

DANIEL PREACHING TO A DYING SINNER

June 18, 2017

Daniel 5:1-6:3

Belshazzar's feast is fixed in human memory as an emblem of impending doom. Human literature and the arts have made much use of this biblical and historical event. We describe events that precede tragedy by saying, "the handwriting was on the wall." Words written in the plaster of Belshazzar's banquet hall were only the conclusion of a sermon that Daniel was destined to preach. He preached it faithfully to the last ruler of Babylon. The prophet's courage was powerful and exemplary, his message was penetrating and indicting, and his vindication overwhelming.

In three simple points, we consider Daniel's sermon to a dying sinner:

1. Belshazzar's Sins

Pride "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 6:18

Drunkenness "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." Proverbs 23:29, 30

strong drink: "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted."

Proverbs 31:4, 5

Idolatry "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Exodus 20:4, 5

Insolence & sacrilege "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." Exodus 20:7

2. Daniel's Sermon:

God's mercies to Babylon were great, establishing human obligations (18-19)

God humbled, then restored Nebuchadnezzar, thereby instructing everyone (20-21)

Knowing these lessons, Belshazzar did not heed them (22-24)

God's verdict is determined (25-28)

This verdict is universal: we are all "weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (27)

3. Daniel's Vindication:

Fulfillment of his interpretation of the writing: “Darius the Median took the kingdom” (31)

Fulfillment of his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (ch. 2) and his own vision (ch. 7)

Exaltation in the kingdom of Darius (6:1-2)