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Belshazzar was Killed

5: 29-31

Belshazzar was killed DIG: What lessons from history do you think stand as particularly relevant reminders to us today? What fatal mistake did Belshazzar make? How did the Persian soldiers get inside Babylon if the walls were so high and thick?

REFLECT: What contemporary examples come to mind of people mocking God by demeaning sacred things, as Belshazzar did the Temple vessels? Then and now, does it seem that ADONAI is quick, or slow, to judge such irreverent behavior?

King Belshazzar was killed and Darius, viceroy to Cyrus, was appointed to rule over Babylon, a small portion of the vast Medo-Persian Empire.



Did **King Belshazzar** believe **Dani'el's** interpretation of **the writing on the wall** (**to see link click Cs - Dani'el Interpreted the Handwriting on the Wall**)? We will never know for sure. In **5:17**, **Dani'el** told **the king** that **his** services were not for sale. Nevertheless, **at Belshazzar's command**, **Dani'el** accepted **the empty gift**, **was clothed in purple**, **a gold chain was placed around his neck**, and **he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the empire behind the king**

himself and **his** coregent father Nabonidus (5:29). **The Babylonian Empire** would collapse **that very night (October 12, 539 BC)**. **Belshazzar** made the fatal error of withdrawing the watchmen from their positions on the city wall. Therefore, when the final attack came, no one was there to defend **the city**. Because the Euphrates River encircled the city, the majority of the residents thought **Babylon's** massive walls, being 320 feet tall and 80 feet thick, were impenetrable. However, the **Persian** army devised an ingenious plan to redirect the river further upstream, thereby reducing the water to a more manageable level. The **Persian** soldiers were able to cross the river and enter **the city** by wading into the riverbed underneath the wall during **Belshazzar's** banquet.²⁷⁷

Therefore, **Dani'el** occupied **his** new position for only a few hours. Nonetheless, **his** appointment was anything but meaningless. As **Chapter 6** will show, it paved the way for **Dani'el's** significance to **the Persians**. When **they** captured **the city**, **they** left it intact. **Those** who held important positions in the **Babylonian** government were given equally high positions of authority under **the Medes and the Persians**. And because of **his** promotion in the final hours of **the Babylonian Empire**, **Dani'el** was among them. At this point **he** was 81 years old. And it is very likely that **his** position of authority in **the Medo-Persian Empire** enabled **him** to later influence **Darius** to issue the decree that allowed **the Jews** to return to **their** homeland (**Ezra 1:1-4** and **6:3-5**).

Dani'el described **Belshazzar's banquet**, **the king's** emotional response to the miraculous **handwriting on the wall**, and **his** own **interpretation** in **twenty-nine verses**. In contrast, the conclusion of the story is very abrupt. The fall of **the Babylonian Empire** is summarized in just **two verses**. **For that very night**, while the citizens of **Babylon** were occupied with dancing and feasting, **Darius** entered **the city**. **King Belshazzar was killed and Darius** (see **Ag - Cyrus and Darius**), viceroy to **Cyrus**, was appointed to rule over **Babylon at the age of sixty-two (5:30-31)**.²⁷⁸ **Darius** ruled over the province of **Babylon**, while **Cyrus** ruled over the entire **Medo-Persian Empire**. **Dani'el** served in **his** role of **governor** of the province of **Babylon** at least until **he** was about eighty-five years old.

Belshazzar's party is thus exposed as the ultimate act of folly: **he** was feasting on the brink of the grave and celebrating on the edge of extinction . . . and **he** never even knew it. With **Belshazzar's death**, **Babylon's Empire** was itself brought crashing to the ground. Like the sequence of weights in the oracle (see **Aw - The King's Dream**), the once mighty **Babylonian Empire** became weak and was

ultimately blown away by the judgment of **Ha'Shem**.²⁷⁹ The rule of **the Medes and the Persians** was the second phase of **the times of the Gentiles** (see [Ao - The Times of the Gentiles](#)), and was represented by **the chest and arms of silver of Nebuchadnezzar's statue** (see [Az - The Second Empire: Chest and Arms of Silver](#)). These events in **Chapter 5** illustrate that **ADONAI** is sovereign and moves according to **His** predetermined plans. Those events also anticipate the final overthrow of all **Gentile** world powers that rebel against **YHVH** and are characterized by moral and spiritual corruption. Such a judgment, anticipated in **Psalm 2:4-6** and **Revelation 19:15-16**, will be fulfilled at the Second Coming of **Messiah** (see [Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah](#)).²⁸⁰

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that those who have faith in **You** can look to death with a joy at being with **You** eternally in **Your** perfect home in heaven. **We** do not need to fear death as **Belshazzar** feared. **And if the Ruach of the One who raised Yeshua from the dead dwells in you, the One who raised Messiah Yeshua from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Ruach who dwells in you (Romans 8:11)**. Yes, an invitation to **Your** special party brings joy. When we receive death's invitation to leave this land for our eternal destiny, it will be like receiving an invitation to an eternal party in heaven. **He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more. Nor shall there be mourning or crying or pain any longer, for the former things have passed away."** **And the One seated upon the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new!" Then He said, "Write, for these words are trustworthy and true" (Revelation 21:4-5)**. Thank **You** so very much for paying the costly price to redeem for yourself a people (**Second Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:16**). I love **You** dearly and can't wait to spend eternity with **You**, praising and exalting **You** forever! In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*