

Daniel 5

Verses 1- 4

Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand. ² While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines could drink out of them. ³ Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines drank out of them. ⁴ They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand.

The time frame of the text just jumped from the end of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (561 BC) to the end of Belshazzar's reign (539 BC).

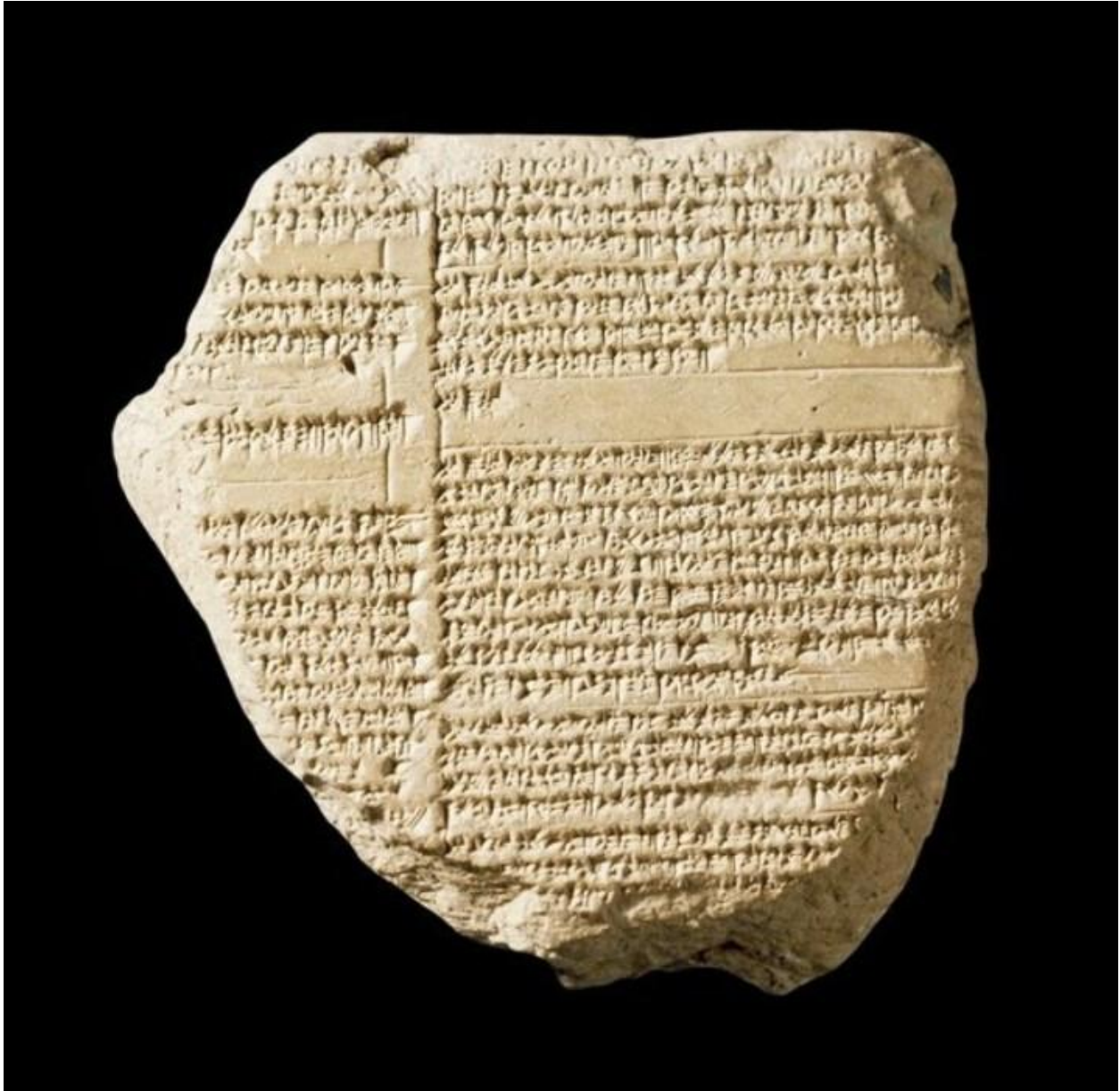
See chart 105

Chapters	Kings of Babylon	Reign	Years
	Nabopolassar	626 - 605	21
1 - 4	Nebuchadnezzar	605 - 561	44
	Amel-Marduk	561 - 560	1
	Nergal-shar-usur	560 - 556	4
	Labashi-Marduk	556	< 1
5 - 12	Nabonidus & son Belsharraz	556 - 539	17

“Belshazzar ruled in place of his father, Nabonidus, because Nabonidus preferred religious study and archaeology over governance, leaving Babylon for a decade-long stay in Tayma and entrusting the city's rule to his son, making Belshazzar the de facto king (co-regent) in Babylon, a role he held until the city's fall to the Persians in 539 BCE.”

Since this is the last night of the Babylonian empire we know with certainty that it is the year 539 BC. A Babylonian text, Nabonidus Chronicle (ABC 07), gives us the date of this event as October 12, 539 B.C.

See pic 510



² While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines could drink out of them.

Nebuchadnezzar was his grandfather (see chart 505 above). As we all know, this is not a problem with the text because in the Hebrew culture the word for “father” was not limited to a father/son relationship.

See Genesis 9:20-25

²⁰ Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. ²¹ He drank some of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. ²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. ²³ But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it on both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father’s nakedness. ²⁴ When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. ²⁵ So he said, “Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants he shall be to his brothers.”

Canaan, a grandson of Noah, is called Noah's son but it is clear from the text that there are three generations here, Noah, Ham and Canaan.

³ Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines drank out of them. They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

Using the sacred vessels that were once dedicated to the service of The Lord showed the king’s contempt for the Jewish religion and their God.

Verses 5 - 9

⁵ Suddenly the fingers of a human hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. ⁶ Then the king’s face became pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints loosened and his knees began knocking together. ⁷ The king called aloud to bring in the sorcerers, the Chaldeans, and the diviners. The king began speaking and said to the wise men of Babylon, “Anyone who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and *have* a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third *ruler* in the kingdom.” ⁸ Then all the king’s wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. ⁹ Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew *even more* pale, and his nobles were perplexed.

⁵ Suddenly the fingers of a human hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. ⁶ Then the king's face became pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints loosened and his knees began knocking together.

God knows how to get someone's attention when He wants to deliver a message. In this case the king showed numerous signs that he was terrified and he acted quickly to understand the message.

⁷ The king called aloud to bring in the sorcerers, the Chaldeans, and the diviners. The king began speaking and said to the wise men of Babylon, "Anyone who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and *have* a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom."

This confirms that Belshazzar was 2nd in command under his father because he offers the position of "third ruler" to the one who can read and interpret the message.

⁸ Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. ⁹ Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew *even more* pale, and his nobles were perplexed.

This group was similar to the one during the reign of his grandfather and again they were of no help to the king.

Verses 10 - 16

¹⁰ The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; the queen began to speak and said, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale. ¹¹ There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—appointed him chief of the soothsayer priests, sorcerers, Chaldeans, *and* diviners. ¹² *This was* because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of riddles, and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation."

¹¹ There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—appointed him chief of the soothsayer priests, sorcerers, Chaldeans, *and* diviners.

One has to wonder why the Queen had to inform the king about Daniel. Even if the king wasn't aware of Daniel, his trusted advisors should have been aware of the major events that took place during his grandfather's reign and those who played a major role in the success of his kingdom. Also, why didn't the wise men mention Daniel's superior knowledge to the king? It seems that each new generation is unaware of the recent past even when it is part of their job to know such things.

Verses 13 - 16

¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king began speaking and said to Daniel, "Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? ¹⁴ Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight, and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you. ¹⁵ Just now the wise men *and* the sorcerers were brought in before me to read this inscription and make its interpretation known to me, but they could not declare the interpretation of the message. ¹⁶ But I personally have heard about you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and wear a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will have authority as the third *ruler* in the kingdom."

¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king began speaking and said to Daniel, "Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? ¹⁴ Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight, and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you.

Daniel had come to Babylon as a boy, probably around the age of 15, and began serving King Nebuchadnezzar when he was 18. Now Belshazzar is king and it is the last days of his reign (539 BC). This means that Daniel is 82 years old.

See chart 515

Time Line for the Book of Daniel

Chapter	Events	Reign	Year	Daniel's age
1	Jehoiakim	609 - 598		
1	Nebuchadnezzar is king	605 - 561		
1	Deportation to Babylon	1st of 3	606	15
1	Three years of training		603	18
2	One statue of 4 kingdoms			
3	A 90 foot statue of gold			
3	4 men in the furnace			
4	The great tree cut down			
4	The king is restored			
5	Belshazzar is king	556 - 539	539	65 - 82
5	Cyrus becomes King	539 - 530	539	82

¹⁶ But I personally have heard about you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and wear a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will have authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.

This would be the same role that he had during the time of Nebuchadnezzar. At that time he was 2nd in command of the kingdom and now he would be 3rd but only because of the co-regency of Belshazzar and his father.

Verses 17 - 19

¹⁷ Then Daniel replied and said before the king, “Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him. ¹⁸ O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, greatness, honor, and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father.

¹⁹ Now because of the greatness which He granted him, all the peoples, nations, and *populations of all* languages trembled and feared in his presence; whomever he wished, he killed, and whomever he wished, he spared alive; and whomever he wished he elevated, and whomever he wished he humbled.

¹⁷ Then Daniel replied and said before the king, **“Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him.**

Daniel did not act from the hope of being rewarded because he was a man of high moral character. In addition, he was 82 years of age and had been 2nd in command of Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom for many years and was surely well compensated for his service.

¹⁸ **O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, greatness, honor, and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father.**

Daniel had the king’s attention so he took some time to explain to the king why his grandfather was so great and why he fell from this very lofty position.

Verses 20 - 24

²⁰ **But when his heart was arrogant and his spirit became so overbearing that he behaved presumptuously, he was deposed from his royal throne, and *his* dignity was taken away from him. ²¹ He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like *that of* animals, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind, and *that* He sets over it whomever He wishes. ²² Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, ²³ but you have risen up against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives, and your concubines have been drinking wine out of them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see, nor hear, nor understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified. ²⁴ Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out.**

²⁰ **But when his heart was arrogant and his spirit became so overbearing that he behaved presumptuously, he was deposed from his royal throne, and *his* dignity was taken away from him.**

In chapter 4 we learned how Nebuchadnezzar behaved presumptuously.

See verses 4:29 - 30

²⁹ Twelve months later he was walking on the *roof* of the royal palace of Babylon.

³⁰ The king began speaking and was saying, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?

²² Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this,

Belshazzar had heard about his grandfather's reign and what had happened to him because of his pride and he should have learned from what he had heard.

²³ but you have risen up against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives, and your concubines have been drinking wine out of them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see, nor hear, nor understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified.

The king had made three major mistakes

1. He disrespected God by misusing the vessels of his house.
2. He worshiped false gods.
3. He did not glorify the God of heaven.

Verses 25 - 28

²⁵ "Now this is the inscription that was written:

'Menē, Menē, Tekēl, Upharsin.'

²⁶ This is the interpretation of the message: 'Menē'—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. ²⁷ 'Tekēl'—you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. ²⁸ 'Perēs'—your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

The hand writing on the wall meant the kingdom of Babylon had come to an end.

Verses 29 - 31

²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and *put* a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he *now* had authority as the third *ruler* in the kingdom. ³⁰ That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. ³¹ So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.

Secular historians have Cyrus as the 1st king of Medo-Persia.

See chart 520

Kings of Persia		559 to 330 BC
Cyrus		559-529
Cambyses		529-522
Smerdis (Bardiya)		522 BC
Darius I (Hystaspes)		521-486
Xerxes I (Ahashuerus)		485-465
Artaxerxes (Longimanus)		465-424
Xerxes II		424
Sogdianus of Persia		424 – 423 BC
Darius II (Nothus)		423-405
Artaxerxes (Mnemon)		404-359
Artaxerxes III of Persia Ochus		358 – 338 BC
Arses of Persia (Artaxerxes IV)		338 – 336 BC
Darius III of Persia Codomannus		336 – 330 BC

However, the Book of Daniel lists Darius as the king that received the kingdom. This is not a problem because Darius is another name for Cyrus.

See video 525 8.72 Who is Darius the Mede

<https://www.levickfamily.com/8.71.html>

It should be noted that Daniel mentions Cyrus in two passages of his book.

1. See Daniel 1:21

²¹ **And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king (539 BC).**

2. See Daniel 10:1

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia (537 BC) a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and *it concerned* great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision.

Since both Cyrus and Darius were reigning at 539 and 537 BC, it seems reasonable to assume it was the same person unless there was a co-regency at that time but that is unlikely.