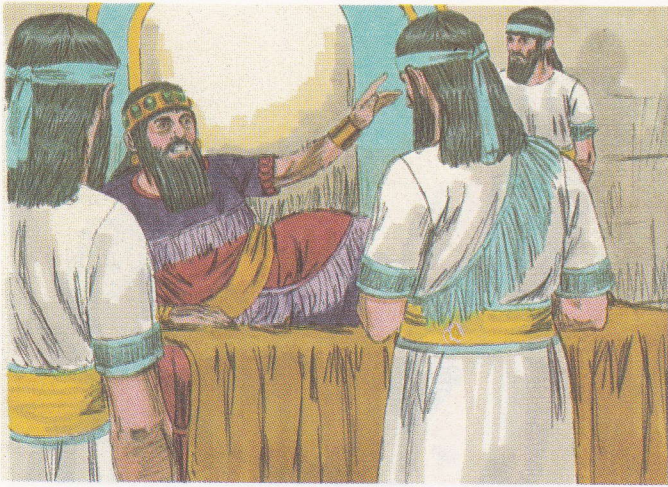


The Writing on the Wall



1 Nebuchadnezzar became ill and was unable to rule over the kingdom of Babylon. So his son Belshazzar became king in his place. One night Belshazzar had a very strange experience.



2 As he drank his wine at a banquet, he had an idea. He ordered his servants to bring the gold and silver cups which his father had taken from the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem.



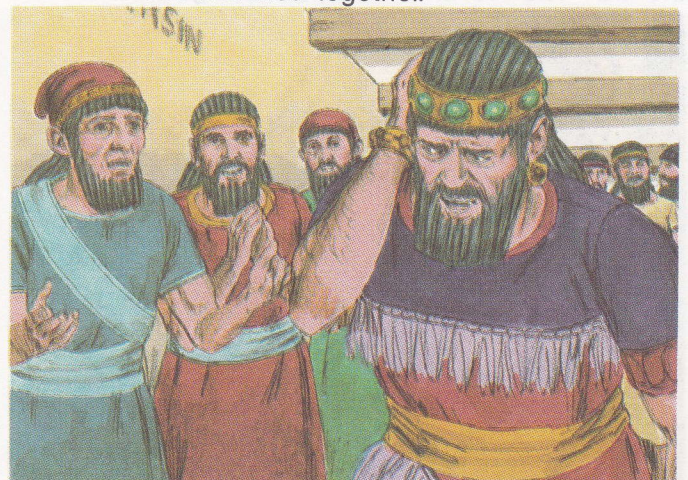
3 Then the king and his guests drank wine from the cups taken from the Lord's temple, and they praised their gods — idols made of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone.



4 Suddenly Belshazzar saw a human hand writing something on the wall of the banquet hall. He was terrified at the sight. His face turned white and his knees knocked together.



5 Immediately he called for his wise men. "Who can explain this writing? I will give him a purple robe and a golden chain. And I will make him third in command of the kingdom."



6 But none of his wise men or advisers could figure out what the writing meant. This made Belshazzar even more afraid. His guests at the banquet were very confused.



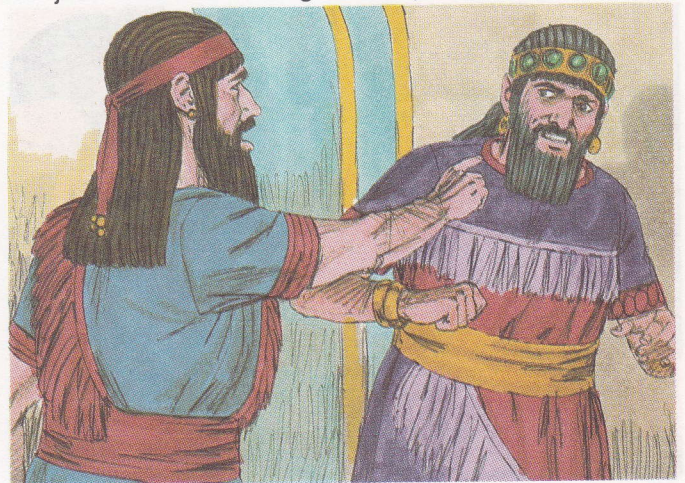
7 Just then the king's mother came in. When she heard what had happened, she said, "Your father made a man named Daniel chief of advisers because of his wisdom. He'll be able to explain it."



8 So Belshazzar called for Daniel and gave him the same promises he had given his wise men. But Daniel said, "I do not want any of these gifts. I will just read the writing and explain it to you."



9 "God made your father a great king. But he became too proud, so his glory and power were taken away. He lived like an animal until he admitted that even kings are under God's rule."



10 "Even though you knew all this, you drank wine from the cups of the temple and worshiped idols made of metal and stone. You did not honor the God who has power over your very life."



11 "This is God's message: MENE means your kingdom is coming to an end. TEKEL means you have fallen short. And PARSIN means your kingdom will be given to the Medes and Persians."



12 Belshazzar then gave Daniel the purple robe and golden chain and made him third in command. That very night Belshazzar was killed, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom.