

Daniel: Faithful in a Foreign Land

A Banquet in the Grave

Daniel 5:1-31

“The writing is on the wall”

“there are clear, obvious signs that something bad, unsuccessful, or inevitable is about to happen”

5 King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords
and drank wine in front of the thousand. 2 Belshazzar, when he
tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver
that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in
Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and
his concubines might drink from them. 3 Then they brought in the
golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house
of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and
his concubines drank from them.

4 They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver,
bronze, iron, wood, and stone. 5 Immediately the fingers of a
human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the
king's palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the
hand as it wrote. 6 Then the king's color changed, and his
thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees
knocked together. . . . 30 That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean
king was killed. 31 And Darius the Mede received the kingdom,
being about sixty-two years old.

- Daniel 5:1-7, 30


THE
HOUSE
OF
WISDOM



13 The woman Folly is loud; she is seductive and knows
nothing.14 She sits at the door of her house; she takes a seat on
the highest places of the town, 15 calling to those who pass
by, who are going straight on their way, 16 “Whoever is simple, let
him turn in here!” And to him who lacks sense she says,
17 “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.”
18 But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests
are in the depths of Sheol.

- Proverbs 9:13-18

Daniel 5

Main Idea: The writing is on the wall, but that is not the end of the story.

- **vss 1-6:** A Banquet in the Grave
- **vss 13-16:** Folly of the World vs the Wisdom of God
- **vss 17-23:** Daniel Delivers God's verdict
- **vss 24-31:** Daniel Interprets the writing on the wall

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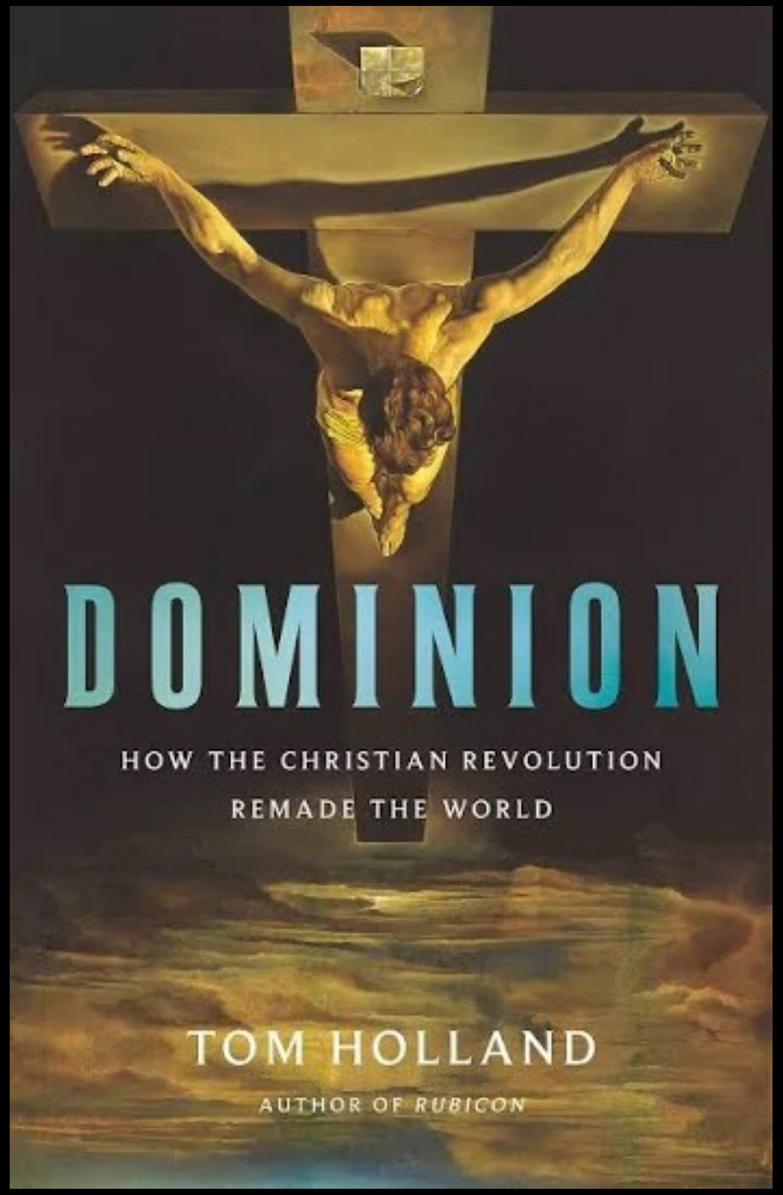
- Daniel 5:1-4

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lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. 6 Then the
king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs
gave way, and his knees knocked together.

- Daniel 5:5-6

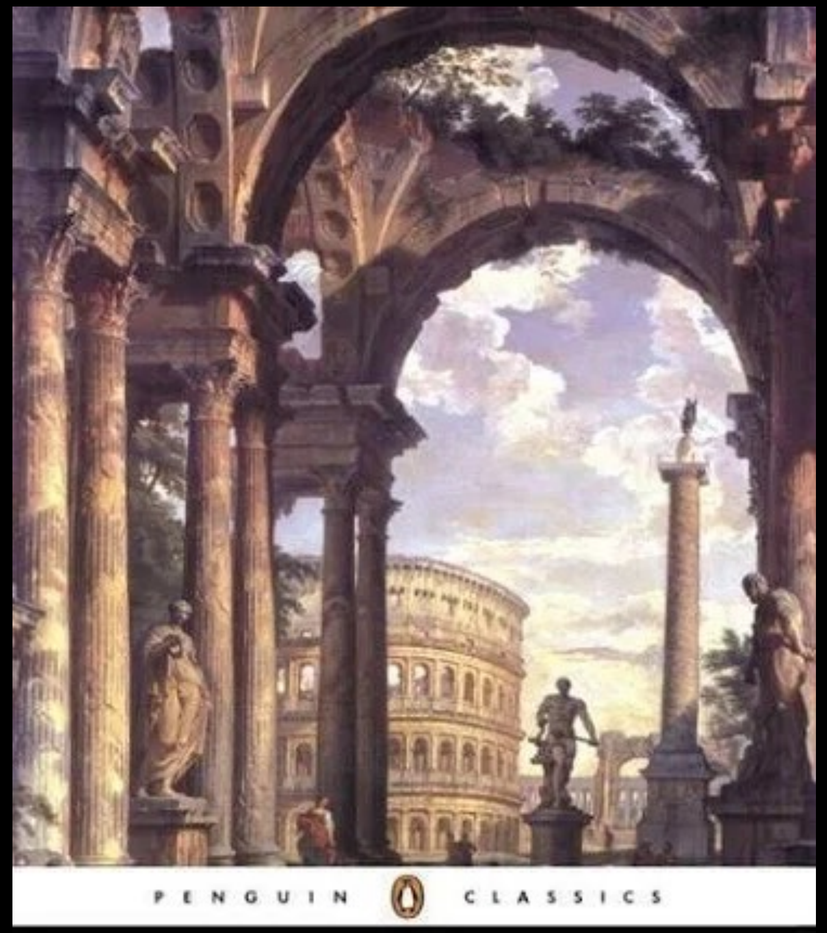
“People in the West, even those who may imagine that they have emancipated themselves from Christian belief, in fact, are shot through with Christian assumptions about almost everything. . . All of us in the West are a goldfish, and the water that we swim in is Christianity, by which I don’t necessarily mean the confessional form of the faith, but, rather, considered as an entire civilisation.”

- Tom Holland, “Dominion”



“The luxury of the Romans was more shameless and dissolute... their profuse luxury must have been the result of that indolent despair which enjoys the present hour and declines the thoughts of futurity.”

- Edward Gibbon, “The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire”



Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, 30 would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, 31 therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices.

- Proverbs 1:29-30

13 Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king
answered and said to Daniel, “You are that Daniel, one of the
exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah.
14 I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and
that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in
you. 15 Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in
before me to read this writing and make known to me its
interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the
matter. 16 But I have heard that you can give interpretations and
solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known
to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have
a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in
the kingdom.”

- Daniel 5:13-16

My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, 2 making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; 3 yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, 4 if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, 5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

- Proverbs 2:1-5

“Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. . .

22 And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, 23 but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.

- Daniel 5:17, 22-23

God’s Verdict on Belshazzar

- Lifted yourself against the Lord of heaven.
- You blasphemed his holy objects.
- Praised the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood and stone.

God's Verdict on ALL Humanity

- **Lifted yourself against the Lord of heaven.**
    - Sin is rejecting the creator and setting ourselves up in His place.

- **You blasphemed his holy objects.**
    - Sin is taking what God has set apart for his purposes and using it for our own. (talents, money, energy, YOU)

- **Praised the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood and stone.**
    - Sin is turning to worship creation instead of the creator.

24 “Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. 25 And this is the writing that was inscribed: Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. 26 This is the interpretation of the matter: Mene, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; 27 Tekel, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; 28 Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

- Daniel 5:24-28

The Interpretation

- **Mene (“numbered”),** God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end;
- **Tekel (“weighed”),** you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting;
- **Peres (“divided”),** your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

30 That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. 31 And
Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two
years old.

— Daniel 5:30

Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

- 1 Cor.10:11

“The Writing on the Wall”

- **Mene, mene:** Your days are numbered.
- **Tekel:** You have been measured and found wanting
- **Parsin:** Your kingdom will be taken from you.

“I would have every man put himself into the divine scales. These scales are true to a hair--one grain of sand will tip them. On one side of the scale, I put only one commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength,” and I invite any man who… flatters himself that he has no need of mercy, no need of washing in the blood of Jesus Christ, no need of atonement—to put himself into the scales, and see whether he measures up to just this one command.

Oh, my friends, if we did but weigh ourselves against the very first commandment of the law, we would have to acknowledge ourselves as hopelessly guilty. And then as we begin to drop in the weight of the other commandments, until the whole sacred Ten are there, there is not a man under the scope of heaven who has anything less to say, but must confess that he is woefully short of the mark.”

— Charles Spurgeon, Daniel 5 sermon

But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

- Jesus, Luke 11:20

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God…”

- 1 Peter 3:18

28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

- John 10:28-29

Jesus Rewrites “The Writing on the Wall”

WITHOUT CHRIST	THROUGH CHRIST
My days are numbered.	My days are in God’s hands.
I am weighed and found wanting.	Christ’s righteousness is credited to me.
Judgment is coming.	There is no condemnation in Christ.
Death and separation.	Eternal life and assurance.