

## **Royal Apostasy and National Judgment (Dan 5)**

### **Introduction**

There is a road that the ungodly walk which has an invisible line across it. It's a line that God alone sees. And sometimes they cross that thin boundary between God's patience and God's wrath.

### **Exposition**

“The Moving finger writes; and having writ, moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it” (E. Fitzgerald).

### **Four charges**

(a) **Rebellion:** *Belshazzar would not humble himself before God, although he knew all about God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar (v. 18-23a).*

(b) **Blasphemy:** *He and his court had profaned the vessels of the Lord's Temple (v.23b).*

(c) **Idolatry:** *He and his court were guilty of gross idolatry (v. 23c)*

(d) **Impiety:** *He did not glorify the true God who was giving him the air he breathed (v. 23d)*

### **Application**

**Lesson 1. We must not presume on the grace shown to others.**

Nebuchadnezzar was humbled until he can confess, as all heathen rulers must confess, “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down” (Dan 4:36). But Belshazzar's judgment was swift.

**Lesson 2. Kings must know, or shall be made to know, that the most high God rules in their kingdom.**

“(it is an *imperium in imperio*—an empire within an empire, not to be excepted against), and that he appoints over them whomsoever he will. As he makes heirs, so he makes princes” (M. Henry). Compare Psalm 2, 2Sam 23:3.

***Lesson 3. Rulers and nations must obey and enforce the first table of the law.***

“Because nations do not have souls, God must bring all their judgment in this world” (J. Knox). Compare Dan 3:29, 6:26, Jonah 3.

**Conclusion**

The answer from the skies is sent,  
'Ye that from God depart,  
While it is called today, repent,  
And harden not your heart!  
(*J. A. Alexander*)