

In Whose Hand Is Your Breath

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Date: 25 October 2026

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[0:00] Isaiah chapter 47. I'll read the first 11 verses. Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon.

! Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans.! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind flour, put off your veil, strip off your robe, uncover your legs, pass through the rivers.

Your nakedness shall be uncovered, and your disgrace shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and I will spare no one. Our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, is the Holy One of Israel.

Sit in silence and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans, for you shall no more be called the mistress of kingdoms. I was angry with my people. I profaned my heritage.

I gave them into your hand. You showed them no mercy. On the age of you made your yoke exceedingly heavy. You said, I shall be mistress forever, so that you did not lay these things to heart or remember their end.

[1:14] Now, therefore, hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, I am, and there is no one besides me. I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children.

These two things shall come to you in a moment. In one day, the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments.

You felt secure in your wickedness. You said, no one sees me. Your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, I am, and there is no one besides me.

But evil shall come upon you, which you will not know how to charm away. Disaster shall fall upon you, for which you will not be able to atone, and ruin shall come upon you suddenly, of which you know nothing.

Amen. What we just had read for us is a prophecy of the downfall of Babylon, the downfall of which Isaiah has just told us would take place in a moment, in a day.

[2:27] Well, we are going to go to the chapter of God's Word that shows us that day when those events would take place. So you can turn over to Daniel chapter 5.

Each month, our kids get a magazine, or actually they get two magazines in the mail, from Focus on the Family. They're called the Clubhouse Magazine and the Clubhouse Junior Magazine.

And these magazines have different stories in them. They have different puzzles and crosswords and word scrambles, and also spot-the-difference pictures.

Kids, do you know what I'm talking about? Spot-the-difference pictures? You have two seemingly nearly identical pictures. You look at them just kind of with a cursory glance, and you think they're the same.

But they're not. There's some subtle differences to be seen. They're not quite exactly the same. I'll admit, I find myself still sometimes doing those when those magazines come in the mail, just to see if we still got it.

[3:29] And we do. We can find those differences there. And I trust this morning that we can also spot the differences between a couple different chapters of God's Word. We're in Daniel chapter 5.

And before us, here in Daniel chapter 5, is a nearly identical chapter to Daniel chapter 4, which we were in last Sunday evening.

The parallels between these two chapters of God's Word are striking. We have two kings, two proud kings, and we have the one God who rules over the kingdom of men.

And we have these two kings, proud kings humbled by God, brought low by the God of heaven who rules. But the pictures before us here in Daniel chapter 4 and Daniel chapter 5 are not exactly the same.

One of the big differences is how God conveys His message to each of these proud kings. In Daniel chapter 4, it was through a dream.

[4:33] Now, this was nothing new in the book of Daniel. God has done this already before in chapter 2 as well. And of course, the dream that King Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4 saw, it truly did happen.

God reveals it to us in His Word. But in the moment, for the people who were with King Nebuchadnezzar, they were in fact taking Him at His Word that it had happened. It was something of a subjective element to it for them.

Nobody else had had the dream. Nobody else was with Nebuchadnezzar in his dream. They were just hearing Nebuchadnezzar tell them what he had seen.

And so everyone there gathered in the room in Daniel chapter 4 had a degree of separation from that revelation of God. They were hearing about it, but they weren't experiencing it for themselves. Well, here in Daniel chapter 5, God changes His mode of communication. Now He goes from relaying His message in dreams to relaying His message onto walls.

[5:37] We even have a saying that finds its origin in this true story. It's a saying that most people know, but perhaps don't actually realize that it comes from Daniel chapter 5.

The writing is on the wall. You know that saying. A company that has gotten some really negative publicity. Maybe there was a scandal of sorts and it can't recover.

You would say the writing is on the wall for that company. It's only a matter of time before it goes under. And by that we mean the end is plain for all to see.

It's obvious. It's only a matter of time. You can look and you can see for yourself and you can be sure. Well, in this passage before us this morning, we have five truths to consider that we can be sure of.

Five truths that God plainly reveals for us to see even as we see the writing on the wall for this man named Belshazzar. Now my original aim was to hit all five of them this morning.

[6:44] But as I prepared this week, it became clear that we wouldn't have time for all five. So we're going to cover the first two truths now. And then Lord willing, next week we'll cover the last three.

So sure truth number one. God will not be mocked. God will not be mocked. And we see this in the first nine verses of Daniel chapter 5.

King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand. Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar, his father, had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem, be brought.

That the king and his lords and his wives and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem.

And the king and his lords and his wives and his concubines drank from them. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

[7:51] Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote.

Then the king's color changed and his thoughts alarmed him. His limbs gave way and his knees knocked together. The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers.

The king declared to the wise men of Babylon, Whoever reads this writing and shows me its interpretation shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed and his color changed and his lords were perplexed.

There's some background here that we need to understand as we come to Daniel chapter 5 because there's a real shift that has taken place. The events of chapters 1 to 4, those all took place during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar.

[9:01] They happened over many decades, but they're all contained for us there in chapters 1 to 4. Many events that took place in this short period of time in the text.

Nebuchadnezzar was the longest reigning king of Babylon and much of his reign we find here in Daniel chapters 1 to 4. So when Nebuchadnezzar dies, some time has now passed from chapter 1. In fact, when we first meet Daniel in chapter 1, he's a teenager. And as we now come to Daniel chapter 5, he has aged significantly.

When Nebuchadnezzar died, Daniel would have been likely in his early 60s. And the events here of chapter 5 don't actually even follow right on the heels of Nebuchadnezzar's death because Belshazzar is not his immediate successor.

There were three other rulers who had come before him. So another 20 years or so have actually passed since King Nebuchadnezzar's death, meaning that the events here in chapter 5 take place about 25 or 30 years since the events of chapter 4.

[10 : 12] And yes, that means that when Daniel arrives on the scene here in chapter 5, he is a man well into his 70s or even 80s. So Nebuchadnezzar is no longer king.

This man Belshazzar is. Now as just a very brief aside, for many years, critical scholars would point to Belshazzar. And they would point to him as evidence that the Bible isn't trustworthy.

That it's fiction. Because only here, for many years, did we find Belshazzar named. There were no other historical records of him outside of what God's Word says.

So the skeptics of the Bible would say, this is made up. To quote one such skeptic, he said, it's pure fiction. Palpable forgery. Because all of the evidence outside of the Bible seemed to say, well, this man Belshazzar doesn't exist.

And these skeptics would back up their claims by pointing to who was on the throne in the historical records when the kingdom of Babylon was conquered. It was not Belshazzar in those records.

[11 : 22] It was a man named Nabonidus. There was an abundance of archaeological evidence and historical record that said this. So for many years, there was a challenge to understand, who is this Belshazzar?

And how does he fit into history? Because if you even look at God's account here in Daniel chapter 5, at the end of it, we see very clearly Daniel puts Belshazzar on the throne when the kingdom of Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persians.

And he makes no mention whatsoever of this man named Nabonidus. So you see there, there was some pretty readily available ammunition for skeptics to use from Daniel against the credibility of the Bible.

Here's a guy that takes center stage in Daniel 5. We have no reason to believe he even exists. So they said, until 1853, that is. Because in that year, archaeologists uncovered what came to be known as the Nabonidus Cylinder.

It was this clay cylinder with inscriptions on it all around, and it related to the Babylonian kingdom. And those inscriptions included a prayer. A prayer for a man named Belshazzar.

[12 : 36] And that's his name. But not just his name that we find there. It also told us his relationship to Nabonidus. He was Nabonidus' son. And then further discoveries in later years would piece the whole puzzle together.

This man Nabonidus. He had been a key conspirator against the king of Babylon at the time that he lived. And he had helped to assassinate that king. And then he himself was installed on the throne. But unlike most men who would conspire to kill another man for the throne, he didn't actually want the throne. He was kind of one of those guys who was like, let's just get rid of him and I don't have the solution.

I don't want to be the solution. He didn't really want the throne. And so as we now know also from historical discoveries, he ended up living away from Babylon altogether. He was uninterested in the affairs of ruling the kingdom.

He was actually a rather religious man, a false religion. He was interested in serving his false gods and worshipping them. So Nabonidus had his son Belshazzar installed as king of Babylon.

[13 : 40] Makes sense that Nabonidus could only offer to the man who could read the words and interpret them the third place in the kingdom. Because Nabonidus currently occupied technically the first, Belshazzar the second, and so he could give the third.

So Nabonidus has his son Belshazzar installed. He's the co-regent. He's the co-king. And so with Nabonidus miles away from Babylon, uninterested, doesn't care what's going on, for all intents and purposes, Belshazzar was king, just like Daniel says.

Now you might think, well, that's a lot of background to this passage. But it relates to the first truth that we can be sure of from this passage. God will not be mocked.

Scoffers will say the Bible isn't true. It isn't trustworthy. And time and again, they say it isn't true until they say, actually it is. It is true.

We found the historical evidence. We found the archaeological evidence. All the while, brothers and sisters, we're saying, yeah, God said it already. We know it's true. Without all of that good additional evidence, because he says it right here in his word.

[14 : 49] God will not be mocked. Whether scoffers are put to shame now or at the final day, God will vindicate his name.

His every word proves true. And this random guy named Belshazzar is just one of many, many examples of that. So let's look at this one singular event recorded for us here in our Bibles related to this man, Belshazzar's life.

Now we don't get much here. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar, who we have many episodes of his reign contained in the book of Daniel, we get Belshazzar's last night of his life right here.

But it's a night filled with significance for him and for us as we learn that sure truth, God will not be mocked. So here's Belshazzar having himself a party, just as even Isaiah 47 prophesied.

Loving the pleasures of this world. That's what he's indulging and enjoying those pleasures on this night. Now this is very strange because it's not as though he's loving the pleasures of this life and unbeknownst to him this night could be his last night on earth.

[16 : 06] He actually has a good key indicator that this could be the end for him. That very night just outside the walls of this city is an army. The Medo-Persians are at the doorstep of Babylon.

They are ready to conquer it. And what is Belshazzar doing? He's throwing a wild party. He's a living embodiment of the saying, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.

In fact, you could say, he's really living out, let us eat and drink for tonight we die. You see Cyrus, the king of Medo-Persia, he had already defeated Belshazzar's father, Nabonidus, about 50 miles away, a couple of days earlier.

He had marched to the city of Babylon with his sights set on overthrowing the city, on taking and capturing and killing the king and conquering the kingdom of Babylon for himself.

Now the ancient historian Xenophon, there's a name, tells us that Babylon did have one last line of defense that Belshazzar may have been overly confident in, the walls of the city.

[17 : 18] It was a well-fortified city that was said to have been able to last perhaps months, even maybe years of being besieged. They were well-stocked with much food and drink, as we see Belshazzar enjoying very much right now.

So Belshazzar was feasting without any fear. Now of course he should have been strategizing, he should have been commanding his armies, but here he was living at ease, enjoying the pleasures of this world.

He was having a party, a huge party, with a thousand of his lords, his wives, his concubines. Now to call it a party is to put it mildly.

What we're seeing here is revelry. This is debauchery. Belshazzar is indulging himself in gross, sinful excess.

And what Daniel highlights for us here is the excess of wine. Verse 1 tells us that Belshazzar drank wine in front of his guests. Then verse 2 builds on that, saying, when he had tasted the wine.

[18 : 23] Now that word tasted appears elsewhere in the book of Daniel. But it's translated every other time in Daniel a different way. It's translated as decree. That's the most common translation of it in all of Scripture.

Decree. The word means command. Like in Daniel 3, verse 10, you, O king, have made a decree. Or in Daniel 3, 29, I make a decree.

You see what's happening here. Belshazzar was under the command. Of the wine. This wasn't a sampling of wine. This was no Costco-sized sample of it.

This wasn't a taste test. He was drunk. And it was in this state that he made a command. Do you see the irony? In the opening verses of this passage, here is a man who thinks he's in full control.

Who says, I can do as I command. And even now, we see that he's weak. He's under the command of wine. And even more than that, we're going to see very quickly in this passage, he's under the command of God.

[19:31] This man thinks, well, I'm in charge. He's terribly mistaken. Now, verse 2 goes on to tell us what Belshazzar does next. Under the command of wine, he gives this command that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar, his father, had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought that the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines, might drink from them.

Now, real quick, in case you're wondering, Daniel isn't mistaken about who the biological father of Belshazzar is. You see, he calls Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar's father, but that's just a formal way of speaking of his predecessor, perhaps even his ancestor.

It's possible that Belshazzar's mother is the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, which would make Belshazzar Nebuchadnezzar's grandson. So that's what we mean by his father. So Belshazzar is drunk with wine.

He orders these vessels then be brought out. Now, again, we might not think much of this detail, but we need to slow down and consider what vessels these are. Whose vessels?

These are. This is a huge deal. These aren't just ordinary cups. These aren't disposable cups to be discarded after the feast. These are God's cups.

[20:48] These are cups that were taken from God's temple by King Nebuchadnezzar. We see the vessels are taken at the very introduction of the book of Daniel.

It shows the significance of these vessels for the entirety of the book. Flip back to chapter 1. Just verse 1. What do we read? In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

And the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his God, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his God.

Now you know, the opening verses here, Daniel's going to give us crucial information. He is setting the stage in a very important way. And he includes those vessels at the very beginning, foreshadowing for us even the events that take place here in chapter 5.

I said this when we were in chapter 1 in the evening a couple of months ago, but I'll say it again. These verses in the beginning of the book show us that Daniel is asking and answering the question in this book, whose God is God?

[22:12] Who's in charge? Who's sovereign? Who's all-powerful? Who rules over the kingdom of men? Who cannot be questioned by anyone who would say, why have you done this?

Who is the most high? The gods of Babylon? For the God of heaven. Belshazzar is giving his answer to us. He's saying, my gods.

My gods are in charge, of course. My gods are triumphant. I'm holding the vessels of God's house in my hand. Who do you think is one? This God of Israel is no God to me.

He's no challenge to me. My kingdom defeated his, and I can prove it. Bring out the vessels. I'll do with them as I please. I'll drink from them.

And I'll do it while flaunting my sin in this so-called God's face. I'll do it while I'm praising my gods. Gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

[23:12] Bring out the vessels. Let's show them who's in charge. And as they do, as he said they do, the vessels from God's house are brought out.

They drink from them, and no sooner have they set down their cups than the fingers of a human hand appears. The text says, immediately, again, this is parallel to the story of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 4.

Nebuchadnezzar had looked out from his rooftop, and no sooner had arrogant words left his lips than a voice from heaven spoke, and judgment came down upon him.

We see the same reality here in Daniel chapter 5. Only this time, it's not a voice, but a hand with fingers writing upon the wall. This is a very public spectacle.

There's even a detail here that emphasizes that everyone was seeing what was happening even though they weren't understanding it. The lampstand. Look again at verse 5.

[24:15] Daniel 5, verse 5. Immediately, the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace opposite the lampstand.

Now the text, it goes on to say that the king saw. This, but that seems to be emphasizing who these words were for. They were for him, but everyone sees this supernatural phenomenon unfolding before their eyes because there's a lampstand that's mentioned.

It's opposite the wall. What's that lampstand doing? It's casting light upon the wall. It's ensuring everybody see what's being written. This isn't written in the shadows. God has something to say. Now we aren't told this is the hand of God and technically speaking, God doesn't have a hand. He is spirit. He's immaterial. But the Bible often attributes human characteristics to God for our sake because of our own limitations.

God reveals himself to us using language, even physical attributes like hands that we can understand. So God said to Moses in the burning bush, I'll stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders I will do in it.

[25 : 32] So also the Ten Commandments were written on tablets of stone by the finger of God. So even we are held in his hand and none can snatch us from him.

The book of Daniel has revealed this hand of God so many times to us already. In fact, Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4 just rightly confessed, none can stay his hand.

God's hand. And that's exactly what we see happening here in chapter 5. As the hand appears and now writes upon the wall, no one stops it. No one even moves a muscle.

Petrified. The narrative though focuses in on Belshazzar in verse 6 and describes him in this way. Then the king's color changed and his thoughts alarmed him.

His limbs gave way and his knees knocked together. And when it says his limbs gave way, that's again a polite way of saying something. It's a polite way of saying that he soiled himself.

[26 : 36] The phrase very woodenly translates to say the knots of his loins were loosed. That's an idiom which means he was so afraid that he involuntarily emptied his bladder.

What humiliation for this man. Even as his response is described for us in God's word contained that we might read of it down through the ages. His face is pale, his mind is racing, he's wetting himself, he's shaking in fear like cartoon characters with their knees knocking together.

This is actually his first appropriate response of the whole night. He's come in contact with the living God who will not be mocked. Galatians 6 tells us, do not be deceived.

God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his flesh will from the flesh reap corruption.

But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. If you are sowing in the flesh, in your own flesh as Galatians says, that means you are living in sin, living for yourself.

[27 : 49] You don't have a care in the world about God or what God says or what God demands of you. And you may think like Belshazzar, you may think, I'm untouchable. I can live it up.

But every day that you write off God, you are ignoring the writing on the wall. Hebrews 9 says it very plainly. It is appointed for man to die once.

And after that comes judgment. We all die. We all stand before God the judge. No one will be exempt. So don't put the living God to the test as you think, well, I won't stand before Him.

As you think, I won't be held to account. As you think, I can live however I please. He won't be mocked. He is worthy of all honor and praise.

So unbeliever, don't be like Belshazzar, putting his lips to the vessels of God in open rebellion against Him. But instead, have on your lips a humble confession before Him.

[28 : 57] Instead, repent. Turn from your life of sin. Stop sowing the seeds that will only lead to destruction and believe in Jesus Christ.

Put your trust in Him. Put your trust in Him for salvation from your sins and from the wrath of God that is sure to come for those sins. So that when you then stand before God on Judgment Day, you can be sure of something entirely different.

You can be sure I have a confident hope in Jesus Christ who died in my place. Because outside of Christ, no one will stand.

God will not be mocked. No sooner had Belshazzar drank from those vessels that the hand of God immediately appeared.

And what Belshazzar witnessed terrified him. He doesn't even know what the writing says. And he's still terrified. A human hand appears.

[30 : 00] It writes on the wall with no body attached to it. That is a terrifying sight. Yet more terrifying than that is what is it that he's written? So in this panic, Belshazzar calls in his wise men to interpret the writing for him.

He even offers him that great reward. But there's no one that can do it. Not even with the status of being ranked third in the kingdom on the table. None can interpret the writing. None can tell

Belshazzar what it says.

It's the pattern of the book, isn't it? All these pagan men, wise men in the kingdom of Babylon trying so hard but they can't keep up with God.

They can't figure him out. They can't unravel the mysteries that he presents showing us that none can rival him. So here in chapter 5, yet again, they fail.

They fail to tell Belshazzar what the writing on the wall says. None can do it. But Daniel. But Daniel. As always, he will be able to.

[31 : 02] And he's about to be introduced to us in this narrative. And with him, we will see the second sure truth of this passage. Examples should not be ignored.

Examples should not be ignored. I'll begin reading in verse 10 and we'll read down through verse 23. The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall and the queen declared, O king, live forever.

Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your fathers, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him.

And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father, the king, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers. Because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems, were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar.

Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation. Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king, my father, brought from Judah.

[32 : 26] I have heard of you, that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter.

But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Then Daniel answered and said to the king, Let your gifts be for yourself and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. O king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him.

Whom he would, he killed and whom he would, he kept alive. Whom he would, he raised up and whom he would, he humbled. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne and his glory was taken from him.

[33 : 44] He was driven from among the children of mankind and his mind was made like that of a beast and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox and his body was wet with the dew of heaven until he knew that the most high God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.

And you, his son Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart though you knew all this. But you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven and the vessels of his house have been brought in before you and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them and you have praised the gods of silver and gold of bronze, iron, wood, and stone which do not see or hear or know but the God in whose hand is your breath and whose are all your ways you have not honored.

Now remember we've established that Daniel chapter 5 though it follows right on the heels of chapter 4 actually is some time between those two chapters.

25 years have passed and multiple kings have been raised up and multiple kings have been removed by the hand of God so that when we come to this account on the very last night of Belshazzar's life Daniel is nowhere to be found.

He has literally been forgotten in the kingdom. Forgotten by seemingly everyone except the queen. he had that place of great prominence during Nebuchadnezzar's reign.

[35 : 32] He was a man who was very much known in the kingdom but now he's completely unknown to Belshazzar. He's a nobody now. But the queen who's likely Belshazzar's mother

Nabonidus' wife the queen she comes in so she hadn't even been with everybody in all of this feasting so this is again not likely Belshazzar's wife but his mother she's much older than him she remembers probably because she was living and remembers it happening.

She remembers Nebuchadnezzar's madness. She remembers even the man who was at the center of interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream. So she speaks up and she tells Belshazzar I know a guy I know someone who can solve your interpretation problem.

He has the spirit of the gods in him and by that we understand he's different than all of these other men. He's unique. This pagan woman understands there's something special about him.

He's got a proven track record from Nebuchadnezzar's reign. She says in verse 12 an excellent spirit knowledge and understanding to interpret dreams explain riddles and solve problems were found in this Daniel.

That's who you need. So Belshazzar calls him in. He praises Daniel. He offers him this reward saying if you can interpret it I'll give this to you and Daniel answers I don't want that.

[37:07] I don't want your reward I don't care about that. Keep your status symbols keep your influential positions give it to another. He rejects the reward and then he rebukes the king. And he rebukes him by recounting to the king what had happened to somebody else to Nebuchadnezzar.

You see Daniel sets Nebuchadnezzar before Belshazzar. He says you had this example. You had him. Nebuchadnezzar he exalted himself.

He lifted himself up against God. And what happened to him? He was brought low. Brought so very low. Made to live among the beasts.

Made to live like the beasts. Made to even look like the beasts. He went mad for a time. He lost the kingdom for a time. All because his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened.

God brought him low. He brought him low until he knew that the most high God rules over the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whomever he will.

[38:13] and then Daniel hones in on Belshazzar because sometimes you're hearing a story about somebody else and you're thinking like that's fine. I don't feel that impacted by it until Daniel turns his gaze upon Belshazzar And he says in so many words but you haven't learned a thing!

The exact words he uses. Even though you knew. Verse 22 and you his son Belshazzar have not humbled your heart though you knew all this.

So isn't it interesting? Belshazzar apparently had no clue about Daniel. He's like you're just some guy I've heard about I'm bringing you in I hear you can help me. Doesn't have a clue who Daniel is but apparently he knew very well who King Nebuchadnezzar was and what had happened to him. He wasn't ignorant of this crazy true story about Nebuchadnezzar going mad and being humbled by God. So Daniel's saying you knew but you didn't learn the lesson and now you've done the same thing that Nebuchadnezzar did.

You didn't learn from the example of Nebuchadnezzar. You didn't learn from how God brought him so very low. There's a lesson for us in that.

[39:34] Learn from those who have gone before you. Learn from the consequences that others have experienced. This is true for all of us but children young people I'm saying this especially to you don't look at your parents when they give you advice even when they use themselves as an example don't look at them and say to yourself oh they don't understand me they don't get my life they don't know what I'm going through.

Generally speaking that's what the fool says you are no exception God is the same and God will act according to his nature the wise listen and take into account the wisdom of others the wise counsel of others the wise listen and take into account the example of others God may save your soul from death using the words and the examples of those who have gone before you so don't be like Belshazzar none of us he ignored the example of Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar did the exact same thing that Nebuchadnezzar did he lifted himself up against God and can't we say in some sense that Belshazzar did something that was even more overtly rebellious Nebuchadnezzar looked at his kingdom and he thought to himself I did this I deserve all the credit it's obviously wicked God dealt with him for it but Belshazzar took it a step further he exalted himself by spitting in God's face he was flaunting the power and the authority that he thought he had over God clutching God's vessel in his hand and drinking from it and what's he doing as he drinks praising his gods false gods Daniel's showing Belshazzar what a fool he was to have ignored the example of Nebuchadnezzar and then Daniel has one last sharp word for Belshazzar you praised your gods

who can't see they can't hear they can't know even yet you have not honored the God in whose hand there it is again God's hand you have not honored the God in whose hand hold your breath in whose hand holds all your ways whose hand has written upon the wall you've not honored the God in whose hand your life belongs you held his cup he holds your life if you think about it there's a measure of insanity in Belshazzar's life self-inflicted insanity

God very directly brought the insanity upon Nebuchadnezzar but here we see a man in Belshazzar who is embracing for himself this insanity he's praising gods of silver and gold bronze iron wood and stone gods who don't see or hear or know and all the while he's shaking his fist at the God who made him and who holds his life in his very hand that is a crazy thing to do sinner friend the God who made you and who holds your life in his hand this God commands that all people everywhere repent that's exactly what Acts 17 30 says he's commanded all people everywhere repent that includes you don't ignore the example of Belshazzar who himself ignored the example of Nebuchadnezzar turn away from your sins turn away from your life of disobedience to God going your own way living life on your terms ignoring God and saying

I'll rule on the throne of my own heart that's what Belshazzar would say turn away from all of that and the ruin and the destruction that that brings brings in this life and certainly it brings ruin and destruction in the life to come turn away from your sins trust in Jesus run to him for salvation confess that you are a sinner in need of a savior ask for forgiveness and you will be forgiven you will be cleansed you will be received and oh what joy will be yours as you turn from a life of mocking God to a life of making much of God a life that exalts God a life that pleases God a life that brings glory to him and brothers and sisters that's of course to be our lives too we're to be making much of God we're to be honoring him in all that we think in all that we say in all that we do we need to see the example of

[44 : 42] Belshazzar this pagan king with a rebel heart because remaining sins still so easily entangles us we're still tempted to lift ourselves up kill that sin put it to death and exalt God in your life and we'll see what comes to Belshazzar Lord willing next week as a result of failing to exalt God in his life we're going to pause there in the narrative we're going to leave it at a bit of a cliffhanger though actually that's maybe the most inappropriate time to talk about a cliffhanger because the writing is on the wall for Belshazzar there's no doubt about it and we're going to see next week Lord willing what comes of him as we finish out this passage we get to consider this one night of Belshazzar's life in two sermons and it is good for us to consider Belshazzar but oh how we need to consider the Lord Jesus Christ Belshazzar and Jesus they wouldn't make very good spot the differences would they because there really are no similarities to be found between there are none between

Jesus and Belshazzar try to spot even one thing that's the same in their heart and you can't two totally different pictures Belshazzar mocked God Jesus Christ God the Son was mocked as he was beaten he was mocked as he was stripped of his robes he was mocked as he hung upon the cross with the crowds laughing and heaping their insults upon him Belshazzar lifted himself up in pride Jesus Christ was lifted up in humility lifted up onto that tree to die in obedience to his father and in love for his people in love for us Belshazzar drank from God's cup that was filled with wine Jesus Christ drank from God's cup that was filled with God's wrath and as Belshazzar drank from the cup he was justly condemned oh and as

Jesus drank from the cup he was condemned in our place it's not hard to spot the differences brothers and sisters between the only savior and this pagan king and as we consider our savior oh how we should love him all the more how we should live for him all the more how we should honor him all the more with our lives because we once were all like King Belshazzar we were once rebel sinners shaking our fists at God if if you were to have done a spot the difference between Belshazzar's heart and Colin's heart there would have been no difference to be found you could have scoured those pictures for hours and hours and how frustrated you would have been no difference to be found just the same and that's the case for all of us we've already heard Ephesians 2 once let's hear it again we were all dead in the trespasses and sins in which we once walked we were carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind we were by nature children of wrath doesn't that sound like a certain king from Daniel chapter 6 but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved so then church what are we to do with so great a salvation honor the

Lord with your life honor the God of heaven and whose hand is your breath honor the God of heaven and whose hand are all of your ways and by his hand his mighty hand you have been redeemed what a great salvation we have let's pray together father God the words thank you feel as though they feel fall so far short what a marvelous work you have done in us bringing us from death to life from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of your beloved son in whom we have redemption forgiveness of sins so father we thank you we highly exalt you this morning and we pray as we go from here that your praise would indeed be upon our lips that we would not think lightly of what you've done for us through the Lord Jesus Christ but we would rejoice and give thanks and we would speak a word to those around us

Jesus Christ look at what he's done for me look at what God could do for you so we pray father that you would encourage our hearts send us from here rejoicing making much of you in our lives and we pray this in Jesus name amen amen amen