

# Belshazzar's Party

Daniel 5:1- 31

*Halifax: 29 April 2007*

Last week in Daniel 3, I showed you how Jesus showed up when King Nebuchadnezzar had his big party in Babylon...

- It was a party in celebration of the City of Man that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
  - And it was all symbolised by the colossal image of man that Nebuchadnezzar had set up (you remember how it kept repeating the words "that Nebuchadnezzar had set up).
  - He had commanded all the important people from Babylon to come this great event to celebrate their delight in the great empire that he had built...
    - And they were to show their devotion by bowing down to this image whenever the music played.
    - There was tremendous pressure to conform...
      - There was the pressure that this was something that most of the people at this time wanted to do...they were excited about Babylon...
      - and there was the pressure that anyone who didn't go along with it would be cast into a fiery furnace.
- But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refused to bow down.
  - These servants of Jesus refused because they knew that they had a better party with a better king and better kingdom than anything at Babylon.
    - They refused to leave Jesus' party to come to Nebuchadnezzar's party.
- In rage, Nebuchadnezzar cast them into the fiery furnace only to learn in a very unmistakable way that he could not spoil their party.
  - He saw them walking about unharmed in the midst of the flame in the presence of the Son of God!
  - Humbled, He confessed before his whole nation that the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego was the Most High God.
    - He did not embrace their God as His own God yet,
      - but over the years God did a lot more to humble him until at last he was brought to what appears to be a genuine confession of faith.

But in Daniel 5, about 50 years later,

- we have the account given of another party in Babylon that is just as rebellious...
  - a party put on by King Belshazzar...
  - This week I want to show you about his party and how the Lord also visits him.

But who was this man, Belshazzar?

- For years, Bible critics mocked.
  - They said that no such person ever existed—
  - They pointed out that the Greek historians clearly stated that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon,
    - and that Nabonidus had not been killed by Cyrus, but spared...
    - and that he was not even in Babylon when it fell to Cyrus.
  - With all the hubris of modern arrogance,
    - these critics insisted that Belshazzar was fabricated in the brain of whoever wrote the book of Daniel.
- But in 1858, they were all put to silence when archaeologist Henry Rawlingson found a terra cotta cylinder at Ur of the Chaldees that mentioned Belshazzar and said that he was the eldest son of Nabonidus.
  - Gradually,
    - other archaeologists found other records indicating that Nabonidus had appointed Belshazzar as co-regent.
      - That explains why in this account he offers the reward of third-ruler to the one who could interpret the writing on the wall—it was a co-regency...
      - Archaeologists also found records stating that Belshazzar had been killed in the night while he was feasting with his nobles.
  - The critics had to start looking for other ways to attack the Bible.
    - Brothers and sisters, the Bible is true!
      - If there is a seeming contraction between the Bible and whatever historical records we possess (and there are very few such contradictions to be found), it is always the historical records that are insufficient, not the Bible.
      - The Bible is God's Word and it cannot err!

Now let's take a look at Belshazzar's party.

- First I want you to see that...

**I. Belshazzar's party is the kind of party that a nation has when it is on its deathbed—**

A. It's very different from the party that Nebuchadnezzar had in Daniel 3.

1. Nebuchadnezzar's party was a magnificent festival, celebrating the city of man!

- a. It was the kind of celebration you have when you have had great success and are so full of confidence that you feel you can do anything!
  - It seems like nothing will be able to stop you!
  - God's words at Babel apply—
    - “nothing will be restrained from them now!”
  
- b. Nebuchadnezzar by policy and might had united the nations of the world under his leadership.
  - The billion-dollar golden image of a man with people from all the different nations and tongues bowing down was the symbol of the unity and success of the city of man.
    - Cultural conformity was emphasised—
      - those who would not comply were to be persecuted...
    - Education and discipline were emphasised—
      - the nation prided itself in its learning and its achievements.
      - It prided itself in greatness.
  
- c. Bothers and sisters, this was the spirit about 100 years ago among our peoples in England and North America!
  - Tremendous progress was being made in all areas.
    - Technologically,
      - The Titanic symbolised what man could do—a ship about which it was said “Even God can't sink this one!”
    - Politically, there were visions of world peace and of the end to all war.
    - Economically, there was unprecedented growth and prosperity and the dream that poverty would be entirely abolished.
    - In science, new discoveries and theories were turning up every day.

TRANS> But God always visits the city of man to bring down its pride.

- The sinking of the Titanic reminded man that he was not on the throne.
- World War I, followed by World War II destroyed the illusions of world peace.
- The Great Depression gave us a taste of poverty.
- The social unrest of the 60s brought in a great wave of distrust in all of man's institutions, even God's institutions of marriage and government when run according to man's ways.
- And now the decline in our economy and an unprecedented number of social and psychiatric disorders have added to our disillusionment.
- The party of pride in human unity and achievement is being replaced by another kind of party...

2. Belshazzar's party is the kind of party we have today, in a society that is on its deathbed.
    - a. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar's party, it is not a celebration of the city of man, or man's potential...
      - It is not at all a party in which things like discipline and education and unity around common principles are valued...
    - b. It is rather a celebration of sensuality and human freedom!
      - It is a party about having no worries.
      - The blasphemy laws aren't even very important any more...
        - The only thing that you are expected to conform to is the notion that it doesn't matter what you conform to.
        - And if you don't go along, you probably won't be persecuted with a fiery furnace, just ignored as irrelevant and out of fashion.
- B. In a society like this, there is a warped display of masculinity.
1. In Nebuchadnezzar's day, a man's strength was shown in conquering, governing, building, and unifying...
    - But in Belshazzar's day, manliness is shown in drinking wine, multiplying sex partners, and living with abandonment.
      - The king of the party is the man up front guzzling the wine with the sensual women around him!
  2. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and Belshazzar's kingdom are perversions of different aspects of Christ's kingdom...
    - a. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is man's rebellious version of God's call to take dominion and subdue the earth...
      - You see, Jesus conquers and governs and builds and unifies all to the glory of God and around the ways of God.
        - It is a kingdom of righteousness and love where things are done God's way...
          - where men use their strength to bless the weak rather than to trample over them.
        - And where they do all for the glory of God rather than their own glory.
      - Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is also about dominion and subduing the earth, but to the glory of man instead of to the glory of God.

- b. Belshazzar’s kingdom, on the other hand, is man’s rebellious version of the rest we enjoy in Christ’s kingdom—
    - We rest in the finished work of Christ on the cross for us.
      - We enter in to the joy of fellowship with God secured by the very righteousness that God’s Son has accomplished for us.
      - We have peace and perfect security in Him and nothing to fear.
    - Belshazzar’s kingdom is a desperate effort to rest in forgetfulness of God.
      - It is an effort to drown ourselves by becoming drunk with entertainment, luxury, sensuality—whatever we can grab.
3. And it is here that you see how perverted the kingdom of man is...
- a. There is a masculine fearlessness in Belshazzar’s kingdom too—
    - but it is a freedom from the fear of God in the rival kingdom of man!
    - A real man is not afraid of God’s judgement, even when his kingdom seems to be crumbling—he is undaunted by it all.
  - b. He says, “Even though my society is crumbling, I don’t care”—
    - “It doesn’t affect me in the least!”
    - “I can go right on as I always did.”
      - And he does this even though he has no basis for it—even though he has no reason to think that things will turn out okay at last.
  - c. You see, Belshazzar had this party in spite of the fact that the city of Babylon was surrounded by Cyrus and his troops!
    - 1) He knew they were there!
      - Belshazzar had not been able to drive them away, and so he and his people were shut up inside the great city of Babylon.
    - 2) But here is the main thing...
      - they were not one bit flustered!
        - They said, “Let’s party!”
        - They felt perfectly safe inside their city walls!
      - The walls of Babylon were 300 feet high and 75 feet thick!
        - There was enough food in store to last for ten years.
        - There were gardens within the walls, and the Euphrates River flowed right through the middle of the city, so there was plenty of water.

- Incidentally, that is how the invading troops of Cyrus got in—his troops diverted the river and came in under the wall where the river had flowed.
  - For Belshazzar and his court, it was time to party.
    - His own army was not motivated enough or disciplined enough to chase away the enemy—
      - but why should they bother?
      - They were safe inside the walls.
        - It was party time!
- 3) Belshazzar and his men had not built these walls or acquired this wealth...
- They would not even have been capable of doing so...
  - No, they were inheritors of all that they had,
    - They were able to live off of their father's sweat.
    - Why should they be disciplined or sober?
      - There was no need—they had enough to party forever—
      - They were going to party and pretend like the party would be there for them forever.
- 4) What a description of our society!
- Our fathers laboured, and we eat what they produced!
    - We have gone from the humanism of Nebuchadnezzar called modernism to the abandonment of Belshazzar called post modernism.
  - The foundations of our society crumble, and we party.
    - We don't care as long as we are still comfortable.
    - And to extend the party for another generation, we have discovered debt—I'll party and someone else can pay the bill.
- d. Note well, Belshazzar was not even afraid of God's judgement.
- 1) The God of Israel had prophesied through Isaiah—200 years before—that Babylon would fall.
- In Isa 47:5-11 it says:
    - "Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans [that's Babylon]; For you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms. I was angry with My people; I have profaned My inheritance, And given

them into your hand. You showed them no mercy; On the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily.

- The LORD is showing that He was the One who had given Babylon success... But look at the Babylon said...
    - And you said, 'I shall be a lady forever,' So that you did not take these *things* to heart, Nor remember the latter end of them. Therefore hear this now, *you who are* given to pleasures, Who dwell securely, Who say in your heart, 'I *am*, and *there is* no one else besides me; I shall not sit *as* a widow, Nor shall I know the loss of children'; But these two *things* shall come to you In a moment, in one day: The loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your sorceries, for the great abundance of your enchantments. For you have trusted in your wickedness; You have said, 'No one sees me'; Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; And you have said in your heart, 'I *am*, and *there is* no one else besides me.' Therefore evil shall come upon you; You shall not know from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you; You will not be able to put it off. And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, *Which* you shall not know.
  - Jeremiah had stated that the captivity in Babylon would only last 70 years in Jer. 25:11,
    - and Isaiah had said that a king named Cyrus would release his people from Babylon.
  - Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 had brought all this into public focus in Babylon,
    - It had shown Babylon that Persia would become the world power.
- 2) But in spite of the date and in spite of these prophesies and in spite of the enemy being just outside the city...
- Belshazzar is partying—
    - He is not afraid!
    - He is a man and he will party!
    - He is not afraid of God's judgements!
  - Be impressed!
    - See how he is able to drink himself under the table!
    - See how many women he has!
    - What a man!
      - What a perverted version of masculinity!
4. But all this is not enough for him!

- a. He must do something else to show that he is not afraid of God's judgements that are falling upon him!
  - He will do something even more daring!
  - He will call for the holy vessels from the temple at Jerusalem and use them to drink toasts to false gods!
    - He will stand up like Voltaire and dare God to strike him down!
  
- b. Nebuchadnezzar would never have dared to do such a thing!
  - He may have ordered that God's servants be cast into the fiery furnace,
    - but he would not have dared to profane the sacred vessels of the God of Israel.
  - This was sacrilege!
  - This was to take the name of the LORD God in vain who said,
    - "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain!"
    - Belshazzar was saying as loud as he could,
      - "Look at me, I don't fear God."
      - "I will do whatever I want!"
      - "I will party and even God can't stop me"
  
- c. He knew that these vessels symbolised the power and presence of Jehovah.
  - It as an act of deliberate, defiant, in-God's-face, rebellion.
  - 1) It is not that these vessels themselves had any special virtue, but that God had set them apart as holy—that is what made them sacred.
    - But to a declining society, nothing is sacred!
    - Everything is for my amusement!
    - Worship is not sacred, it is for entertainment!
  - 2) Today, God has the Word of the gospel to reveal Christ, and the sacraments to which He has attached his name.
    - Warnings are given in the New Testament about those who would despise the Word of God—
      - and about those who would abuse the Lord's Table by coming in an unworthy, careless manner.
    - It was not that long ago that people in our society respected the gospel and the word of God, but now there are many who mock...
      - They say, "Be saved from what?"
      - "What do I have to fear?"
      - "The Bible is a book of evil."



## II. Now I want you all to see secondly from this account in Daniel 5 that God will not be mocked!

### A. Look at what happens to this man who fears nothing as recorded in verses 5 and 6!

1. Daniel 5:5-6: In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.
  - a. This is a picture of what happens to the man who disregards God and despises the gospel.
    - What a pitiful specimen of humanity he is now!
    - How suddenly he is turned from his bold, cocky arrogance to a pitiful trembling creature, shaken right down to the bone.
  - b. See how swiftly God's judgement breaks into his life—as it does to all those who defiantly resist Him.
    - 1) God has promised that it will be so...
      - Prov 29:1: “He who is often rebuked, *and* hardens *his* neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”
      - 1Th 5:3: “For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.”
    - 2) Within moments, he went from fearless-boldness to terror.

TRANS> But here is a curious question...

2. Why is Belshazzar so terrified to see this hand, writing on the wall?
  - a. Could this not have been a hand declaring to him some good tidings?
    - What is it that made him tremble before he even knew what the writing meant?
  - b. Well I will tell you what it was—
    - It was his conscience!
      - His conscience condemned him before the message was even proclaimed.
      - God did not have to say anything to strike this man with terror.
    - Belshazzar was in the very act of defying the living God when this hand appeared.
      - He knew what this was about!
      - He knew that he was being judged right on the spot.

TRANS> So here is this man who was so brazen and fearless reduced to desperate trembling...

- Where will he turn for help now?

B. Where do you turn for help in the day of trouble?

1. You can tell a lot about a person by looking at where they turn in their time of need.

a. Do you go to God and His resources?

- Is that the first place you turn?
- When Job was struck with his troubles, he cried out to God.

b. But over and over, the world turns to its own resources first, and only to God as a last resort.

- Christian, it ought not to be that with you!
- You know the living God, you have His word, you have brothers and sisters and elders that He has given you.
  - If you know Him, you will take pains to seek out His counsel and to gain wisdom from Him.
  - It is even a good sign if you complain to Him—not in a grumbling way, but in a way that acknowledges that He is sovereign and your only source of help—
    - even as David teaches us in the psalms...
    - He was a man after God's own heart.

2. But Belshazzar goes to his own pagan wise men first.

- Daniel 5:7: The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

a. He knew there was a prophet of God in Babylon, but even now he is not ready to humble himself and go to the true God for answers.

1) Though he is helpless, he continues to rely on his own resources.

2) Just like in other parts of Daniel,

- The wise men of the world prove to be completely inadequate.
  - Verse 8 shows that they were not even able to read the writing, much less interpret what it meant!
- Neither Belshazzar's wine nor his wise men were sufficient to ease his terror-stricken conscience.

- The wine had made him bold in sinning, but it had not made him bold before God's judgement seat!
- b. He becomes even more terrified after consulting his wise men!
- Verse 9 says:
    - Dan 5:9: Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.
  - 1) He has no place to go—
    - He cannot keep avoiding God—
    - He must now face Him.
  - 2) That is the most horrible thing about the day of judgement for unbelievers...
    - On that day you will have to face God whom you have tried to avoid all your life.
    - You will have no choice, you will have to come to Him and hear what He says about you.
- c. So now God brings someone onto the scene to introduce His prophet.
- 1) The queen, a sensible woman who stands in sharp contrast to this foolish crowd!
    - a) Verse 10 shows that she was not in the Banquet hall, but came in only because this trouble had befallen the king.
      - She was not participating in all this foolishness.
      - She is a woman who knows where the truth is to be found!
        - She remembers what all the others had forgotten!
    - b) This is probably the Queen Mother, perhaps even the wife of Nebuchadnezzar who was now dead.
      - If so, she represents the previous generation that Belshazzar has been trying to forget.
        - She represents the generation to which God revealed Himself in Babylon to show that He is LORD.
  - 2) The Queen takes this opportunity to remind the king about Daniel.
    - Daniel 5:11-12: "There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, 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, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. Inasmuch as an excellent

spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation."

a) There is no question that Daniel was worthy of the highest esteem as a prophet of God.

- He had given such remarkable prophecies, that he should have been remembered for a thousand years!
- But Belshazzar had ignored him: his most capable counsellor.
  - This is what we might call the Rehoboam Syndrome—
    - Remember how Solomon's son Rehoboam rejected the counsel of the elders who had served his father and only listened to his own generation?
    - This is precisely what we see in our day.

b) But here is a woman who is a voice from the previous generation.

- God uses her as a John the Baptist to point the king and the people who were with him to Christ.
  - How important it is for us to call others to hear the word of God in their need.
- And notice what it is that makes Daniel great—according to her.
  - It is the Spirit of God that speaks through Him.
  - He brings God's precious truth into the situation.
    - As she says, "Light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods were found in him."
    - Strange, isn't it, that such counsel is not cherished!
  - Brothers and sister, you must be a sensible voice in our day of debauchery...
    - You must direct our foolish society to the truth—
    - Urge them to put themselves under the ministry of God's Word.

3. See how God displays His glory in all this!

a. He set up this whole situation to display the glory of His judgement.

1) For years God waited in silence while Belshazzar rebelled,

- He only watched as Belshazzar's rebellion and perversity grew.
- Now there was brazen sacrilege.

- 2) The thousand lords and the wives and the concubines thought they had come there to party,
    - But in fact, God had another purpose for their assembly!
      - In His providence, He had brought them together in order that He might display His glorious judgement to them!
    - Right at the moment when they were taking this daring step of defying His holy name by sacrilege...
  - 3) God came to judge!
    - Here was an example for all this assembly and for all of those like us who would read this account in the days to come.
    - Here was a man of great authority and power, suddenly brought to tremble before the bar of God.
      - Learn from this that God will not be mocked!
- b. What God says to Belshazzar He will one day say to all who have rested in their rebellion in the city of man rather than in Jesus Christ in the city of God.
- 1) He will say, MENE:
    - Your days are numbered—
    - Your party is over...
    - The end has come and you must give an account to Me.
  - 2) He will say, TEKEL
    - You have been weighed in the balances and are found wanting.
      - You thought you had what it takes, but in my scale you are grossly deficient.
      - On your scale, you had plenty, but on my scale, you are worthless and empty—
        - lighter than vanity!
  - 3) He will say, PHARSAN
    - Your kingdom has been divided—
      - The word **divided** here means **destroyed, ripped apart**.
      - If you are outside of Christ, all that you have lived for, all the kingdoms that you have built will be destroyed.
        - Only Christ's kingdom will abide forever!

TRANS> But now I want to consider a question about all this...

### **III. Why was it that no mercy was shown to Belshazzar?**

A. Why did God deal so differently with him than He did with Nebuchadnezzar?

1. With Nebuchadnezzar, God came to him again and again, and gave him time to repent.
  - a. He appeared to him in the dream of chapter 2, and showed him that the truth was with Jesus Christ and His people, not with Babylon...
    - He showed him that He was the most high God whose kingdom would arise in the last days—
      - a kingdom that would destroy all the kingdoms of this world, but that itself would never be destroyed.
  - b. Then He came to him again at his party as recorded in chapter 3...
    - when before all his nobles and lords He delivered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from the furnace...
  - c. And again in a second dream to warn him about his boasting,
    - Then he gave him twelve months to repent...
    - And when he did not repent,
      - He chastened him severely until finally...
        - He was brought to confess that God Most High rules in heaven and is the One who raises up kings and abases them.
        - He brought him to repentance.
2. But it doesn't appear that Belshazzar had any of these ways of drawing him in!
  - a. The judgement of God seems to have fallen upon him suddenly and without warning...
    - He was not given twelve months that Nebuchadnezzar had,
    - Nor was he given the preliminary encounters with God to prepare him.
  - b. Well let me warn you not to ask the wrong question here!
    - The real question is not why God dealt so suddenly and so decisively with Belshazzar,
      - But rather,
        - Why did He bear so long with Nebuchadnezzar?
        - Why does He bear so long with those to whom He shows mercy?

- If you are in Christ today,
    - you ought to marvel at how patient God has been with you,
      - at how many times He has forgiven you and restored you and called you back to Himself!
    - You ought to marvel that He called you at all and did not leave you to go your own way until the judgement day.
- c. You see, God shows mercy to whom He wills, and whom He wills, He hardens.
- 1) All through His Word, He has given us contrasts between mercy and judgement.
    - There is Jacob and Esau
    - Cain and Able
    - Isaac and Ishmael
    - David and Saul
    - Peter and Judas
  - 2) But in all these, the thing that is extraordinary is not the judgement, but the mercy that was shown.
    - It is not
      - “why did God judge Cain?”
      - but rather, “Why did He accept Able?”
    - Nor is it
      - “Why did He curse Esau?”
      - but rather, “Why did He bless Jacob?”
  - 3) And if you are a Christian, you know that God’s mercy came to you only through Jesus Christ.
    - You deserved to go the way of Belshazzar.
      - If you were put in the balance, you would be wanting just like he was...
    - But God has graciously put you in the balance with Christ...
      - You are weighed with Him, and there is no one who is weighed with Christ that is lacking.
      - Christ has fulfilled all righteousness for you...
        - He has shed His blood to atone for your sins...

- He has established you in His kingdom that can never be shaken.
  - In Him, you measure up.
- So the bottom line is that the difference is not in you, but in God who shows mercy.
- Your response should be gratitude!
- B. But there is another lesson here in the contrast of these two kings, and this is a lesson especially for you covenant children.
1. There is a very real sense in which Belshazzar actually had even more opportunity to repent than Nebuchadnezzar!
    - a. He grew up, in a sense, surrounded by God’s grace and light.
      - Nebuchadnezzar had experienced the powerful working of God in his life—
      - And Belshazzar should have learned from that.
      - He should have continued in the truth that was brought into Babylon though Nebuchadnezzar so clearly and so powerfully.
    - b. Daniel brings this up **first** when he speaks to Belshazzar...
      - 1) In verse 18-21, he reminds him about how God had dealt with his father, Nebuchadnezzar.
        - “father” is not used here in the more narrow sense as the one who begot you, but rather as his father in the kingdom...
        - In the same way that the Jews refer to Abraham as their father because he is the founder of the nation.
      - 2) Anyway, Daniel reminds Belshazzar about how he humbled Nebuchadnezzar to teach him that (v. 21)
        - “the most high God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.”
      - 3) And then Daniel hammers him with these words in verse 22:
        - “But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, **although you knew all this.**”
        - Those words “**although you knew this**” are key!
        - There was no need for God to teach the same lesson over and over to each generation!



- Belshazzar already **knew** what God had done with Nebuchadnezzar and he was supposed to learn from that!
- But he was a foolish son and acted like he didn't know!
  - He deliberately chose to forget.

4) Daniel says,

- “instead of humbling yourself as you should have done in the face of all this revelation and light in which you grew up...
  - v. 23: “You have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords and your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who owns all your ways you have not glorified.”
- Though he grew up with all this light surrounding him,
  - he did not walk in the light of that glory, but in the darkness.

2. You children who are growing up in Christian homes—

- Listen to me!
  - a. You get it all wrong if you presume on the grace of your parents!
    - If you see how God has dealt patiently and gently and mercifully with your parents and you say to yourself,
      - “See there, I have nothing to worry about...
      - I can go along as I please and God will be merciful to me too!”
  - b. God does not intend to take you through all the same experiences He took them through to bring them into His kingdom.
    - He expects you to learn from them.
    - You have the privilege to grow up as one surrounded by God's grace,
      - as one living under His promise...
      - but your father—your father in the faith—no matter how many generations back that may be—
      - had to be brought from the world of idolatry into God's grace.
    - The Bible warns you not to be haughty, but to fear.
      - Haughtiness was the problem with Belshazzar—
        - He did not fear God.

- c. Children, right now, God's grace is all around you...
  - You have your parent's example...
  - You have your parent's instruction...
  - You have the preaching of the Word each Lord's Day...
  - You have Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
  - You have God's promises and covenant.
  - You are surrounded by the grace of Jesus Christ.
  
- d. But woe to you if you do not profit from all this!
  - Woe to you if you look at your parent's example only to pick out their faults rather than to imitate their faith...
  - Woe to you if you ignore their instruction that points you to Jesus Christ and turn away from their correction...
  - Woe to you if you sleep when the word is preached and do not take it to heart....
  - Woe to you if you do not cherish the display of Christ in the washing of baptism and the feeding of His broken body and shed blood in the Supper.
  - Woe to you if you do not believe His promises and walk in His covenant.
  
- e. Hear me now, you children!
  - You are surrounded by God's grace...
  - And right now, you are either spurning that grace and resisting that grace...
    - or you are drawing near to Jesus Christ...
  - Either you are hardening yourself against Him each day.
    - or you are drawing near to Him each day.
  - The day will come when you will be weighed in God's balance.
    - If you are alone, you will be found wanting and you will lose everything...
    - But if you are with Jesus, you will be blessed forever in His kingdom.
  
- 3. Belshazzar was a fool!
  - He gladly took his father's gold and his father's place as king...
  - But he was not so glad to take his father's Saviour and Lord.
  - So what was the result of this choice?
    - Look at v. 30-31:

- “That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, *being* about sixty-two years old.”
- The party was over forever!

### **Conclusion**

Now then, what will you do with all this!

- Whose party are you going to attend?
  - Will it be the party of Nebuchadnezzar where you celebrate your own achievements and accomplishments and those of man?
  - Will it be the party of Belshazzar where you fill yourself with wine, woman, and song to forget it all?
  - Or will you come to Jesus’ party to celebrate the marvellous dominion that comes when God’s Word subdues everything and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven,
    - and that celebrates the marvellous rest that comes when you have the assurance that there is nothing to fear because Jesus has paid the full penalty of our sin and given us rest from our labours?
- The choice is up to you.