

### Daniel 5:13-31

**Daniel 5:16,17 And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. 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 third ruler in the kingdom. Then Daniel answered and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation..."**

Daniel who is by now over 80 years old is brought to Belshazzar in the great hall to interpret the writing on the wall. This is the third time in the Book of Daniel that the Babylonian magicians and wise men have failed to interpret a dream or vision and that Daniel has been called upon afterwards. We notice that Daniel has been consistently confident in each of these situations. He has not been afraid of the moment but has stepped up to assure the king that he will be able to give the interpretation. He has done so with complete dependence upon God to give him the message that is from the Lord to these kings. Daniel's confidence was rooted

in the relationship that he had with God and that allowed him to know what God was doing and how he was to be a part of how God was going to accomplish His purposes.

With a chapter still to go, Daniel has logged close to 70 years of confidence in God in circumstances in which he was required to trust in Him completely. We are familiar with the special events recorded in the book but not with the ordinary part of his life and walk with the Lord. His readiness for the big moments speaks to the quality of his walk with God in the ordinary times of his life. In his youth, middle age and old age, Daniel never changed.

God's message to Belshazzar through Daniel included the expectation that Belshazzar was responsible for the knowledge of God he had been exposed to through the previous encounters that Nebuchadnezzar had with God. These lessons in humility and in the reality of God's sovereign rule should have been foundational to Belshazzar's understanding of how the world works. Obviously, these elements were not a part of Belshazzar's thinking. God's answer to this deficit was effectively - "could've, should've." We all need to consider this principle of responsibility.

What do we know and what should we have known of God and His work in the world and in our lives and what difference could and should have this have made in the way we have lived?

Then Daniel got down to the business of the interpretation of the writing on the wall. "Mene: God has numbered your kingdom and finished it. Tekel: You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Peres: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." There is general agreement that the interpretation made use of puns and that the actual words were that of differently valued coins. To bring this home mene would be like our 50 cent piece, tekem would be like a penny, and peres would be like a quarter. The 50 cent piece values the kingdom and ends it. The penny evaluates Belshazzar and finds him worthless. The quarter values what is left now to the Medes and Persians.

Daniel was then awarded the interpretive prize. He knew and at this point it seems that Belshazzar also knew that it was meaningless. Belshazzar could have repented, ordered the collection of the holy vessels etc. but he doubled down on nothing. That night he was slain as the Persians took the city.

