

Daniel 5

1 He reigned in Babylon while his father Nabonidus, also called Minus, the king was on a campaign. We have extrabiblical confirmation of this story. We also have confirmation in writings that Belshazzar (Baal fire) was a vain and ruthless leader. Daniel seems to show none of the courtesy he showed to his grandfather. The city was under siege by Cyrus, but Belshazzar thought their provisions and fortifications were more than sufficient.

2,3 His Grandfather (Jer 27:7) had declared the God of Daniel to be the one true God. Now - Bel is taking those vessels he knows were reserved for the worship of that God, and using them for a drunken party. Under the influence of alcohol men will do things they would not do sober.

4 Instead of praising the one true God as his Grandfather had done, he praised gods of earthly substances - worldly things, wealth and culture. It was if he mocked his Grandfather's conversion as well as the God of Israel by using the sacred vessels. How do we do this today?

5 In the same hour, so that he would make the connection with his irreverence. Is this the very lampstand that stood in the Holy Place and so the writing is near it? These walls usually are inscribed with exploits of the king and his titles. Here where his glory is usually written, God prescribes his doom. Imagine the horror and sudden silence as finger cuts into the rock hard plaster in the sight of the drunken revelers.

6 When you are mocking God, a revelation from God should be a horribly frightening thing. Men will live as if they are eternal until they are faced with the supernatural or their own frailty. This pompous king is immediately reduced to a scared, shaking mortal.

7 Party's over. What does it matter if you are made king at a time like this. He operates just like his grandpa when it comes to understanding - since he had the testimony of Daniel why didn't he just call him? Third ruler was the position Daniel had before. King was one and his son or wife #2. #3 was head of the government officials.

8-10 Queen mother avoids the brat's party and reminds him that the man who helped his grandpa can help him.

11,12 She uses the same language as Nebuchadnezzar – Daniel, a man in whom is the spirit of the gods. The guy was full of the Holy Spirit! Didn't Neb know this? Or is she reminding him of what he already knows but is afraid to ask? She seems to have no doubt that he can read and explain the writing.

13-16 Sounds like they have never met! His father must have put someone else in his position. Not having the title didn't change Daniel's ability or his gifts.

17 Daniel already knows the gifts are meaningless. He does it for the glory of God. He knows God will give him the ability to read and interpret the writing because it is his God who wrote it, and Daniel is His servant.

18 God gave it! Recognize that it all comes from God Most High. Bel may not be familiar with this title. Ilay El Aramaic

19 – 23 Daniel reminds him of his Grandfather's testimony and what he should have learned from it. His response should have been to humble himself. We often have lessons and testimonies from others' lives that should speak to us as much as to them. Instead of humility, he mocked God by using the Temple vessels, and praising other gods. Here is an interesting description of God's sovereignty: the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways.

24 Ancient Hebrew that literally means: literally, "numbered, weighed, and divides."

25,26 Times up! God determined the days of his reign and they are up. Repeated twice means it is unchangeable.

27 There is no substance to your life, nothing of weight or value.

28 About to be conquered by his enemy the Medes and Persians. Consider this message in whole - Your times up. There is no substance to your life, nothing of value. You are about to be conquered. Could it be any worse? Time will be up for us all and all our days are numbered, but our hope is that there is something of value in our life, something of weight. To be conquered was a fate of many a man, and we will all be conquered momentarily by death. In Christ, however, we will hear that we are not found wanting. He is our substance that endures. Death's victory will be momentary as we graduate to our reward.

29 Daniel probably put it in the nearest dumpster. It was a curse that night when the invasion took place.

30,31 Some prophecies take time to see their fulfillment. Some happen immediately. Two deserters guided the invaders to divert the Euphrates and the army of Cyrus marched in through the riverbed. That is the end of Babylon, the nation God used to enslave Judah. Now the arms of the image in chapter 2 take over the known world.