jer 50-51** and the fall of Babylon the Great in **Rev 17-18**. In **Jer 51:19-24** we read of God's judgment on Babylon. Compare **Jer 51:6 / Rev 18:4; Jer 51:7 / Rev 17:1-4; Jer 51:8-13 / Rev 18:5,9-10; Jer 51:64 / Rev 18:21**. Judgment upon Babylon in each case is final.

## DANIEL 5:1-4 BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

**v1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast**: Emphasis again at the beginning on *the king*. Beshazzar is the one who thinks he is in control but this is shown to be false. This was not some ordinary party. It was a direct challenge against Yahweh God of Israel. His one request in **v2** was to bring in the vessels from the temple. Daniel "understood by books" (**9:2**) from Jeremiah that Babylon would fall: **Jer 51:7-8,24,39,57**. **Wine**: Dulls the senses: **Prov 23:30-33**. We are repeatedly told in chapter 5 that they **drank wine**: **v1,2,4,23**. A symbol of Babylon the Great: **Rev 14:8,10; 16:19; 17:2; 18:3, 6,13**. A similar description is given of latter-day Babylon in **Hab 2:15-18**.

**Colour code**: Blue (God and Jesus); Red (sin/devil/judgment of wicked); Green (Kingdom); Orange (important words, phrases); Purple (Israel, Jews, Jerusalem); Yellow (practical exhortation). Prepared for Adelaide Youth Conf 2013 and Rathmines Bible School teenagers 2014. Acknowledgements: notes by HP Mansfield and talks by J Martin, C Parry, R Gore.

**v2-3 Vessels**: Also represent people: **Prov 25:4; 1 Pet 3:7; 2 Tim 2:21**. In **Jer 27:19-22; Dan 1:2** the vessels are taken into captivity. This party was celebrating Babylon's victory over Judah. They hold the God of Israel in contempt. It was a celebration of the (supposed) victory of Babylon's gods over Yahweh.

**v4 Praised gods**: This is the undoing of all Neb learnt in **Daniel 4**. As in **Isa 46:1-7**, cp. **Acts 3:2**. These are the same metals as in the image of **Dan 2:31-42**. These gods represent the Kingdom of Men! Here is a parable of the time of the end. A similar concept is in **Rev 13:1-2**. Not only 4 metals but also wood and stone. In **Dan 4**, the king is likened to a tree chopped down. In **Dan 2**, a stone destroys the image. They worship their gods of stone as greater than Yahweh. It is at this point that the hand appears. Ironically, **God will give them a stone** - Jesus Christ, who destroys the Kingdom of Men: **Dan 2:35,45**, cp. **Isa 2:20-21**.

## DANIEL 5:5-9 WRITING ON THE WALL

**v5 Same hour**: cp. **Rev 14:7; 18:10,17, 18**. **Fingers of a man's hand**: God's fingers made the heavens: **Psa 8:3**. Margin ref is to **Ezek 8:3**, see also **10:8**. This was the hand that gave Ezekiel the little scroll containing God's judgments.

**Candlestick**: Str. *chandelier*. The word of God enlightened: **Psa 119:105**. **The wall**: Babylon put its trust in city walls, the work of their hands: **4:30; 5:23**. cp. **Acts 7v48**. Contrast God's city in **Rev 21** and Babylon: **Rev 21:10-11,26-27**.

**v6 King's countenance changed**: As predicted in **Isa 45:1-2; 21:4-9**. A description of Babylon's fall is in **Isaiah 21**. **Joints of his loins**: RSV "his limbs gave way". **v7 Cried aloud**: **Dan 3:4; 4:2,14; Rev 14:7**. **Astrologers**: **Dan 2:2**. **Chaldeans**: **Dan 2:4**. **Wise men**: **Isa 47:5-13**. **Scarlet**: Colour of Roman Catholic priesthood: **Rev 17:4**. Like the world today, clothing, status and money were offered. **v8 Could not read the writing**: The Word of God was unintelligible. **v9 Troubled**: Str. *to terrify, hasten*, cp. **Dan 2:1,3; 4:5,19; 7:15,28**. **Astonied**: Roth / RSV / Str. *perplexed*, cp. **Lk 21:25-26 perplexity...failing for fear**.

## DANIEL 5:10-12 THE QUEEN'S WISDOM

**v10 Queen**: NIV mgn. "or queen mother". His wives were already there: **v2**. **O King live forever**: Ironic! A genuine statement as it is in **6:21**. **v11 Man in thy kingdom**: The queen mother repeats Neb's words in **4:8,9,18** ie. "you are nothing like your father!" It appears Daniel was no longer master of the magicians here. A Gentile woman confesses that Daniel was special! Imagine if people in the world could say that of us!

**BELSHAZZAR the king** made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar, while 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.

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.

They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

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.

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.

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.



**v11 Light**: A man of God: **Dan 2:22; Psa 36:9; Jn 8:12; 1 Thess 5:5**. **Wisdom**: Application of knowledge: **Dan 1:4,17,20; 2:14,20,21,23,30**, cp. **Rev 5:12; 7:12; 13:18**. This wisdom is spoken of extensively in **Proverbs** and **Ecclesiastes**. **Master of magicians**: His influence was amazing! The wise men at Christ's birth were drawn to a star in the east and consistent with **Dan 9:24-26** they went to Jerusalem: **Matt 2:1-2**. **v12 Hard sentences**: Youngs lit. *loosing of knots*. **Excellent spirit**: **Dan 5:14; 6:3**. Key aspect of Daniel's character, cp. **Gen 41:38-40; Prov 17:27; Eccl 7:1; Acts 6:10**. Christ-like attitude.

## DANIEL 5:13-23 DANIEL BEFORE BELSHAZZAR

**v13-16 Captivity of Judah**: Immediately derogatory. **v17 Daniel answered**: The answer we need to give to the world. Babylon's gifts would be short lived: **Isa 13:6-15**. Daniel would have known **Isaiah 13**. Abraham also rejected the gifts of Sodom's king: **Gen 14:22-24**. **v18-21 Most High**: **Dan 3:26; 4:17-34; 5:18-21; 7:18-27**. **God gave Nebuchadnezzar**: Key principle: **Dan 2:37; 4:17,22; 8:12,13**, cp. **Jn 19:10-11**. All we have is given by God and is not by our own strength. Belshazzar had not learnt from his grandfather's example: **4:17,25**. **Peoples, nations and languages**: The redeemed are called out of Babylon the Great: **Rev 5:9-10; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 17:15**.

**v22-23 Thou knewest all this**: Deliberately ignorant: **2 Pet 3:5; Mt 24:38-39**. Those in Noah's day **knew not**, despite his preaching for 120 years! They ignored Noah's message. Our grand-parents have laid the foundations of the truth also. Will we remember their example or overthrow all the principles they stood for? **Lifted thyself up**: The Lucifer prophecy in **Isa 14:12-15** is about Belshazzar! He made himself like God, cp. Herod in **Acts 12:23**. The popes also set themselves up as God: **Dan 7:8,25; 11:36-37; 2 Thess 2:1-11**.

## DANIEL 5:24-31 DANIEL INTERPRETS THE WRITING

**Interpretation**: God has numbered the days of your kingdom and finished it. You are weighed in the balances and found wanting. **Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians**. **v25 Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin**: A measurement of money: Mina, Mina, Shekel, half Mina. Numerical value of 2520 which has prophetic significance. **v26 Mene**: Numbered. **v27 Tekel**: Balanced. God's weights are perfect: **Ex 30:24; 38:24-26; 1 Sam 2:3; Amos 8:5; Prov 16:2; Psa 62:9**. **v28 Peres**: Divided. Singular of **Parsin**, ie. **Persia**.

**v30-31 Darius the Median**: "Darius" is a title. Babylon was now finished. Consider the words of **Jer 51:30-33** cp. **Rev 18:16-17,24**.

**Cyrus is a type of Christ conquering Babylon the Great**:

CYRUS THE PERSIAN	JESUS CHRIST
Cyrus = "like the heir"	Christ "heir of the world" <b>Rom 4:13</b>
Cyrus "my shepherd" <b>Isa 44:28</b>	Christ "the good shepherd" <b>John 10:11</b>
Rebuilds the temple <b>Isa 44:28</b>	Christ to rebuild the temple <b>Ezek 40-48</b>
Cyrus liberated captives <b>Isa 44:13</b>	Christ also liberates captives <b>Isa 61:1</b>
Yahweh's "anointed" <b>Isa 45:1</b>	Messiah = "anointed" <b>Dan 9:25-26</b>
Subdue nations <b>Isa 45:1</b>	Christ subdues nations <b>Rev 19:11-21</b>
Dry up Euphrates <b>Jer 50:38; 51:36</b>	Drying up Euphrates <b>Rev 16:12</b>
"King of the east" <b>Isa 41:2</b>	"Kings of the East" <b>Rev 16:12</b>