

Shine With Marvel

In 700 BC, an astounding prophecy is given. *“I am the Lord...who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, ‘Let it be rebuilt’, and of the temple, ‘Let its foundations be laid.’”* Isaiah 44:28. In 600 BC, Cyrus was born in the backwater province of Persia as Babylon ruled the world. In 586 BC, Babylon conquered Jerusalem and burned the temple down.

In 559 BC, Cyrus became king of Persia and began expanding his empire. On October 12, 539 BC, while King Belshazzar and his nobility partied late into the night, Persian forces snuck into the city and conquered it with little loss of life. This is the setting for Daniel 5. In 538 BC, Cyrus liberated the Jews, permitting them to rebuild their temple. God works in wondrous fashion (Exodus 34:10) and desires that we marvel at his greatness (Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:12).

God Speaks to His People in Four Marvelous Ways:

1. In _____ (Rebellion)

- a. *“King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem.”* Daniel 5:1-2. Drunkenness led to immorality which led to blasphemy. The king essentially spit in God’s face.
- b. *“Rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft.”* I Samuel 15:23. Typically God gives a clear warning before judgment falls. Belshazzar didn’t humble himself as his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had done (Daniel 4:37).

2. In _____ (Writing)

- a. *“Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote.”* Daniel 5:5. The king turned pale and his knees knocked together.
- b. God uses various ways to get our attention, but sometimes we are too preoccupied or stubborn to see this. At the very moment the writing appeared, a high-ranking Babylonian defector was leading the Persian army into the city after diverting the Euphrates River so the river bed could be used to invade.
- c. The sands of Belshazzar’s hourglass were running out, but there may still have been time to repent. The king of Nineveh repented after a stern warning (Jonah 3:10). When God warns us we must avoid hopelessness, for it’s not too late! We must also avoid procrastination, thinking there will always be another chance. Maybe not, as the rich fool found out (Luke 12:20)!

3. In _____ (Rebuke)

- a. *“O king, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness...but when his heart became arrogant...he was deposed...until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign...but you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this.” Daniel 5:18-22.*
- b. Belshazzar had witnessed his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar being deposed and eating grass like a cow. And he saw him restored when he humbled himself before God. *“People who are not aware that they are doing wrong will be punished only lightly. Much is required from those to whom much is given.” Luke 12:48.*

4. In _____ (Revelation)

- a. *“Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin. This is what the words mean: Mene – God has numbered the days of thy reign and brought it to an end. Tekel – You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Parsin – Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians.” Daniel 5:25-28.*
- b. There is a time when it is too late. Judgment is certain. But we may not be aware of this, therefore we should seek to repent and get right with God, just as the thief on the cross did (Luke 23:42). Belshazzar, though powerful, wasted his life, while a widow, though poor, is praised by Jesus (Mark 12:44).

140 years ago Daniel 5 was scoffed at as fiction. In 1879, the Cyrus Cylinder was found, confirming the accuracy of Daniel 5. In March 1899, archeologist Koldewey excavated Babylon, giving added confirmation to the Scriptures. “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a single biblical reference.” Dr. Nelson Glueck. We would be wise to marvel at the Bible and its Author!