

Sent: 3/30/2016 11:30:40 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
Subj: Last Nite's MOB Study on Daniel 5

"Bene, Bene, Tekel, Upharsin!" The hand writing is on the wall!

It's 539 BC! The 70-year Babylonian captivity for God's chosen people is almost over--as prophesied by the prophet Isaiah! Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, and reigning king of Babylon, has been "weighed in the balances and found wanting!" Nebuchadnezzar, who ultimately acknowledged Daniel's God as the Most High God of Heaven, and offered praise and honor to Him, has been dead for more than 20 years! But Belshazzar continued his worship of "the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone--which do not see, hear or understand..." and did not glorify the true God of Heaven, "in whose hand, as Daniel noted, were his very "life-breath and all his ways"!

Even worse--Belshazzar, at the height of the celebration that fateful night, "gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple, the house of God, which was in Jerusalem...and he and his nobles, his wives and concubines drank from them...and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone"! Bad idea!

You all know the rest of the story! The "hand writing on the wall" appeared--much to the "great alarm" and "knee knocking" of Belshazzar, and his guests! The party was over--and Daniel, now in his 80's, was once again called upon to give the interpretation, which was a message from the God of Heaven that the "days of Belshazzar's kingdom were over" and that the once great empire would be "given to the Medes and Persians"!

Daniel writes that "that same night Belshazzar, the Chaldean king, was slain..." and Darius the Mede (which might be an honored title for Cyrus) entered Babylon and "received the kingdom"! (Dan. 5:30)

All of this was in fulfillment of prophecy!

More than a century and a half before this, the prophet Isaiah had warned Hezekiah, king of Judah: "Hear the word of the Lord of hosts! Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing will be left, says the Lord! And some of your sons who will issue from you, whom you will beget, will be taken away, and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon!" (Isa. 39:5-7)

The prophet Jeremiah prophesied (in Jer. 25:11-12) that "this whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon 70 years!" But he also prophesied that "...when the 70 years are completed, the Lord of hosts will punish the king of Babylon and that nation...and make it an everlasting desolation!"

But he also had some good news for God's people! "For thus says the Lord (he wrote!): when 70 years have been completed...I (the God of Heaven!) will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place! For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope!" (Jer. 29:10-11) Wow!

And, just to complete the story, Jeremiah also prophesied that the "sacred vessels" in the house of the Lord would be "carried to Babylon and be there until the day I visit them...Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place!" (Jer. 27:21-22)

We see these prophecies fulfilled, ironically, through the reign of another pagan ruler, Cyrus, king of Persia! Ezra writes that the God of Heaven would "stir up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that he would send a proclamation throughout all his kingdom...in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, to allow exiles to return to the land of Israel, to instigate the rebuilding of the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem"--and even to return the "sacred vessels" which had been desecrated by an inebriated pagan king! (Read more of this story in the book of Ezra!)

And we know that all of this was part of God's plan for providing redemption and hope for all eternity through the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord!

We're reminded that we have a sovereign God of Heaven who's in control of nations and individuals! Just as in the days of Daniel! We too can trust Him for whatever is occurring in our world, and know that He has a plan and purpose for us too, as His people, in whatever position--and circumstances--we find ourselves!

David Jeremiah, in commenting on Daniel 5, in his book "Agents of Babylon," writes: "These days aren't for the faint of heart! Like Daniel, we need strength to stay useful, wisdom to focus on the unseen, and courage to warn our world of the judgment to come!"

Well. on to Daniel 6, where we find Daniel, now in his 80's, still in exile, now "distinguishing himself" by serving Darius (or is it Cyrus?), king of Persia--but really still serving and trusting God of Heaven, as he finds himself cast into the lion's den!

Dare to be a Daniel!

Have a great week, men!

Lowell