

**Judgment Day Has Arrived**  
Daniel 5:25-31; Romans 14:10  
December 11, 2022  
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We hear a lot about justice today—social justice, reproductive justice, gender justice, racial justice, economic justice, ecological justice, etc. Justice is not defined by whatever agenda people are promoting. It's not just a word to lend credibility to a cause. Justice does not favor one group of people over another group of people.

Justice is rendering to a person/people what is right. And what is right is determined not by the opinions of a group or even by the majority of nation, but is determined by Almighty God, our Creator alone. God alone is perfectly just. He is the absolute standard of justice. There is no standard of justice above Him, but rather He is the One who is absolutely right/just, and He gives us the standard of justice in His Moral Law (as summarized in the Ten Commandments).

It is then our duty in all relationships, situations, and controversies to apply God's justice (what He determines is right and wrong)—whether in the family, in the church, or in the state, whether at work, at school, or even when we are all alone with our phones or on our computers.

God is an absolutely just Judge. That's what makes His love, grace, and mercy so absolutely amazing! We don't deserve it. We deserve God's judgment for our innumerable sins. All sins and transgressions against Him and His holy commandments must be judged since He is absolutely just. God either has judged Jesus for all your sin, or He will judge you for all your sin in hell. Every sin must receive payment according to God's justice—either by Christ upon the cross or by the sinner in hell. God's justice demands this. He would not be just if this were not true of God.

How do we know that He has judged Jesus for all our sins? We will trust Him as our Savior and our Lord. We will love Him and will endeavor to walk in His holy commandments. And when we fall (as we all will do), we will be humbled before Him, repent, seek His forgiveness, and walk in love and in new obedience to His law.

From our text today, Belshazzar is brought before God, the just Judge, who renders to the king His just judgment. Let us humble ourselves and bow before our God and worship this just Judge. Our main points are: (1) God's Judgment Pronounced upon Babylon (Daniel 5:25-28); (2) God's Reward Given to Daniel (Daniel 5:29); (3) God's Judgment Falls upon Belshazzar (Daniel 5:30-31).

**I. God's Judgment Pronounced upon Babylon (Daniel 5:25-28).**

**A. Review**

1. The kings of Babylon looked upon themselves as the supreme judge and authority to whom all must bow and give account. Nebuchadnezzar learned the hard way that it is God that rules over all the kingdoms of this world (Daniel 4). God is the supreme judge. He will judge all people (even kings) according to His righteous laws.

2. Earlier in Daniel 5, God had interrupted the drunken party of Belshazzar who had profaned and blasphemed the Lord God of Israel by the appearance of a mysterious hand that wrote a message upon the wall. The wise men of Babylon could not read it or interpret it.

3. The Queen-Mother then appeared in the banquet hall and counseled Belshazzar to send for Daniel who was endowed with knowledge and wisdom of dreams and mysteries by the Spirit of the Holy God and who had interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dreams when all the wise men of Babylon failed to do so.

4. Daniel was then summoned, and he proceeded to lay out the case as God's prosecutor

against Belshazzar, who had not learned from the example of Nebuchadnezzar. Now having charged Belshazzar with proudly profaning and blaspheming Almighty God, Daniel translates and interprets God's judgment against Belshazzar in Daniel 5:25-28.

B. The judgment of God against Belshazzar is contained in just four words: **Menē, Menē, Tekēl, Uphārsīn**.

1. Daniel first translates the mysterious script into the Babylonian language (a form of Aramaic) spoken in Babylon at that time. Why then could not the wise men read the writing? The words themselves were not written in Aramaic, but in some script unknown to them (perhaps not even a known script in the world at that time). God miraculously gave Daniel understanding of the four words in this mysterious script, which he then translated into the Babylonian language.

2. Even if the wise men of Babylon had been able to read and translate the four words in the mysterious script, they would still not have been able to interpret the full meaning of the words as God's judgment upon Belshazzar: **Menē** ("numbered"); **Tekēl** ("weighed"), **Uphārsīn** ("and broken/divided in two"): "numbered, numbered, weighed, and broken/divided in two." It was the supernatural gift of God to Daniel not only to translate the four words into Aramaic, but also to interpret what the four words meant by way of God's judgment upon Babylon/Belshazzar. Let's consider each of these words.

3. **Menē** ("numbered") in Daniel 5:26.

a. This word is repeated as an emphatic certainty. This is not a possibility or a mere probability, but it will surely come to pass.

b. The days of the Babylonian Empire are numbered and determined to come to an end (which implies Belshazzar's days are also numbered and have come to an end). All kingdoms and nations have a lifespan determined by the Lord (Acts 17:26-27). The life of a nation that covenants to be God's nation will extend its life (Proverbs 14:34). So likewise are the days of our life numbered by the Lord as individuals (Job 14:5; Psalm 90:12; Ephesians 5:15-16). I don't want to spend my last day on earth trying to catch up on all of the days and relationships I have wasted. Let us now begin to buy back those wasted days and relationships by our love and obedience to Christ and our love and service to one another. Don't wait to make things right with God. You may not have time or the inclination to do so if you do not do so now.

4. **Tekēl** ("weighed") in Daniel 5:27.

a. Belshazzar had been weighed in the balance or scale of God's justice and was found to be a profane, blaspheming idolater who had rebelled against the light God had given him (light given through Daniel's witness with Nebuchadnezzar). Because he had refused that light, it was taken from him to wallow in darkness (1 Samuel 2:3). That truth terrifies the unbeliever, but is an encouragement to the believer who wants to be known and seen by the Lord in all that he/she does. That is a great incentive to our sanctification and growth in Christ.

b. The truth of the matter is that all of us have been weighed in the scale of God's perfect justice and found to be transgressors against His holy commandments (Romans 3:23). We are all by nature like Belshazzar—we love our darkness, and we hate the light of God's truth and righteousness (John 3:19-21). The only One whose righteousness fulfills and meets the righteousness that God's justice demands is the righteousness/obedience of Jesus Christ. To stand before God in our own righteousness is to be condemned before God. To stand before God in Christ's righteousness is to be justified before God.

5. **Perēs** ("broken/divided in two") in Daniel 5:28.

a. This is a different form of the same word as in Daniel 5:25 (**Uphārsīn**). **Perēs** is without the conjunction "and" (*U*) and is in the singular form rather than in the plural form (Daniel 5:25).

b. The Babylonian kingdom was about to be broken and divided into two parts among the Medes and the Persians who were already at the gates of the city and likely making their way into

the city by passing under the great wall of Babylon through the canal of the diverted Euphrates River and through the gates that were mysteriously left open (Xenophon, *Cyrop.*, 7; Isaiah 45:1—about 150 years before Cyrus secretly entered Babylon that night to conquer it; Daniel 2:38-39). Fulfilled prophecy demonstrates that Scripture is God’s inspired Word—it is faithful and true—if God declares history before it happens, He controls all that happens. We need not fear/panic about tomorrow.

c. God wrote supernaturally on the wall a message of judgment and clearly delivered that judgment through His prophet, Daniel. What change do we see in Belshazzar after hearing this message of judgment? None! There was no change, no repentance, and no seeking God’s forgiveness. Let God’s providential warnings and wake-up calls in our lives bring us to repentance—not stubbornness. God’s patience ended soon after and God’s judgment fell upon Belshazzar/Babylon.

## **II. God’s Reward Given to Daniel (Daniel 5:29).**

A. It is interesting that Belshazzar promoted Daniel even though Daniel had just read to him his doom. I would suggest that God moved Belshazzar to promote Daniel just before Cyrus and his troops entered and took the city of Babylon in order that Daniel might be God’s man in power and authority to reveal to Cyrus the prophecy in Isaiah 45:1.

B. This was not ultimately Belshazzar’s reward to Daniel (for he hated Daniel’s God), but God’s gracious reward to Daniel for Daniel’s faithfulness to God as God’s prosecutor before a king who could have slain him immediately. God’s reward is not given as that which is due to Daniel—as an obligation God owes to Daniel—but as a free gift (which brings God glory not Daniel and not us, Revelation 4:10-11). God works within us both to will and to do His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13), and then He rewards us for doing so (both earthly and heavenly rewards).

## **III. God’s Judgment Falls upon Belshazzar (Daniel 5:30-31).**

A. That very night before morning dawned, God’s just judgment fell upon Belshazzar and the kingdom was received by Darius, the Mede. Darius the Mede was likely a subordinate ruler under Cyrus (Xenophon calls him Gorbyras) who ruled the former kingdom of Babylon while Cyrus ruled the entire empire.

1. When God declared through Daniel that Belshazzar’s days were numbered, he likely had no idea how soon that would be (King Nebuchadnezzar had a year to repent; Belshazzar only had minutes or hours to repent). Our days are also numbered by the Lord and none of us knows how soon that will be for each of us. Belshazzar trembled before God, but he did not flee to the Lord for His mercy—he therefore fell under the Lord’s judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Just as certain as death will come to us all, so will we all appear before Christ, the righteous Judge (Romans 14:10). We will either appear before Jesus in our own righteousness and suffer His eternal judgment (for all our righteousness is as filthy rags, Isaiah 64:6), or we will appear before Jesus in His righteousness and receive the blessings of eternal glory in heaven. This is the most glorious rags to riches story ever told, and it is entirely from beginning to end due to the love, mercy, and grace of God.

2. Let us not be those who only speak of the mercy of God, but not the justice of God. Dear ones, there is no mercy of God if there is no justice of God. It is God’s mercy and grace that God freely showers upon us who deserve His justice. God has highly exalted His mercy and grace to sinners because He is a God of justice. And God’s perfect justice and His free mercy have kissed one another in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God’s justice was fulfilled in punishing His own beloved Son for the sins of His people in order that His mercy and grace might be freely and abundantly poured out upon us. Let God’s absolute justice drive you today to the love, mercy, and grace of Jesus Christ.

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