



Life's Greatest Mistake

What is life's greatest mistake? What is life's most foolish decision? The greatest mistake in life is not to make mistakes – it is to fail to learn from the mistakes we make. Life's most foolish decision is to ignore the warnings of God. It is to repeatedly violate our conscience, reject God's counsel, and turn our backs on His instruction. It is to walk away from the opportunities God gives us.

Belshazzar's Night of Pleasure

Belshazzar's grandfather had committed his life to the true God. The prophet Daniel had lived in truth shone upon Belshazzar, but he foolishly rejected it. A day of judgment was approaching much faster than he realized. Belshazzar learned, as we must, that one thing is for certain: there is a day of judgment for us all.

The sacred vessels from the temple at Jerusalem were dedicated for use in Israel's worship services of the true God. It was blasphemous to defile these holy goblets by filling them with intoxicating wine at a drunken Babylonian orgy. The king crossed God's boundary line. Judgment was about to fall.

The Divine Interruption

The king was shocked. His countenance changed. His stomach muscles tightened. He was seized with terror. His entire body shook nervously. His thoughts raced with fear. He knew something had gone terribly wrong, but he wasn't sure what it was. "What terrible event," he wondered, "does the writing on the wall foretell?"

Belshazzar failed to learn from the past. The so-called wise men of Babylon had failed Nebuchadnezzar, and they would fail him, too.

In Daniel 5:10, the queen finally encouraged the king to call for Daniel. Some translations say, "Queen-Mother." Evidently she was not Belshazzar's wife. She was an older woman, a mother figure in the empire, most likely Nebuchadnezzar's wife. She knew from personal experience the life-giving power of God. She also knew that God had used Daniel in the past and that He would use him again.

Daniel served as a statesman in Babylon for seventy years. His sterling reputation was well known. His wisdom in political affairs had influenced the nation repeatedly. In view of all this, Belshazzar, in a drunken stupor, attempted to demean Daniel by implying that he was merely an Israelite captive. In a desperate attempt to understand the mysterious writing, Belshazzar offered Daniel lavish rewards if he could explain the significance of these strange words.

Daniel could not be bought! His services were not for sale. His one motive was to serve God. His one ambition was the honor of God's kingdom. Daniel took this opportunity to review God's attempts to save Babylon. Throughout Babylon's history, God gave it repeated opportunities to know His will. In a variety of ways, God knocked on Babylon's door. Those opportunities were now quickly coming to a close; the door of mercy, open for seventy years, was soon to shut. The Babylonians had hardened their hearts, and there was little God could do except to give them up to their own selfish desires.

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Belshazzar knew what was right, but he didn't do it! He turned his back on the light God gave him. He chose darkness rather than light.

Babylon's sin was so great because the Babylonians openly rebelled against God when they knew better. Our world today is following the same course.

There is a last night for everyone and everything on earth. There is an invisible line we cannot cross without suffering the consequences. Judgment once again will fall on our society. When the accumulated figures of sin reach a certain amount, God says, "It's enough." In the days of Noah, wicked men sealed their destiny. During Sodom and Gomorrah's time, the accumulated results of sin sealed the city's doom, and heaven's fiery judgment fell. So it will be in the last days.

Our Lord invites us to come to Him now. The enticing "pleasures" of sin just are not worth it. His arms are open now. His mercy is available now. His grace touches us now. Does His Spirit impress you now? Why make the same tragic mistake of Belshazzar? Don't delay; give Him your life today!

One day soon there will be a day of reckoning, a day of accountability, and a day of earth's final judgment. Soon every individual will make his or her final decision. The choices you make today are setting your eternal destiny.

Daniel 5:1	The feast of Belshazzar the King.
Daniel 5:2-5	Belshazzar brings in the golden vessels taken from the temple of God.
Daniel 5:5-6	Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall.
Daniel 5:7-10	The King calls for the Astrologers, Chaldeans, and Soothsayers to interpret the writing on the wall, but they could not.
James 1:5	Any of you who lack wisdom, let him ask of God.
Daniel 5:9-13	The Queen comes in and suggests Daniel be called to interpret the dream.
Daniel 5:13-14	Belshazzar mocks Daniel as being a slave, and yet God blesses him.
Daniel 5:16	The King tries to bribe Daniel into giving the interpretation to him.
Daniel 5:17	Daniel refuses the gifts, he will not be bought!
Daniel 5:18-28	Daniel interprets the dream to Belshazzar.