

# Daniel 5:10-12

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*The Queen arrives and reminds Belshazzar of Daniel, who was famous for having insight and godly wisdom. Daniel can help in this situation, because he always accurately interpreted the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar.*

After worshipping man-made idols and drinking wine from the Jerusalem temple vessels, Belshazzar witnessed a bodiless hand write words into the palace wall. King Belshazzar's wise men were called upon but failed to read and interpret the writing on the wall. The king is deeply disturbed and does not know how to make sense of the writing.

His nobles and magicians are equally perplexed. The *queen*, however, has a solution. She enters *the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles*. It does not appear that the queen was present for the feasting and drinking. She is probably Belshazzar's mother, not his wife, because his wives and concubines participated in drinking from the Jerusalem vessels (v. 2-3). This queen enters into the hall after learning of the writing, and hearing that no one could interpret it. She says, "*O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale.*" She tries to calm her son in his state of panic.

There is further evidence she is Belshazzar's mother in what she says next, "*There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods.*" The queen is referring to Daniel. She is familiar with Daniel, yet it seems no one else is. At this point in time, Daniel is an old man. He is said to be *in Belshazzar's kingdom*, rather than his court, so Daniel is living in relative obscurity in his old age. When regimes change or new leaders take control of governments, the old courts and cabinets are often done away with.

But Daniel, says the queen, has the *spirit of the holy gods*, meaning he has a connection with the divine. She explains that *in the days of Belshazzar's father* (or forefather), Daniel was known for his *illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods*. Daniel's political prominence has all but disappeared, only to be remembered by the aging queen. She reminds her son of Daniel's career: *King Nebuchadnezzar appointed Daniel chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans and diviners*. Daniel was trusted and consulted more than any other advisor during Nebuchadnezzar's reign. The same occupations are listed here as the men whom Belshazzar summoned: *magicians, Chaldeans* (astrologers), and *diviners*. Daniel served Nebuchadnezzar better than the wise men of his day, and Belshazzar's own wise men have just failed to serve their king, so it is logical to call up Daniel.

The queen continues to list Daniel's qualifications, showing why he was so revered: he had *an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and he solved difficult problems*. If anyone can interpret the writing on the wall, it is Daniel, *whom the king named Belteshazzar*. This name is coincidentally close to the King's name, Belshazzar. Belshazzar essentially means, "Bel, protect the king." Bel was one of the names of the Babylonian god Marduk. Daniel's Babylonian name also seems to be derived from Bel, as

referenced in Daniel 4:8, “whose name is Beltshazzar according to the name of Nebuchadnezzar's god.” Beltshazzar probably has a similar meaning, “Bel, protect the king.” This was a name imposed upon Daniel, whose Hebrew name means “God is my judge.” Although Daniel served well in Babylon all his life in captivity, he always only obeyed and worshipped the Most High God of Judah. His true name, represented his true identity.

The queen concludes that *Daniel should be summoned because he will declare the interpretation.*

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>10</sup> The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; the queen spoke and said, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale. <sup>11</sup> There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans *and* diviners. <sup>12</sup> *This was* because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Beltshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation.”**