

The Writing on the Wall (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] Well, Daniel is where we are, of course, on Wednesday night, Daniel chapter 5.

! So, we'll get started with that, not finished that tonight. It is one of my favorite chapters. You know, there's a lot of things, a lot of stories, a lot of interesting things that happen in the book of Daniel. The prophecy, the dreams, the different things that we're very familiar with, have heard of and studied maybe over the years, even some of these things when we were in Sunday school as a child.

I don't know if this particular story in Daniel chapter 5 is one that's often taught or told in Sunday school. It's quite an interesting story.

It's not exactly what we want to do, share with our kids about a drunken banquet. But this chapter has that story of, well, what has become, you know, the expression that we use today, the handwriting on the wall.

[1 : 14] You know, I saw, you saw the handwriting on the wall, or I saw it on, well, it comes right from this passage, of course, where Belshazzar sees the hand and the finger and it writes that message on the wall.

So that's what this text is about. What's interesting is the time that has elapsed between chapter 4 and now chapter 5.

A lot of time has elapsed here. So with that in mind, I'd like to give you a little bit of a historical context. I'm going to go ahead and just read it to you.

You've got it in your notes, but you might not find this very interesting. But, you know, there are a lot of gaps in the book of Daniel in regard to the history of Babylon.

So we go from Babylon to then the Medes and the Persian Empire, and we move to these other empires very rapidly. And so let me just give you a little bit of a historical background.

[2 : 12] King Nebuchadnezzar, when we get to chapter 5, he's dead. He's been dead for probably 20 years, over 20 years. So Daniel, then you can imagine, because he's in the story, he's still alive, and so he's got to be getting up there.

And most would say he's probably, you know, in his upper 80s, most likely. Some even say possibly 87. They've kind of worked out some of the dates and think that maybe Daniel was 87.

He no doubt was in his 80s. So he's an old man, probably has kind of dropped from the scene from, you know, when he was kind of in charge, was given charge over all of the counselors, the king's counselors and wise men and all these folks.

So he's probably retired. I guess we could say maybe kind of retired because, you know, at some point in the chapter, they have to go call for him and bring him. You know, I don't know if they had to help him come.

You know, I don't know. All right, so Daniel's old. Several Babylonian kings have succeeded Nebuchadnezzar in that they're not mentioned here in Daniel, though they are mentioned in some other books in the Bible.

[3 : 28] Kings, also Isaiah and Jeremiah, mention some of these other kings that served in Babylonia, the kings of Babylonia, or what is technically called the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

And so these kings, you have actually the first king before even Nebuchadnezzar was Nabopolassar. He, in alliance with four other nations, some of those nations, the names of those nations you would recognize.

And it would be Persia. And I'm trying to think of some of them. I didn't put them in the notes there. Phoenicia was another kind of smaller nation at this time.

Anyway, he formed an alliance, this king did, and conquered the world power of his day, which was Assyria. But then after Nabopolassar, we have Nebuchadnezzar.

That's Nebuchadnezzar II. But that's the Nebuchadnezzar that we have in Daniel. So he was the son of Nabopolassar, became king after his death.

[4 : 40] Great leader. I mean, we've already mentioned that a little bit. He was a great leader, great king, an empire builder, though he didn't, I say he was a great builder.

He didn't actually do the work. But as king, he led in a huge building project throughout the nation. Because much of the Babylon, the Babylonian Empire, or those cities that were kind of in that near proximity, they had been destroyed by the Assyrians.

Nineveh, for one, had been completely and totally destroyed by the Assyrians. And so Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt Nineveh and many other cities throughout the Babylonian Empire. And as well as really expanding the size and beauty and fortification of Babylon. He was responsible for a lot of that.

By 572, Nebuchadnezzar was in full control of Babylonia, Assyria, what once was the nation of Assyria.

[5 : 52] Phoenicia, Israel. We already know that he was in full control of that territory because he had taken them into captivity. And Philistia, or the Philistines, that territory was under his control.

Northern part of Arabia, northern part of Arabia, as well as a pretty large part of Asia Minor. And I gave you that map there to show you the size of the, again, the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

And then after Nebuchadnezzar, we have Amal, or some historians refer to him as Evel, Evel Marduk.

Evel Marduk. But Amal Marduk, Marduk is the name of the chief god of the Babylonians. We'll talk about him a little bit more later.

But, all right, so he was the son and the successor of Nebuchadnezzar. But he was murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, Neriglissar, if that's how it's pronounced.

[7 : 02] And if you can come up with a better one, you let me know. Anyway, if Tom was in there, I'd ask him. He probably knows how to pronounce all these Babylonian names. Anyway, this was Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law, this Neriglissar.

And he murdered Amal Marduk after two years. So, he didn't serve very long as king, just two years as king of Babylon. And then Neriglissar, he ruled, you can see there, for really about four years, I guess.

Not anything to say about him. Labashi Marduk, there's Marduk again. You know, the gods, and I kind of explained this when, remember when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were given their Babylonian names.

Babylonian gods, the names of Babylonian deities, were a part of their names. Even Nebuchadnezzar, the first part of his name is the name of a Babylonian god, Nebo.

Nebo. And so, here we have, all right, now twice, the name Marduk is included in the name. It's the name of their god, chief god of the Babylonians.

[8 : 18] All right, so he was the son and successor of Neriglissar, but he was murdered in a conspiracy after only two months as king. So, his reign was quite short.

And then, finally, we have these two names. Nabonidus and Belshazzar. All right, now why are they put together there?

Well, because they served together as king. And so, here's the explanation. Nabonidus was another son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar, the husband of his daughter, Nitochris, probably.

His mother was an Assyrian and a high priestess of the moon god at Haran. If you look back over at that map, Haran is kind of at the top part of the Neo-Babylonian empire, that territory.

So, the moon god, she worshipped the moon god, and she was even a priestess in the temple to the moon god. This was an Assyrian religion, not Babylonian, which is going to cause some troubles.

[9 : 28] And one reason why we have two names there as being the last rulers of Babylon. And so, Nabonidus, because of his military exploits, during his, I think, 17 years, he expanded the kingdom even more.

So, he liked to be out there leading the armies. And so, through a lot of his tenure as king, he was away on these military exploits.

But also, he was away because of his origin, his Assyrian origin and religion, because he had the religion of his mother. And so, during his 17-year reign, he not only expanded the empire into new regions of the world, but because of his devotion to the religion of his Assyrian ancestry, he was

extremely unpopular with the priests of Marduk, Babylonian's chief god.

All right, they didn't like him. I mean, he's king, but, you know, the priests in these pagan kingdoms, they really possessed a great deal of influence and power and authority.

I think, quite frankly, Nabonidus was not safe to stay there in Babylon. And so, for 10 years, the last 10 years of his official reign as king, he was not in Babylon, probably in Haran most of the time, where his mother was, and then out leading the armies.

[11:03] All right, so, and this not only caused him troubles with the priests of Marduk, but also the people, the people of Marduk. He was a very unpopular king because of his religion primarily and some other things that he did.

So, the priests hated him, and the people had no respect for him. And so, he appointed his son, Belshazzar, as co-regent of Babylon.

That means he was co-king, all right, not just second in command. And he was equal with his father, co-regent of Babylon, and he ruled the empire with equal authority during his father's 10-year absence.

All right, so you basically have two kings in Babylon during this time. Now, you don't see this in Daniel. We can find it other places in scripture where this king is referred to.

Now, Belshazzar, which, by the way, has, over the years, until recently, a lot of liberal scholars said, well, here's just another mistake in the Bible because there was no such king, Belshazzar, no such king in Babylon.

[12:14] And yet, all you have to do is just say, well, the Bible must be true. Whether we can prove it or not, it doesn't make any difference because just wait a while, and they'll find the proof. And they did. Archaeologists have found proof that Belshazzar was not only king of Babylon, but co-king or co-regent of Babylon with his father.

All right, so then, the events of Daniel chapter 5, and this will become clear when we get to the end of the chapter. These events mark the end of the Babylonian Empire and the beginning of the Medo-Persian Empire, the Medes and the Persians, just as Daniel prophesied in chapter 2.

Remember, Nebuchadnezzar's dream of this figure, this giant statue, and the head was made out of what? Gold. Gold. Gold. And that head was Nebuchadnezzar.

It was the Babylonian Empire. And now, that head, it's going to come to an end, and then we begin with the silver. Is it silver? I think that's right.

And the Mede and Persian, Medo-Persian Empire. And so, this is where we are in history. All right, so, getting to the text.

[13:31] First of all, we want to see that it all began with the king's shameful intoxication. Shameful intoxication. And so, verse 1 begins this way.

Belshazzar, the king, and he was co-king, but he was king, and certainly king of Babylon, the city of Babylon. He was in charge of it.

The king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. Literally, they did a lot of drinking and got drunk.

So, this is a pretty large feast, if you think about it. Even if you just take the thousand, that's a lot of people. And yet, the feast could have easily involved as many as 10,000 people.

That's huge. Imagine going to a feast with 10,000 people. But it could add up pretty quickly, because you have the 1,000 lords. And not only the 1,000 lords, but you have their wives.

[14:35] The Bible mentions that here in the account. Their wives, and though it doesn't mention their concubines, many of them would have had multiple wives and multiple concubines.

And then you have the king and his wives, and he had multiple wives. And concubines. The account mentions his concubines. He could have had hundreds of them.

You say, really? Well, Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Okay. So, it's easily conceivable that Belshazzar had hundreds of wives and concubines, as did probably many of his lords.

And then you would have soldiers there, guards there, part of the palace guard there to protect the king and to protect all these lords.

I mean, you can imagine. You have this get-together of so many leaders in Babylon. You would have to have a lot of protection there. So, you'd have all of those people there and all the servants.

[15:39] Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of servants to, I mean, this is a large banquet. And not just simply, you know, serving the food once.

You know, you've got the wine free-flowing, and they're all involved in this. So, that's a lot of people. And so, here again, yet again, is another example or another place in the scripture where the liberal scholars want to argue against the inspiration of scripture.

They say, well, it's ridiculous. There would not be a place large enough for this kind of banquet or feast. Well, lo and behold, archaeologists have discovered a throne room.

For one thing, a throne room, and I'll get back to that because I think that's where this took place. A particular throne room, as well as several other banquet halls in the ruins of ancient Babylon that could have easily seated as many as 10,000 people.

They were that large. Now, that may be interesting, but the interesting thing here is not that they would have a feast like this or not even that it would have included so many people.

[16:53] You know, that's interesting, but that's not the interesting thing. What's interesting here is that Belshazzar held this huge drunken feast on the very night Babylon fell.

Now, that's what's interesting. You know, quite honestly, as I was going back over and studying this chapter to prepare to teach it, I don't think I ever really noticed it. I mean, I know at the end of the chapter, you know, Belshazzar comes to an end.

He's put to death. And we know that the very next chapter, we start with Darius. So, something has dramatically changed here, but I never really thought about the timing of this.

That actually, while Belshazzar was getting drunk and all of his lords getting drunk and they were having this huge feast, at that very moment, the invading Medes and Persians had already besieged the city.

They were already around the city at that very time. By this time, they had already taken the surrounding countryside.

[18:05] And now they're at the city walls. And certainly by now, all the people, including the king, knew the city was surrounded by the Persian army.

All right, so, it's a little weird, isn't it? You know, to have this big feast and you're just having a great old time and getting drunk and, you know, and all the things that they did.

You know, we don't know all of it. And at that very moment, there's a conquering army that has surrounded the entire city. Now, how could Belshazzar do this?

Well, perhaps he'd given up. You know, that would be one, maybe, logical answer. He'd given up. Defeat is inevitable. I mean, you could maybe imagine that kind of scenario.

And so, you know, let's just get drunk. Tomorrow we die. Yeah, that kind of thing. That's really not what this is all about. Not at all.

[19:10] In fact, we could maybe come up with three other things, reasons why he would have a feast at that very time. The first one, and maybe this is the only reason, Belshazzar believed that the city of Babylon was unconquerable.

And it had proven to be for a thousand years. No one had conquered the city of Babylon for a thousand years. And so he had a lot of confidence. And the Babylon of his day was even greater and stronger than it had ever been, thanks to Nebuchadnezzar.

When Nebuchadnezzar was king, he built it so strong. And I mentioned some of this last time. I even showed you some, you know, some kind of pictures and what it might have looked like.

But it had a double wall system. And in between those two walls, it had a moat around the entire city.

So you have the main wall, a moat, and then another wall as its fortification. The outer wall was 87 feet thick.

[20:28] That's quite a wall. It depends on, you know, the documents you read, the archaeological finds.

But most agree, 87 feet thick. And 350 feet high, this outer wall, with towers that would reach another 100 feet above that.

The Euphrates River, you might remember the picture. It runs right down through the middle of the city from north to south.

And it runs through great brass gates. So no boats can come in there, enemies, in that sense.

The city itself was 14 miles square. And it had its own internal farms. All right, so, you know, you could imagine that a city of that size could store a lot of grain and food and things that they need, as well as continue to grow it if they're besieged.

[21 : 39] And so it's been speculated that Babylon could have endured a 20-year siege with no problem. So you just kind of take all those facts, and you might think, as Belshazzar thought, all right, they're out there, can't do anything about that.

They can't get in here. This is the strongest fortified city that has ever existed in the entire world. And so the feast, then, would have been kind of a in-your-face to the enemy, you know. Yeah, you're out there. We're going to have a feast.

We're going to have a good time. I'm going to have a big party. Yeah, they had confidence. I think you could add to that that Belshazzar may have had confidence in his pagan god as well.

That would be Marduk. And specifically Marduk, even though the Babylonians had multiple gods, pantheon of gods, but Marduk was the chief god.

[22 : 45] The meaning of Belshazzar, that name is Bel has protected the king. Now, Bel, by the way, just another name for Marduk, Babylonian's chief god.

So Marduk has protected the king. So maybe, you know, that's my name, and I trust this god, and I don't have any worries. So he is trusting a pagan god.

But I would mention a third thing, and probably, in my opinion, more likely, Belshazzar was just a drunken fool. You know, and he used wine to escape the realities of life.

I kind of imagine that he didn't venture far from Babylon, that great city, and his palaces, and his very, very plush life, you know, that he lived.

He lived, and I think he was a drunkard, and a fool, of course. One historian put it this way, With the armies of a conqueror pressing at the capital, this deputy ruler took refuge in an orgy of wine, and that's what he did.

[24 : 00] All right, so the king's shameful intoxication. Second, the king's prideful desecration. Now, he's not enough just to get stinking drunk.

Not enough for Belshazzar. So verse 2, while he tasted the wine, he had a thought. It came to his mind. Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels, which his father, Nebuchadnezzar.

Now, Nebuchadnezzar was not his father. His father was co-king with him right now. But, you know, many times in the Bible, when the word father is used, it quite often means ancestor, his ancestor, or predecessors.

And so these vessels which his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple, which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines, might drink from them.

All right, so he brought all these things out, these silver, gold, and silver vessels, so he could drink out of them.

[25 : 17] And now, where were these things? Well, Nebuchadnezzar had added these particular articles, these vessels, these gold and silver vessels. He had added them to his kind of his treasure room as trophies, trophies of war.

That's what they were for Nebuchadnezzar. And where did he get them? Well, he got them from Jerusalem, got them from the temple. And how did he do that? Well, you remember, Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem and had destroyed most of it, but he had completely destroyed the temple.

But he didn't do that until after he had taken out the valuable things, things of value, and then bring those back to Babylon.

This would be standard procedure for the conquering and raising of a city. He would take booty. He would take things of value, gold and silver, and the king would get the best stuff, and he got all of these gold and artifacts and vessels and instruments and such that were used in the temple in the worship of Yahweh God.

So these things have been in the treasure house and kept away. And we might find fault with Nebuchadnezzar, and certainly we can, that he would even have done such a thing.

[26 : 40] But what Belshazzar is about to do is far worse. And so while Nebuchadnezzar is keeping those things just as trophies of victory, Belshazzar has another thing in mind.

And so in verse 3, then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God, which had been in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines, drank from them.

They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. So you just got to see them. You know, they're filling them up with wine, and they're toasting, but not Yahweh God.

They're toasting their God. So they're taking the vessels of honor that were used in the temple worship, the worship of Yahweh God. And they are using them to further their drunkenness, and they are praising their own god, Marduk, and other gods.

Now, this act signified several things. Well, a couple of things. One, disregard for Nebuchadnezzar's respect for Yahweh. By now, that's long gone.

[27 : 54] In Nebuchadnezzar's last years, not everyone would agree with this, but I think that in his last years of life, he'd become a true believer, a true worshiper of Yahweh God.

And as king, that would have had great influence on the people of Babylon. And Belshazzar then, and not just him, but probably several of the kings who were predecessors to the throne came after Nebuchadnezzar.

Belshazzar was part of an effort to restore, to rid the nation, rather, of Yahweh worship and restore the pagan worship of Marduk.

And so this was a part of his disrespect for Nebuchadnezzar. And then, so that then leads to a second thing, disregard for Yahweh God. Just total disregard for him to the point of sacrilege.

Now, the phrase, the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone, that's not talking about the gods of gold.

[29 : 03] That is, gods over gold and gods over silver and, you know, particular deities associated with these materials. Now, what we have here is an indication of who wrote this.

It was a Jewish author. So it was a Jewish author writing this, and so, what did they believe about these deities, these gods?

Well, they were just gold. They were just simply gold. Gold. Gods of Babylon were nothing more than images made out of gold, silver and bronze and iron and wood and stone.

But the point of it all is, Belshazzar had set himself up as superior to Yahweh God. And the only way a pagan can show himself superior to God is to desecrate those things that belong to him. Kind of like what ISIS is doing these days. You've seen some of that over the, you know, over the past year or so. Going in and purposefully destroying anything associated with Christianity.

[30 : 20] They did it just the other day with a report of that at some Christian monastery. And, all right, so, to just absolutely desecrate those things that are associated with God or associated with the worship of the one true God.

All right, so the king's shameful intoxication, the king's prideful desecration, and then third, the king's frightful observation.

verse 5, in the same hour, the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand, so that's so everyone could see it, on the plaster wall, the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

That'd be pretty frightful to see, wouldn't it? I can't imagine, I mean, I guess I can't imagine what that might have looked like. I don't know how large the hand was. I've seen a lot of artistic renditions of this, you know, where it's just actually the size of a man's hand that Belshazzar could see, or a large hand.

You know, I don't know what it looked like. I kind of imagined it just looked like an ordinary man's hand, but it was just the hand. And that hand goes and writes on the wall, the writing on the wall.

[31 : 45] And so this verse seems to describe a room that archaeologists have now discovered in the ruins of Babylon. And so instead of explaining that, I just put in a quote from John Wolbert.

In the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, archaeologists have uncovered a large throne room 56 feet wide. And 173 feet long, which probably was the scene of this banquet.

Midway in the long wall opposite the entrance, there was a kind of a niche, a niche in front of which the king may well have been seated.

Maybe his throne was there. Interestingly, the wall behind the niche was covered with white plaster. as described by Daniel, which would make an excellent background for such a writing.

And so archaeologists found something that quite possibly could have been that very room. My question is, was the writing still on there? It wasn't. I mean, if it was still on there, we would have heard about it.

[32 : 57] So what Belshazzar saw was the hand and fingers of God. Right. I mean, I think that's obvious.

And this is not the only time the Bible refers to the finger of God. Exodus 18-19, remember ultimately the magicians, they think this is all real.

What God is doing through these plagues, the magicians say this is the finger of God. is the finger of God. Is it because they saw a finger?

Not in that particular case, but it's a metaphor of the act of God. Jesus said in Luke 11-20, I do miracles by the finger of God. I cast out devils by the finger of God.

All right, so this immediately, it leads immediately to the fourth thing in the text and what I have called the king's pitiful stupefaction.

[34 : 00] How do you like that word? Stupefaction. I thought it was a cool word, so I put it in there. Verse 6 and following, then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him so that the joints of his hips were loosened.

That's a weird way of describing it. And his knees knocked against each other. That we can't understand. The king cried aloud. All right, so I want to stop right there.

You know, five things happened. His face turned pale. That's the meaning here. He just flushed, turned white. And I guess mine would too.

I saw such a thing. Then second, his thoughts began to terrify him. I mean, imagine you're thinking, what is this? What's happening? Who is this? What does this mean?

This is a terrifying experience. His whole mind is inundated with terror. His hips gave way so that he could barely stand up.

[35 : 09] I mean, it's just about to crumple. See, it started in the mind, he started to think, he's terrified, and now he's pretty close to passing out, actually. And the other expression, his knees began to knock together, that one, you know, we understand that expression, whether you've ever experienced it or not.

But the last thing, he cried out, it says there in verse 7, actually the word means he shrieked, he screamed, he was terrified.

So he's noticeably traumatized here, then we get verse 7, the king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, those would be the experts in divination, you know, they'd be experts on what the gods have done, the acts of gods, all right, so you'd want those experts here, you know, to find out what this, is this an act of one of our gods, so the experts in divination, the Chaldeans, probably the oldest kind of sect of counselors or mystics in the kingdom, these would be the scholars in Babylonian lore, so you'd want them in there, you know, and ask, has this ever happened before in all of Babylonian history, do we have some reference, some precedence for this, you know, so you get the Chaldeans in there, and then the soothsayers, they're the conjurers of magic, they're able to actually do magic tricks, but people believe them to be real, so guys, this thing has happened, this hand, have you ever seen that before, is this listed anywhere in your book of magic, anywhere, could it have been done by a magician, or a conjurer, a soothsayer, the king spoke, saying to the wise men of

Babylon, whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold around his neck, and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom, all right, so he promised the moon, in fact, he promised more than he could give them, actually, if they could just interpret this handwriting on the wall, and so forth, so you think about what he's promising here, clothed with purple, that refers to royal authority, so he would grant that person who could interpret this, these words, what's happened here, he promised them royal authority, and then having a chain of gold around his neck was simply a symbol of high office and government, and we would seem that many cultures used that over the centuries, you know, some gold chain around their neck, maybe a medallion, or something, you know, on there, that would be the symbol of their high office, and what office would it be?

Well, shall be the third ruler in the kingdom, that meant that he would rule co-equally with Belshazzar and his father, Nabonidus, so instead of two kings, it'd now be three, if you can just tell me what this means, now he's drunk, you know, and I mean, he's perfectly willing to confer all these things on the person who, whether it could hold or not, whether, it would last or not, in fact, we can say definitely it was a hollow promise because before the night's out, he's dead and the Babylonian empire is gone, so, you know, he could promise the moon, nobody was ever going to get it, even if they could interpret it, of course, we know later in the story, Daniel does interpret it, we'll get to this

next time, but Daniel said, forget all that promise, I don't care anything about that, you know, of course, Daniel knew too that he'd never get it anyway, because the guy who promised it to him is going to be dead that night, and the

[39 : 12] Babylonian empire will be over, all right, so, verse 8, then we'll wrap this up here tonight, now all the king's wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation, then king Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished, probably this time his countenance was red instead of white, he's getting angry, and so he and his wise men, they were stupefied over this whole thing, verse, from verse 25, we'll get to this next week, but it appears that the writing was in Aramaic language, so it was not some unintelligible writing, or of some unknown language, it was Aramaic, a language that they could read, so the question is, why could they not read it, I mean, it says they couldn't read it, well, the meaning here is that the wise men, they could read the individual words, actually,

I'll give you a clue, and we'll look at it next week, but all the words are measurements, they're measurements, so they could read the individual words, but when you put all those words together in a sentence, it didn't make any sense, so that's what they meant when we can't read this, it would be just like stringing, you know, four words together, and it's nonsensical, it couldn't make any sense if it, couldn't read it, and therefore then they were unable to guess the meaning of the sign, or miracle, all of that will make, I think, more sense when we get to verse 25, and that leads to a fifth thing that we're going to hold for next week, the king's dreadful revelation, and here's where Daniel comes into the story, and so we'll take that up next week.

Thank you.