

# How Daniel Got His Name Back

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May 2015

*Not all Bible stories draw attention to themselves. Sometimes God tells us other stories behind the obvious ones.*

*The book of Daniel is a good example. It begins when a young man named Daniel is taken to Babylon as a prisoner and the king tries to destroy everything that his new slave used to be. He starts by changing his name.*

*But God had other plans for Daniel. This story from the 5th chapter of Daniel, a story from which we get the phrase “the Writing is on the Wall,” tells more than one story...*

When the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, conquered Jerusalem,  
he plundered the Temple of God  
and carried away its holy riches.  
He also captured many Jews  
and took them back to Babylon as slaves.  
He chose some of the young men from Israel’s noble families  
to be trained in the wisdom of Babylon and its gods  
so they could be royal servants to the King.

One of these young men was Daniel.  
The King renamed him Belteshazzar.  
But although Daniel learned all the King asked of him,  
he remained true to his God,  
the One True God of Israel,  
and because of that  
God blessed him in every way  
and even forced the proud King to recognize  
the One True God of Babylon.

But the King still called Daniel Belteshazzar.

After many years the King died  
and a new king, King Belshazzar, came to power.  
He ignored Daniel and his God;  
instead, he brought out the holy gold cups  
taken from the Temple in Jerusalem  
and threw a big party to honor himself and his gods.

In the midst of his party  
    the fingers of a human hand appeared  
        and began to write something on the wall.  
The King was so terrified that he collapsed in fear.  
He called all his magicians and fortune tellers and astrologers.  
“Can any of you tell me what this writing says?  
    I will make the man who can  
        the third most powerful ruler in Babylon!”  
But try as they might,  
    none of them could read the writing on the wall...

And this terrified the King even more. His face turned white  
    and his advisors began to fear for their lives.

But when King Belshazzar’s mother heard about it,  
    she ran to the banquet hall and bowed before him.  
“Listen to me, my son!  
    There is a man in your kingdom who can help!  
With his great wisdom  
    he guided Nebuchadnezzar for many years.  
The former king called him Belteshazzar  
    but his real name is Daniel.  
Send for Daniel, my son;  
    he can tell you what this means.”

So the King sent for him and, when he arrived,  
    the King asked, “Are you Daniel?  
    Can you tell me what this writing says? If so,  
    I will make you the third most powerful ruler in Babylon!”

Daniel frowned and said,  
    “I don’t want your gifts...  
        but I will tell you what the writing says.

“God gave great power to Nebuchadnezzar,  
    the king before you,  
but Nebuchadnezzar was proud and would not honor God  
    so God humbled him  
until he learned to worship the One True God.

Nebuchadnezzar was king before you, O great Belshazzar,  
and you knew all about this  
but still refused to humble yourself before God  
and recognize him as the Lord of All...  
so God has rejected you as king.

Here is what the writing says:

*MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN.*

*MENE* means your days as king are numbered;  
*TEKEL* means you do not measure up to what God wants;  
And *PARSIN* means your kingdom will taken from you  
and divided amongst the Medes and the Persians."

So Belshazzar dressed Daniel in royal robes  
and appointed him the third most powerful ruler in Babylon...  
but it was his last act as king.  
That very night Babylon was invaded,  
King Belshazzar was killed,  
and Darius the Mede became the new King of Babylon.

And from the day that Darius became king  
Daniel became his most trusted advisor...

**And he was never called Belteshazzar again.**