

“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream.”—Daniel 7:1 NIV

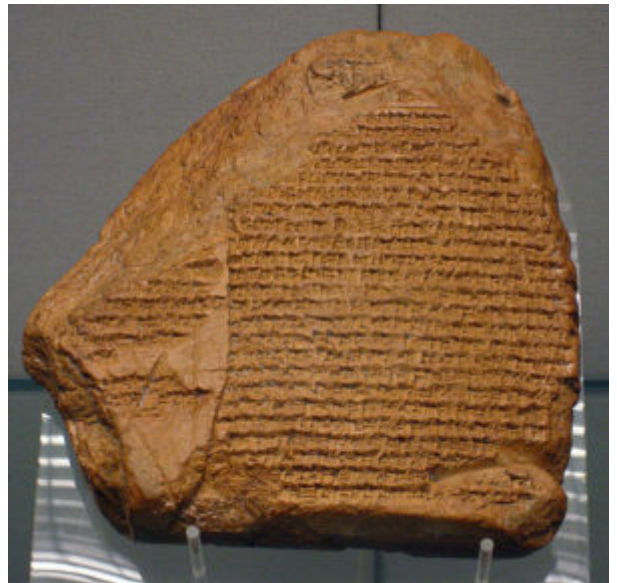
“In the third year of King Belshazzar’s reign, I, Daniel, had a vision.”—Daniel 8:1 NIV

“King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them.”—Daniel 5:1 NIV

“Nebuchadnezzar his father”—Daniel 5:2 NAB

“His predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar”—Daniel 5:2 NLT

Until the 1870’s, Daniel (and works dependent on it) was the only source of information about Belshazzar. Critics, therefore, claimed that Daniel’s references to Belshazzar were fiction, and the author of Daniel was a fraud. At that time, all other extant sources said Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon. Critics were silenced when archival texts began to be discovered in Babylon, beginning with the Nabonidus Chronicle, which was written shortly after Babylon’s capture by the Medes and Persians in 539 BCE. Today, Belshazzar is well-authenticated as a historic personage through archaeological discoveries and studies. In fact, at least 37 archival texts have been discovered naming Belshazzar, proving he was a real person, and revealing his position to be exactly what the Bible says it to be, ruler of Babylon during his father’s extended absence, in the final years of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.



Cyrus of Persia reveals his exceedingly low estimation of the character of Belshazzar in the Nabonidus Chronicle

Even though Belshazzar is always referred to as “son of the king” in Assyrian sources, Belshazzar exercised all the functions of kingship, including receiving tribute, granting leases and attending to the upkeep of temples, as attested in several business letters and contracts contemporary to his reign. A Babylonian text, the Verse Account of Nabonidus, says that Nabonidus put the military troops under Belshazzar’s command and entrusted the kingship to him before departing to the west. Actually, during almost the entire ten-year rule of Belshazzar, his father, Nabonidus, was ‘out of town’, which left Belshazzar to ‘run of the place’, exactly like what is portrayed in Daniel.

“Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means . . . will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”—[Daniel 5:7 NIV](#)

“If you can read this writing and tell me what it means . . . you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”—[Daniel 5:16 NIV](#)

“Then, at Belshazzar’s command, Daniel . . . was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”—[Daniel 5:29 NIV](#)

The fact that Belshazzar could only offer and make Daniel “the third highest ruler in the kingdom” proves that Daniel had accurate, firsthand knowledge of Belshazzar and his father, King Nabonidus. The Nabonidus Chronicle and other documents which have been discovered, explain the absence of King Nabonidus from Babylon, and his son Belshazzar being the regent, or crown prince, that he left in charge of Babylon, giving him royal authority. Therefore, historical documents discovered confirm that Belshazzar was the second highest ruler in the kingdom, just as Daniel implied.

“Under the influence of the wine, he (Belshazzar) gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets . . . taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king, his wives and his concubines might drink from them.”—[Daniel 5:2 NAB](#)

In the Nabonidus Chronicle, Cyrus of Persia reveals his exceedingly low estimation of the character of Belshazzar, which is not at all out of harmony with the Biblical account.

Since Babylonian records reveal there were several kings between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, critics have claimed that **Daniel 5** contains historical inaccuracies. Nebuchadnezzar is called Belshazzar's "**predecessor**" ("**father**") six times in **Daniel chapter 5 (v 2,11,13,18)**, and "**king Belshazzar**" is called Nebuchadnezzar's "**successor**" ("**son**") once (**v 22**). This is the way that Semitic languages, such as the Aramaic in which chapter 5 is written, used the term "**father**" to designate one's father, grandfather, ancestor, or, in the case of kings, the immediate predecessor. Likewise, the term "**son**" may mean one's immediate offspring, grandson, descendent, to the ancestor.

Thus, the discoveries made during the last 150 years about Belshazzar, have not only proved Bible critics wrong, more importantly, demonstrate how unwise it is to challenge the Bible, because it is God's word (**John 17:17**)! Contrast this with other "sacred" books, such as the Book of Mormon, which have no archaeological evidence that supports their claims.

**"God will always be true, even if no human being can be relied on"—Romans 3:4
NJB**