



# PREPARING TO STAND

Number 91 — September, 2015

---

“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3/21/1905

---

## THE WEIGHT OF PROPHETIC EVIDENCE

by Jim Buller

The year is 539 BC. The invading army has just won a battle against the ‘home forces,’ and they are marching on the capital city. What *should* the people in the city do? —They should have repented and prayed for deliverance, possibly fled the city, or at least prepared for the coming siege.

But what *did* they do? —They threw a party!

Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. (Daniel 5:1.)

And at the party, they even went out of their way to defy God!

While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver 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. 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. (Daniel 5:2-4.)

... king and counselors would vie with one another in blasphemy against God, ... (*Prophets and Kings*, page 531.)

“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.” (Daniel 5:5.) Then Belshazzar came unglued! “The king’s countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.” In vain he called for “the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers,” and “the wise men of Babylon,” to read and interpret the mysterious writing. (Daniel 5:7.)

Finally, they remembered Daniel, and called for him. When he came in and took in the scene, he briefly recited the experience of Belshazzar's predecessor Nebuchadnezzar. How, "his heart was lifted up," in pride, and as a result, he lost his reason for seven years. "His heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys," and, "they fed him with grass like oxen." (Daniel 5:20-21.) Then, Daniel essentially said, 'You should have known better!'

So let's explore for a minute what *else* Belshazzar could, and should have known. Earlier in Babylon's history, Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great metal image made the 'top story' in the news. (See Daniel chapter 2.) Although Babylon was pictured in the dream as, the 'head of gold,' it went on to declare that Babylon would be followed by another superpower, the 'chest and arms of silver.' In response to this dream, there was another national event. Nebuchadnezzar had built an enormous replica image *entirely* of gold, and commanded everyone to bow down to '*his* version of the story.' However, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow to the golden image, so they were thrown into the fiery furnace. Their miraculously deliverance was witnessed by everyone. (See Daniel chapter 3.)

In the third year of Belshazzar's own reign, Daniel had the vision of the ram and the goat. In this vision, the ram was identified as "the kings of Media and Persia," (Daniel 8:20), who are the very ones attacking them now! Isaiah chapter twenty-one, and Jeremiah chapter fifty-one also predicted that Babylon would fall, and named the Medes and Persians. Cyrus, the commander of the combined forces of the Medes and Persians was also named in Isaiah 44:28, and 45:1. These, as well as other prophecies in Isaiah and Jeremiah even predicted, among other things, that the river would be dried up, the gates would be left open, and the guards would be drunk. (See Isaiah 44:27, 45:1, Jeremiah 51:57.)

There was another historical event that Belshazzar also could have known about. The Assyrian Empire was the superpower before Babylon. (Babylon became the superpower by conquering the Assyrians with the help of the Medes.) In the early years of the Assyrian Empire, the prophet Jonah shows up in Nineveh, its capital, saying, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:4.) In response to Jonah's message, the Assyrian king and people, "believed God, proclaimed a fast," and "turned from their evil way." (Jonah 3:5, 10.) Because of their repentance,

Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it. (Jonah 3:10.)

Consider the difference in the 'prophetic weight of evidence' between what happened to Nineveh and to Babylon. Nineveh only had one prophet, with one message, and they believed and repented. Babylon had multiple prophets, and multiple messages. Yet, instead of believing God and repenting, they threw a party, even trying to out-do "one another in blasphemy against God."

In that last night of mad folly, Belshazzar and his lords had filled up the measure of their guilt and the guilt of the Chaldean kingdom. No longer could God's restraining hand ward off the impending evil. Through manifold providences, God had sought to teach them reverence for His law. "We

would have healed Babylon,” He declared of those whose judgment was now reaching unto heaven, “but she is not healed.” Jeremiah 51:9. Because of the strange perversity of the human heart, God had at last found it necessary to pass the irrevocable sentence. Belshazzar was to fall, and his kingdom was to pass into other hands. (*Prophets and Kings*, page 530.)

From this quotation, it sounds as if they believed and repented like the people of Nineveh, God would have “relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them,” too.

With all this in mind, let’s ‘fast forward’ in history about 500 years, and also consider all the ‘prophetic weight of evidence’ that applied to the Jewish nation during Christ’s time. Ever since Adam and Eve fell, there had been many prophetic messages, by many of the Old Testament prophets about the coming of the Messiah, His mission, His rejection, and death, and the resulting desolation of the Jewish nation. John the Baptist had been sent to call the rulers and people to repentance. The Son of God Himself came to “confirm the covenant” with them during His three and one half year ministry. And after His death He instructed His disciples to continue to focus their ministry on the Jews during the remaining three and one half years of that final “week” of the ‘seventy weeks’ prophecy. (See Daniel 9:27 and Acts 1:8.) No wonder Jesus said,

The men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment with this generation, and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. (Matthew 12:41.)

But instead of repenting at the calls from John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples, the Jews killed their Messiah, and put the early Christians to death. No wonder the Jewish nation lost their position, and “the people of the prince who is to come,” destroyed, “the city and the sanctuary.” (Daniel 9:26.)

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate. (Matthew 23:37-38.)

Let’s ‘fast forward’ again to today. What about us? What are *we* going to do? Think of all of the end-time prophecies, the ‘prophetic weight of evidence’ dealing with what is happening in the world right now!

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, “My master is delaying his coming,” and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the

hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 24:45-51.)

Like the Babylonians, and the unfaithful servant in the parable, are we going to seal our destiny by just partying and playing games?

Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that the fact might be determined whether it would fulfill the purposes of the Watcher and the Holy One. Prophecy has traced the rise and progress of the world's great empires —Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with the nations of less power, history has repeated itself. Each has had its period of test; each has failed, its glory faded, its power departed. (*Prophets and Kings*, page 535.)

Are we going to believe God? Are we going to take the 'prophetic weight of evidence,' and the times we are living in seriously? Are we going to repent, and allow the Holy Spirit to work in and through us so that we can fulfill our purpose?