

Troubled Thoughts

Daniel 5:1-9 KJV Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. [2] Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. [3] Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which *was* at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. [4] They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. [5] In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. [6] Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. [7] The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. *And* the king spake, and said to the wise *men* of Babylon,

Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. [8] Then came in all the king's wise *men*: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. [9] Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

I. A MAN'S THOUGHTS

-To many men, thinking is a very unusual undertaking. This is particularly true when it comes to the concept of thinking about spiritual matters.

- Matters about life.
- Matters about death.
- Matters about where we go after we die.
- Matters about what it will be like to face God at the judgment.
- Matters about whether there is a Heaven or a Hell.

-Those thoughts very rarely surface in the mind of a man. He is too busy, too distracted, or even too careless to consider such a thing.

-Yet the one thing that separates man from the animal world is his ability to think.

-In this age of great distraction and busyness, it is no wonder that when a man has the process of thinking forced upon him that he becomes troubled.

II. BELSHAZZAR

-This passage that we have read concerns a Babylonian king that was literally at the highest apex of his reign. It seemed as if everything he touched turned up gold. Worldly and material success was at his fingertips and he was greatly enjoying the fruit of his work.

-But the Bible tells us that his thoughts were troubled (5:6)! Other translations render it like this:

Amplified—his [terrifying] thoughts troubled and alarmed him.

Concordant Literal Version—his ruminations are flustering him

ESV—his thoughts alarmed him

A. Those Troubling Thoughts Were Unlikely

-Consider with me the thought that his thoughts never should have troubled him at all. He was a man who was a king and he literally had to answer to no one. He was focused on serving himself and doing every single thing to serve himself.

-Given his position in life, it was not very likely that his thoughts would trouble him. He had too much going for him or so he thought.

-In acting in this particular way, over the course of time, Belshazzar had become very irresponsible and reckless in his approach to ruling in the Babylonian kingdom. Belshazzar is not alone in this kind of behavior. History is filled with men who ruled their kingdoms with ruthlessness and a pride as if they were above life and thought they were above God.

-Joseph Stalin (Russia), Adolf Hitler (Germany), and Mao Tse-Tung (China) together were responsible for killing over twenty million people.

-Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic are perhaps some of the more recent dictators who ruled with an iron fist that ultimately led to their destruction.

-Yet Belshazzar according to Daniel 5:22-23 was a man who hardened his heart with pride. He was confronted by Daniel because of his behavior. He had taken the vessels from the Temple and used them for his drunken party.

-Daniel said to him, “You have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven.”

-Belshazzar’s drunkenness had gotten the best of him and the company he was running with was not the most virtuous of people (5:2).

-The trouble was that he had abused the sacred vessels in the carnival-like party atmosphere as an expression of his contempt for the God of Israel. He despised God and he walked it out by drinking wine from them.

- No man is rendered wise or thoughtful by the wine-cup.
- No man, no matter how drunk on wine or life, is out of reach of the arrows of God.
- No man has a conscience so dead that it cannot be smitten by God.

B. His Thoughts Turned on Him

-Even though it was not likely that his thoughts would trouble him, they soon turned on him.

Daniel 5:5 KJV In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

-What Belshazzar saw was appalling to him. Someone had turned the whole wall into a screen and a huge hand begins to write on it that screen. That someone was God. Belshazzar saw the hand but it was a great mystery to him.

- Where was the hand?
- Where was the writer?
- What had been written?
- What did it mean?

-Suddenly what had been a drunken atmosphere of fleeting happiness and base debauchery had turned on him in such a way that he began to think.

- He began to think about what he had done.
- He began to think about the cruel wars of conquest he had been involved in.

- He began to think about the heavy oppression he had placed on the people of his kingdom.
- He began to think of his blasphemies toward God.
- He began to think of his sinful vices that he thought he would get away with.

-What he had literally failed to do came to haunt him. What was it that he had failed to do? The answer is in Daniel 5:23:

Daniel 5:23 KJV But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: **and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:**

-What he had failed to do appeared before him. His very actions started troubling him.

-But up until that point, Belshazzar had lived in a land where most men live. . . They live in a place beyond where their thoughts can trouble them.

III. WHAT ABOUT US?

A. Do Your Thoughts Trouble You?

-Far too often most who are sinners live beyond the reach of their thoughts. So my question to you is this: *Do you think your thoughts might trouble you?*

-Most Americans are prosperous whether they think they are or not. We are like Belshazzar in that somewhere there are some beasts that we have ready for the slaughter.

-But despite that, we often trifle and fool around with holy things. I dare say that there are people who have been coming to this church for years have never been truly converted. I am also certain that there are some who have only been coming for a short period of time that are lost.

-There is such a mixture with the world and with unholy things that it has worked like the wine that Belshazzar drank on that fateful day. He did not know it then but it was the very last day he would live. But Belshazzar was drunk on wine, drunk on life, drunk on immorality, and drunk on what just passes through so fleetingly.

-Belshazzar neglected, ridiculed, and mocked the holy things and had very little seriousness about God until his thoughts began to trouble him.

-Belshazzar should have been troubled by the history of Nebuchadnezzar or at least he should have been instructed by it but he wasn't.

B. A Holy Hand Has Written This Book

-That hand writing on the wall was against him on that night. It was a sacred writing, it was a holy writing, and it was a spiritual writing. Just like those things that are written in the Bible, sacred words have been written for our instruction or for our destruction.

John 3:3-5 KJV Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. [4] Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? [5] Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Acts 2:36-39 KJV Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that

same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. [37] Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? [38] Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. [39] For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Acts 17:30 KJV And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Matthew 3:2 KJV And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

-What will you do with those things? The hand is not writing on a wall but it has written in this Book. . . There is one other. . .

Galatians 5:19-21 KJV Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, [20] Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, [21] Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of

the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

IV. CONCLUSION—A TROUBLED CONSCIENCE

-In honest confession, I am doing my best to take this Book and trouble your thoughts today. I want your conscience to trouble you as it never has before. I want you to be converted!

McCosh—As the ant-hill, when stirred, sets in motion its living insects in every direction, so the conscience of the sinner, disturbed by the Spirit of God, calls up before its vision thousands of deeds which fill the soul with agony and woe.

-Some of the old historians have written about scenes from the battlefields even up to the most recent ones. However, those old battlefields of Vietnam and prior to those are witness to men who in their great state of injury suddenly decided that the matter of their soul was of great importance.

When Charles IX of France was in his youth he was a very kind young man. Time passed and he began his reign, soon his mother began to tempt him to destroy the Huguenots who were

among the first Protestants who opposed the state religion. He shrank back in horror at her suggestion. “No, no Mother, I cannot do that! They are the faithful subjects God has entrusted to me.”

But she kept up her persistent plea until finally on St. Bartholomew’s Eve, he engaged in one of history’s worst massacres and destroyed masses of the Huguenots. But that single action caught up with him when he was on his death-bed. To the doctor trying to sedate him, Charles IX cried out, “Asleep or awake, I see the mangled forms of the Huguenots passing before me. They drip with blood. They make hideous faces at me. They point to their open wounds and mock me. Oh, that I had spared at least the little ones!” Then historians have recorded that he broke out in agonizing cries and screams. Bloody sweat oozed from the pores of his skin.

He was one of the few cases in history that is recorded to have a similar experience that happened to the Lord in Gethesemane. It was the fruit of resisting, years before the presence of his troubled conscience.

-What shall we do? Come to Jesus. . .

Weak and wounded sinner
Lost and left to die
O, raise your head, for love is passing by
Come to Jesus
Come to Jesus
Come to Jesus and live!

Now your burden's lifted
And carried far away
And precious blood has washed away the stain, so
Sing to Jesus
Sing to Jesus
Sing to Jesus and live!

And like a newborn baby
Don't be afraid to crawl
And remember when you walk
Sometimes we fall...so
Fall on Jesus
Fall on Jesus
Fall on Jesus and live!

Sometimes the way is lonely
And steep and filled with pain
So if your sky is dark and pours the rain, then
Cry to Jesus
Cry to Jesus
Cry to Jesus and live!

O, and when the love spills over
And music fills the night
And when you can't contain your joy inside, then
Dance for Jesus
Dance for Jesus
Dance for Jesus and live!

And with your final heartbeat
Kiss the world goodbye
Then go in peace, and laugh on Glory's side, and
Fly to Jesus
Fly to Jesus
Fly to Jesus and live!