

## DANIEL 5:7-21

Study by Glenn Palmer

### Daniel 5:7

1. **The king called out for the enchanters, astrologers and diviners to be brought.**
  - a. Normally a king would command. To call out shows how frightened he was.
  - b. Which group of wise men is not mentioned?
    - 1.) 2:2 *magicians (or magi), enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers*
    - 2.) 4:7 *magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and diviners*
    - 3.) 4:9 *Belshazzar, chief of the magicians*
  - c. Two possibilities:
    - 1.) Young, Aalders: Magicians are included in the enchanters, etc. That is why in verse 8 we read "all the king's wise men." Daniel was not included because after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, he was no longer chief of the magicians.
    - 2.) Boice: Belshazzar knew of Daniel, but did not use him as a wise man. The whole class was not called. "If you don't want the answer, don't ask the question."
  - d. What does he promise them if they can interpret the writing?
    - 1.) *Clothed in purple*
      - a.) From the Phoenicia, which comes from the Greek word *phoinix* which means "purple-red"<sup>1</sup>
      - b.) 4,500 murex shellfish (snails) required to produce just over a ½ a gram of pure dye, which is what is required to dye a pound of cloth
      - c.) Judges 8:26
      - d.) Esther 6:8
      - e.) Esther 8:15
      - f.) When Alexander the Great captured Susa in 324 BC there were purple robes and cloths in treasury
      - g.) Cleopatra's sails were purple
      - h.) Nero - only he could wear all purple. Others could have purple stripes. If anyone wore all purple, he could be executed.
      - i.) Who was a seller (NIV: dealer) of purple? *Acts 16:14: Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth*
    - 2.) *Gold chain around your neck*
      - a.) Genesis 41:42
    - 3.) *3<sup>rd</sup> Highest ruler*
      - a.) Genesis 41:40

### Daniel 5:8

2. What happens in this verse? *Enchanters, etc. could not read it*
3. Is this a surprise? *No, as God is forcing Belshazzar to acknowledge Him.*

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<sup>1</sup>. [www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200604/milenia.of.murex.htm](http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200604/milenia.of.murex.htm) accessed on 14 Sep 13; number of snails to make a gram comes from Dr. Richard M. Podhajny, "History, Shellfish, Royalty, and the Color Purple", [pffc-online.com/mag/1348-paper-history-shellfish-royalty](http://pffc-online.com/mag/1348-paper-history-shellfish-royalty) accessed on 14 Sep 13.

**Daniel 5:9**

4. What is Belshazzar's response? *More frightened*

**Daniel 5:10**

**5. The queen**

a. Vs. 5:3 - With whom does Belshazzar party?

- 1.) *nobles*
- 2.) *wives*
- 3.) *concubines*

b. Therefore, the queen is probably not Belshazzar's wife as she was not present as his wife would be.

- 1.) Rather, she "came into the banquet hall" on her own will and was not summoned. Thus, she had to be a female of great importance than the king's wives.
- 2.) The way she speaks to Daniel is like that of a mother comforting a grandson, "Don't be alarmed."
- 3.) I Kings 15:13
- 4.) II Kings 10:13
- 5.) II Kings 24:8
- 6.) Jeremiah 13:18

c. She could be

- 1.) Nabonidus's wife (Belshazzar's mother), or more likely
- 2.) Nebuchadnezzar's wife
  - a.) Since she knows the story of Nebuchadnezzar, she is probably Nebuchadnezzar's wife
    - (1.) Amytis - for whom Nebuchadnezzar built the Hanging Gardens
    - (2.) Nitocris - perhaps the mother of Nabonidus, grandmother of Belshazzar

6. "O king, live forever."

**Practical application:** *Do you really want to live forever? What happens when you get old? What happens when the Golden Age is not so golden?*

7. Who is Daniel?

- a. Why did the Queen Mother have to explain to Belshazzar who Daniel was? After all, he was the chief of the magicians under Nebuchadnezzar.
- b. After the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus (Darius the Meade), Darius placed Daniel as one of the three most important rulers of Babylon. Daniel is in charge of 120 administrators. How is it that Belshazzar who claims Nebuchadnezzar as his father, does not know about Daniel, but Cyrus who has just conquered Babylon knows enough about Daniel that Daniel is placed as one of the top three rulers of the kingdom?  
*Belshazzar is not interested in the past*

**Daniel 5:11-12**

8. **Spirit of the holy gods.** The pagans still don't get it. There is one God.

9. **Insight and intelligence and wisdom.** May we have that!

10. Cf. Vs. 12: **Keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems.**

**Daniel 5:13**

11. **So Daniel was brought before the king.** All of this took time. Daniel was probably not hovering at the palace. A messenger would have to be sent.
12. **Are you Daniel?**
- a. Under the new regime of Nabonidus, Daniel probably lost his position as chief magician.
  - b. Note in vs. 12, Nebuchadnezzar's wife says "This man Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar"
  - c. Here Belshazzar addresses him by his Hebrew name, not his Babylonian name. Why?
    - 1.) Possibly - Belteshazzar is very close to Belshazzar.
    - 2.) Possibly - He realizes that the magicians, soothsayers, etc. are out of their league. He thus wants to be polite to the one he needs.

**Daniel 5:14-16**

13. To whom does Belshazzar attribute such wisdom? *spirit of the gods*
14. To whom does Daniel attribute such wisdom? Look up Daniel 2:19-23 to God. *He is not filled with pride.*

**Practical Application:** *What is our attitude when the Lord blesses us?*

15. **I have heard.** Why does he say "I have heard"?
- a. Cf. Daniel 2:25
  - b. Cf. Acts 23:27-30
16. Review: Why can Daniel only be made the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest ruler? *Nabonidus is # 1, Belshazzar his son is # 2*

**Daniel 5:17**

17. Why does Daniel reject the gifts? *He can't be bought with gifts; What he has to say is true.*

**Daniel 5:18**

18. What is the theme of Daniel **God is Lord of lords and King of kings**  
**Our God Reigns**
19. How does Daniel describe God?
- a. Daniel 3:26                                      God is the Most High god of all other gods
  - b. Daniel 4:2                                        God is the Most High god of all other gods
  - c. *The Most High God*                          God is the Most High God - there are no other gods
    - 1.) Thus, the Most High God gives power to King Nebuchadnezzar.

*John Calvin: "No kings can possess any authority unless God extends his hand to them and props them up."*

**Daniel 5:19**

20. What type of power did Nebuchadnezzar have? *Total power*
- to put to death*
  - to spare*
  - to humble*
21. Lord Acton: "Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely."
22. Story: Representative Hyde crossing the street.

**Daniel 5:20**

23. Why was Nebuchadnezzar removed?
- His heart became arrogant and*
    - Became = took time: not suddenly, but a slow slip in wickedness
    - Webster's definition of arrogant: "exaggerating or disposed to *exaggerate one's own worth or importance* in an *overbearing* manner"
    - Antonym: meek
  - hardened with pride*
    - Why is pride considered one of the Seven Deadly Sins? *It is the root sin*
    - Why is pride considered the first of the Seven Deadly Sins? *1<sup>st</sup> sin - by Satan*
    - Isaiah 14:13-14
      - Notice # of "I"s.
      - Notice what the I wanted.
    - Dante's definition: "love of self perverted to hatred and contempt for one's neighbor."
24. Was Nebuchadnezzar warned? *Dream of the tree being cut down*
25. Did Nebuchadnezzar change his attitude? *No. He boasted - 4:28*

**Daniel 5:21**

26. Was God faithful in His punishment? *Yes - God is true and faithful - for good and for bad*
27. When did God stop Nebuchadnezzar's punishment? *When he acknowledged God*
28. How does this verse reflect the theme of this book? *God is God.*
29. Calvin wrote: "The drunken confidence of all kings, in supposing themselves to stand by their own power, and to free themselves from the authority of God, as if He were not seated as a judge in heaven."