Kings and Prophets 16-10-27b

Let's resume our study now. We're in Daniel chapter 5, looking at Belshazzar's feast. We know that a supernatural communication is about to take place in the plaster of the wall.

But it is instigated and initiated by this flagrant display of excess. We can be reasonably confident that this wasn't the first orgy to be held in Babylon. It wasn't the first extravagant expression of excess and indulgence and abuse and so on.

So why does God pick this occasion to write on the wall? Well, what was new and what was different here, unlike what had no doubt been a long string of previous banquets, wine-sodden parties, was the idea that He got to bring out the golden vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple. So it tells us here, He gave the command in verse 2 to bring the gold and silver vessels, which His father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple, which had been in Jerusalem, so that the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. So let's just think about this because we go back to the temple.

What are these vessels? When Solomon originally constructed that temple, it took him seven and a half years, 180,000 laborers to build the thing. But we know that from those days, there had been several depredations of the temple's treasuries and goods. You remember that Joash and Josiah had made repairs and done some refurbishing to the temple because it had been let go and their fathers had taken implements and various riches out of it.

Much of the wealth had been confiscated, sent to outside powers, spent on silly things. You remember it told us in 1 Kings 15 that Asa sent all that was left of the silver and gold to Ben-Hadad, king of Syria. That's 1 Kings 15, 18 and 19, because he was worried about Baasha, the king of Israel, coming down.

And so he tried to buy off the Syrians to come help him against the northern kingdom. Then again, in the reign of Ahaziah, Jehoash, king of Israel, carried off all the gold and silver in the temple and the palace. That was 2 Kings 14.

Ahaz robbed the temple and took the treasure to bribe the king of Assyria. And he also moved the altar that had stood since Solomon's day in the temple courtyard. He moved it aside and the lavers and took the oxen out from under the bronze sea, the big laver there.

2 Kings 16, 10 through 17. Hezekiah, good king Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came down. And so Hezekiah sent 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold and all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasures of the king's house.

That's 2 Kings 18, 13 through 16. And then later on, you remember the emissaries from Babylon came and he was showing off and he got chastised for that by Isaiah. 2 Kings 20, verses 12 and 13.

After these depredations and sending all of the silver and gold off to various kings, of course you remember they always had the half shekel tax coming in and over time they could rebuild. So these were sort of depredations and destructions and emptyings of the treasury, but it would eventually be refilled. And in times of prosperity, they would gain back and they'd cast more implements and hang bronze shields in place of the gold ones and one thing and another.

But when Nebuchadnezzar came in 586 and the temple was destroyed, in 2 Chronicles 36, verses 18 and 19, it tells us, All the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, all the treasures of the king and of his friends, Nebuchadnezzar brought to Babylon. They burned the house of God, broke down the wall, burned its palaces with fire, destroyed the remaining precious vessels that they didn't haul off. This is what is in the treasury and notice that Nebuchadnezzar and several successive kings before Belshazzar did not defile these or otherwise just left them in the storehouse.

They were sacrosanct. Why would that be? Well, it's politically expedient. They've got a very large captive population of Jews and to appease them, to keep them from rising up in horror and rebellion, they say, look, your sacred things are safe.

We haven't touched them. We haven't defiled them. You would imagine, and the Bible doesn't say this, but you would imagine that it was just politically expedient.

When you've got a large indigenous population, you try to keep them happy and not give them flippant reasons to get mad at you. This happens even today. There are constituencies within our population that politicians and those in authority will try to appease and keep happy and not, on some minor pretext, needlessly cause them offense.

But on this night, forgetting all of those things, because what does excess whine do to judgment? Deteriorates it. And in an egregious instance of bad judgment, Belshazzar throws caution to the winds. Now, what exactly is the situation here? Interestingly, what do we know about Belshazzar in terms of what year of his reign is this chapter 5 taking place in? Without even knowing any dates, what year of his reign is this? It's the last year of his reign, right? It's the last one.

He's going to die this very night at the hand of the Medes, right? So it's the last year of his reign. It's not the first year, it's not the third year, it's not the fifth year. Now, we know by piecing together things that have only relatively recently come to light, the Nabonidus Cylinder and whatnot, that he seems to have reigned 12 or 13 years.

And so this, we would estimate, would be in the 12th or 13th year, right? It's the last year, so this is 12 or 13 years after he takes this throne. Now, keep your finger here and turn over to the beginning of chapter 6. Chapter 6 is going to tell us some stuff that takes place after this in the reign of Darius, the Mede, who is going to overthrow the Babylonian Empire later this very night, right? Now, turn to the beginning of chapter 7. If you look at your Bible, it says the vision

of the four beasts. This is going to be Daniel's vision of these beasts.

What is the time notation? In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, first year. So, we're out of chronological sequence here, aren't we? Belshazzar's demise and end chronologically would come after chapter 7, right? Because Daniel is going to have this dream in the first year that he comes to the throne and this is a dozen or so years later. Turn to the beginning of chapter 8. In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar, a vision appeared to me, to Daniel, after the one that appeared to me the first time.

So, two years later, he has a second one. Chapter 7 and chapter 8 all precede the events of chapter 5. So, here's my question, all of you deductive sleuths and observant students of the word. Why does chapter 5 come here and not after chapter 7 and chapter 8? And then we'd have chapter 6 after that.

7 ought to be 5, 8 ought to be 6, 5 ought to be 7, and 6 ought to be 8. Something like that. Just rearrange them and put them in chronological sequence. It's out of order, so there must be a thematic reason rather than just trying to give us a chronological history, right? So, let's just read a little bit of this further and see if we can deduce why it is that the divinely inspired author slash editor of this has chosen to put this right after chapter 4 and ahead of this and chapter 6 come ahead of chapter 7 and chapter 8. Why is that? Well, they drank wine, we saw this in verse 4, and they praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

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. The king's countenance changed, his thoughts troubled him, the joints of his hips were loosened, and his knees knocked against each other. 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 tells me its interpretation, I'll clothe him in purple, have a chain of gold around his neck, he shall be third ruler in the kingdom. All the king's wise men came, they could not read the writing, couldn't make it known, Belshazzar was greatly troubled, countenance was changed, his lords were astonished. The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall.

She says, there's a guy named Daniel, you ought to call him. Verse 13, Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke and says, are you that Daniel that the queen just told me about? He says, yes, I am.

Daniel answers in verse 17, keep your rewards, but I'll tell you what it means. Look at verse 18, O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar, your father, a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. And because of the majesty that he gave him, all peoples, nations and languages trembled and feared before him.

When's the next time that is going to happen for a kingdom? Where God is going to raise it up and all other nations and peoples are going to be subordinate and tremble before it. When's that going to happen again? There is a coming kingdom that is going to have a king who will rule with a rod of iron and will shatter the nations like a potter's vessel, right? So is this anticipatory? Is this proleptic? Is this prophetic and significant for God's people who are currently in captivity? But God has promised David, you will not fail, you will not lack a man to sit on your throne, Laolam. So what has happened to that? Well, Nebuchadnezzar had that suzerainty, that authority, that power, everyone trembling and fearing before him.

Whomever he wished, he executed. Whomever he wished, he kept alive. Whomever he wished, he set up.

Whomever he wished, he put down. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne and they took his glory from him. Who would this be significant to? Every single Hebrew in captivity in Babylon.

Oh, that's what happened to us. That's where we are now. Our glory has been taken from us.

Our temple is destroyed. Our land is forsaken and we're captives. Ezekiel is down by the river Kabar.

Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. How do you think the Jews feel living amongst these pagans? Well, like Esau, wild ass of a man. I'm dwelling among people that care nothing for God.

And look at Belshazzar. He's just exhibited that very behavior. They fed him with grass like oxen and his body was wet with the dew of heaven.

Until when? From chapter 4. Remember the emphasis we saw over and over again? Until he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men. When he lifted his eyes to heaven and made that recognition, his reason returned. His kingdom was restored.

When is Israel going to be restored? When will they be renewed? What did Jesus tell them? You'll not see me again until you say what? Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. God rules in the kingdom of men and appoints over it whomever he chooses. Why are they under the authority and held captive by the Babylonians? God chose it.

The question is, why did he choose it? Is he just fickle and arbitrary and likes pulling the wings off of flies from time to time? Or does he have a purpose? Does he have an overarching plan? Is he teaching his people something that will serve them as an eternal reminder so that they will never again need to be judged in this way, need to experience this hardship and deprivation and suffering and death? But you, his son, verse 12, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. Why do the Israelites remain in captivity? They are still wet with the dew of heaven. They are still eating grass like an ox.

They have not yet raised their eyes to heaven. They have not yet acknowledged God, and God is going to keep them in that condition until they do. Why is it, by the way, that having rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, Israel is still scattered outside their land without hope and without God in the world, so to speak? They have not yet reached the point where they will say, when they see the Lord, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And that will not happen until the end of the tribulation. That's when they will see the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. That's when the latter part of Matthew 24 will take place.

That's when Ezekiel's prophecy to the dry bones will be fulfilled and they will rise and stand on their feet and become a mighty army. That's when the Mount of Olives will split. That's when the Son of Man will come, will separate the sheep from the goats, as it were, and those who can enter the kingdom will do so, and those who are not will not.

So there are overtones. This is a harbinger. This is a statement of principle of the way God works.

He is consistent. He is unchanging. But the reason we have this now is because it links directly back to chapter 4. The centerpiece of this event is not the hand scratching the note in the plaster.

It isn't the sacrilege, if you will, of Belshazzar, nor is it really the incursion of the Medes ending the Babylonian Empire. What is the centerpiece of this story? We just read it. You did not learn from your father's experience and you are doomed to repeat it.

Isn't it a wonderful thing to learn from the mistakes and the hardships and the sufferings of others and not repeat them? That's the reason we have God's Word. That's the reason we have the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit so that we can be instructed in the Word of Truth and be fed and nourished in our souls without having to experience the other way of training. Isn't it great when you don't have to be reprimanded, you don't have to be disciplined, you don't have to be scourged with a whip as a son.

You instead are responsive and sensitive and teachable. God resists the proud. God gives grace to the humble.

The proud say, well, He's a mean God. He keeps scourging. He keeps allowing all of these bad things.

Well, it's a self-fulfilling prophecy. As long as you are proud enough to resist and to judge, God is going to resist and God is going to judge. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.

There are two categories of people in the captivity. Those who continue to rail and to blame Josiah's reforms for their captivity if we'd only continue to serve the gods of the Canaanites. But no, we had to have a big reform.

We had to return to the God and what kind of a God is He? We got attacked. We got destroyed. No recognition of personal culpability, no recognition of the hollowness and the shallowness and the superficiality of those reforms done by someone else, led by someone else who did have a heart for God, but they did not follow.

And now they're blaming Him for their hardship. They're going to still be wet with the dew of heaven. They're going to still eat grass like an ox.

They're going to still dwell with the beasts and the donkeys, the wild donkeys, until when? Until they lift their eyes to heaven like Nebuchadnezzar did. Belshazzar has seen this and not learned. This is a subsequent lesson for the people of God.

Look at the history of your fathers, you people in captivity. When you learn the lesson from their experience and break the pattern of a generation and a second generation and a third generation all following the same bad attitude. Remember the three-generation curse? If you have three in a row that reject and don't learn the lesson, I'll cut that line off in Israel, God said, essentially.

But His mercy extends to a thousand generations of those who acknowledge, who humble themselves, who recognize that God is God and there is no other. That's what's going on here. I tell you this in advance because now as we go back and track the details of this story, the significance of it is going to be more visible.

This is not a story about what happened to the Babylonians. This is a story about what will happen to us if we do not maintain teachability and sensitivity and humility to the examples that are given to us in the Word of God. These things were written for our instruction.

The Word of God is profitable for doctrine, to tell us what we should believe, but also for reproof and correction and instruction in how to live rightly, how to live prosperously, how to abide in the vine so that we bear fruit, how to be blessed, how to be genuinely and deeply happy, how to have the peace that passes understanding, how to have the abundant life that Jesus said He came to give. So now back to the beginning here. You've got the feast, these gold and silver vessels.

Now with this sensitivity and this understanding that this is really a message to the people of God, what would the sacrilege represent? Some pagan desecrating, you know, you've got Antiochus Epiphanes later on sacrificing a pig on the altar in Jerusalem. There was no handwriting on the wall for him. Why does God react here? Why is there handwriting on the wall and destruction of the Babylonian Empire here and now? What does it mean to the people of God when they look at this occasion? There are two elements of it.

It is this free dedication and giving over to excess, to satisfying the cravings of the flesh. This is arrogant, it is boastful, it is flippant, it is in high hand disregard for what even the Babylonians have respected and held sacred for decades. Right? And secondly, it is taking those things that

were crafted and purposed and stamped holy to the Lord of gold and silver and putting them to personal and despicable use.

What is it that Israel is going to be doing in the time that the Lord Jesus comes with temple worship and with the sacrifices? Remember, the one time you see the Lord genuinely angry is when He goes in and drives everybody out of the house of prayer. Prayer is worship. What have they done? They've turned it into a den of thieves.

They've taken the precincts that are dedicated to worship and approach to God and turned it into a place of gain. Remember all of those verses we covered in the first session about greedy for gain, sordid gain, self-interest, self-gratification? Jesus looked around the temple and that's all that He saw. This sacrilege by Belshazzar and his wives, concubines, and lords represents the perversion of the things of God by God's own people.

Easier to see it in somebody else. Well, of course God would get upset if you take His sacred things and put them to a pagan use. Oh, wait a minute.

Romans chapter 2 after Romans chapter 1, you, oh man, who are pointing a finger at somebody else have three fingers pointing back at you. Remember that turnabout in Romans chapter 2? That's what this is. This is the significance.

This is the meaning. This is the reason Daniel puts this down and communicates it to the people of the captivity, the reason God has put it in His Word and it is ministered to every generation of God's people since. For 2,500 years this has been a message, a warning.

Don't take the things that are dedicated to God and put them to common use, defiling them, appropriating them. This happens in Christianity. People get greedy for recognition.

They get greedy for gain. They make merchandise of the Word of God. They pervert and distort.

They get power over people. It's almost a sad pattern that you see so many pastors who end up with personal immorality and personal indiscretion within their own church of various kinds and horrible abuses of their privilege and their position and their influence in every different area of life. This is taking the vessels and drinking out of them.

They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. And if you count these elements, how many are there? Gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone. It's your number of humanity, six.

This is all the best that man can do. We were redeemed not with corruptible things like gold and silver but with the precious blood of Christ. These implements originally supported the central theme of temple worship, which was what? Blood sacrifice, which anticipated and represented the incredibly precious price that God would pay to redeem His people, to redeem us.

And instead, you're praising the implements themselves. They've got these gold goblets, and they're saying, Look at this great gold, look at this great silver, look at these gods that we have made with our own hands. That's what the Pharisees are going to do with their system of worship in the days of the Lord Jesus.

And that's what we tend to do when we put the works of our own hands and our own accomplishments and the accomplishments of the human race and aren't we wise and aren't we special and look at all the wonderful things that we've done ahead of God. In the same hour, the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote, Now, here's my question. Of all of the ways this communication could be delivered, why is it the fingers of a man's hand? Writes on the wall, By the way, they have excavated this palace.

They have found this wall. There is a niche in the wall before which the throne of the king sat. And there is a platform where a lamp sat.

They have found the wall. Guess what the wall is still covered with to this day? Plaster, white plaster is on this wall. You can go to the web and see pictures of it.

They have found this wall. They have found the spot where this happened. The writing is not there anymore.

But portions of this wall still exist. Portions of the plaster still cling to it. It is this palace.

Fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lamp stand. Remember now, this is a carousing and an orgy. It's late at night.

They don't have, you know, 150 lumens of illumination. How is this place lit? Torches, lamps and so on. But this isn't a place in the hall that is lit by this giant lamp stand.

It's the brightest spot on the wall so that everyone can see it. It isn't done in a corner. It's not that just a few see it.

Everybody sees this. It's the bright spot in the whole hall. God puts it where everyone can see it.

They see it, but they don't understand it. Does that remind you of anything? Jesus told parables that everybody heard, but nobody could understand. What is the key to getting the meaning? Well, I'm in the great hoi polloi.

I'm in the great majority that sees this and can't make any sense of it. It just doesn't make any sense. Well, that's just nonsense.

When something doesn't make sense, we say, that's nonsense. What does it take to make sense of divine revelation? Two things. A. You have to want it.

And B. You have to have divine enablement. The carnal mind cannot understand the things of the spirit because they are spiritually discerned. Right? Okay, so we know we need the spirit to

understand communication from God.

Okay, so how do I get this spirit? If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give what? The Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. That's even in Jesus' day. Now, for believers, the gift of the Holy Spirit is ubiquitous.

But you have to be willing. You have to listen. The Holy Spirit can speak and you just tune it out.

We're really good at tuning things out, right? I play music in the background when I'm studying. And I tune it out. I can actually edit audio and play my Pandora channel at the same time.

Because I discriminate. I listen to one. I listen to the other.

You can be in a room where several people are talking and you focus on one conversation. And you don't really register what the other people are saying even though you can hear it. Right? The Holy Spirit can be talking to us and we tune it out.

It requires two things. Desire and enablement. Both things have to be present.

The king cannot figure it out. The wise men cannot figure it out. You can read all these details.

We don't have time to review all of that. When Daniel is brought in before the king, why is he brought in? Because in verse 10, the queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. Now, the queen.

You notice over and over again, and I wish I had more time to really develop the details here. But several times in this chapter, several times, Belshazzar is called the son of Nebuchadnezzar. But he's manifestly not the son of Nebuchadnezzar.

Not a direct son like we would use the word. But father and son. And Nebuchadnezzar is called his father several times.

But in the Bible, there is no distinction made in the number of generations. Someone can be your father and be any number of generations in the past. If you're descended from him, he's your father.

And they don't have a word for grandfather. They don't have a word for great-great-grandfather. It's just father.

So he is a descendant. Now, Nabonidus, who we know was Belshazzar's actual father, is not a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar. Yet the Bible repeatedly says that Belshazzar is Nebuchadnezzar's son and Nebuchadnezzar is his father.

So how is this possible? Here's your answer in verse 10. The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. Now, wait a minute.

Look at verse 2. While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the vessels,

so that the king, his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink. So the wives and concubines are all there. Who's the queen? Normally, the senior wife of the king, right? The most senior wife, she's the queen.

This queen is not one of the wives. So who is she? Best guess, my conservative estimate here, this lady is a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. She is the mother of Belshazzar.

She is the wife of Nabonidus. And Nabonidus, who was put into place because of a coup by a military junta, so to speak, gets legitimacy for his reign by marrying a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. So Belshazzar is descended from Nebuchadnezzar, not through Nabonidus, but through this lady.

Why does she know so much about Nebuchadnezzar's experience? Why is she able to talk about Daniel? Because, perhaps as a young girl, she saw these things at first hand. She's the queen mother. And she's not at this soiree.

She hears from a servant, no doubt, that something portentous has happened. And she comes to the hall and she, with her experience from long years ago, comes in and tells Belshazzar about Daniel. So all of these things are harmonious and accurate.

So Daniel is brought in in verse 13. The king says, Are you that Daniel, one of the captives from Judah? Notice he wasn't consulted when they bring in the astrologers and the wise men and the seers and all these guys, the Chaldeans. Why is that? Daniel, by this time, would be in his 80s.

He's retired. Perhaps with the change of the regimes and with the increasing debauchery and so on, they said, This guy is one of the captives. Get him out of here.

Put him off someplace. Let's use our own people. Nebuchadnezzar was silly to ever promote this guy to begin with.

So he has exited stage left for whatever reason. He's either retired because of age or these later kings shunted him aside. You know, there was another pharaoh that knew not Joseph type of thing.

So they've got to bring him back, bring him out of retirement, out of his obscurity based on the word of this queen mother who saw him back in the day interpret. So he comes in and he delivers this message. And skip down to verse 25.

This is the inscription that was written. Mene, mene tekel ufarsin. And it's real interesting because it says that the wise men could not read it, much less interpret it.

So it could be that this was written vertically perhaps and you had an Aramaic maim and a maim for... It would have been written right to left. So you might have had a maim and then a noon and then a maim and then a noon for mene, mene. And then you would have had a T and a Q and an L and then a P and an R and an S. And because it was written vertically, they might

have been trying to read it horizontally.

There was some reason why they couldn't even make sense of the words. But Daniel recognized it immediately. And he says, this is mene, mene tekel ufarsin, which is basically, in one way, it's got a double entendre.

It's a word play. When you think about units of money, remember the mina? Mene, mene is related to the word for mina. Tekel is related to the word for shekel.

And peres, which is ufarsin's root, is a half shekel. So a mina is larger than a shekel, and a shekel is larger than the peres, which is like the half shekel. Peres literally means divided, and it's half a shekel.

It's a divided shekel, and they just called it the half. We call a 50-cent piece a half dollar. That's what peres was.

So what does it show? There is a great thing, there is a lesser thing, and then there is a divided thing. There is meaning in this that is revealed to Daniel. So I've gone over time here, and I really want to develop the last half of this chapter where Daniel interprets this bold act.

So what we'll content ourselves with tonight is what we've seen thus far. All these things are instruction for the people of God. It's not just a story.

It's not just a fable. It has a point. It is to be taken to heart.

What are some of the lessons that come from this? Well, we reviewed in detail what the Bible has to say about wine. Perfectly legitimate thing, as are most other things. What you eat is legitimate.

What you do, everything else you do, it can be legitimate, but within guidelines. What were those guidelines again? Do you remember? First of all, what effect am I having on others? Am I sensitive to what I am doing to others around me by my choices? Secondly, is it an indulgence of the flesh? Am I serving my own flesh? Am I engaged in self-gratification? This is really difficult because, you know, we do everything. There's an argument that says, well, everybody always acts in their own self-interest.

I've heard that recently somewhere. Everybody acts in their own self-interest. Well, even when we try to live our lives to please God, are we not self-interested? Well, I don't want to be judged by God.

I want to be blessed. I want to be pleasing in His sight. I want to have that well done, that good and faithful servant.

Isn't that my own interest? Yeah, it is. But I have done a number of things not in my own first choice of things to do. I have denied myself and taken up my cross to follow the Lord Jesus in order to serve that higher interest.

And there is an element of fruit of the spirit in terms of patience, long-suffering, humility, and self-control that are reflected in that allegedly self-interested act. Of course I want to be blessed and not judged. Of course I want God to smile and not frown.

That's obviously in my self-interest. But look at the nature of my attitudes and my thought processes and my choices in achieving that goal. I am not gratifying myself at every turn.

Instead, I am reflecting what can only be done in the power of God's spirit, which is the fruit of the spirit. Review the list. So that is a second criteria.

Not only what effect am I having on others. I don't want to do anything that causes others to stumble. But secondly, I want to be pleasing in God's sight.

I am not here to please myself. And then thirdly, does it reflect the glory of God? Can I do it in Christ's name? Can I dedicate it as a member of the body of Christ, as a representative of the Lord Jesus, here to do the will of the Father? Does this comport? Does it fall into line with that? Or is it something that I am not sure about that? And maybe it would be better if I just left that off. Maybe I need to set some new limits on it.

Maybe I need to exert more prayer and thoughtful reflection from the word of God before I continue or indulge or engage or whatever else it might be. So this comes from looking at an egregious example set before the people of God as a warning. You can lose everything if you stop acknowledging who is the Lord of heaven and earth, who controls the affairs of men, who gives you the things that you have.

Do you appreciate Him and remember Him as you use them as resources, as you enjoy them for blessings, as you seek to be a blessing to others in their association? Are your eyes on the Lord in all of these things or are your eyes on yourself? That's really what it boils down to. And in an effort to penetrate this thick scar tissue, God uses Belshazzar as He used Nebuchadnezzar beforehand to get this point across to His people. And by His people, that includes us.

So fruitful areas for reflection and meditation until we can come back next time and conclude our discussion and study of this chapter. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for the wonderful, creative ways that You communicate to us and the grist and the matter that You give us under the ministry of the Holy Spirit to inform us, to enlighten us, to illuminate us, to motivate us, persuade us, and encourage us in this life that You have granted to us so graciously in the days that we spend on this earth. Ever looking forward to the return of the Lord Jesus and our eternal life before You in Him. We pray that our study tonight will be a blessing to each one who has participated, that Your Word will live and breathe fire in our souls, enable us and empower us to be pleasing in Your sight and reflect the glory of our Lord Jesus.

We pray it in His name. Amen.