

Daniel 5:25-28

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/dan/dan-5/daniel-525-28/>

The meaning of the words, MENĒ, MENĒ, TEKĒL, UPHARSIN, is that God will bring Belshazzar's kingdom to an end because He has judged Belshazzar as an unfit ruler. Therefore, God will give Babylon to the Medes and the Persians.

Daniel has explained to Belshazzar why a mysterious hand appeared and carved words into the wall. While feasting, Belshazzar exalted himself against the Most High God by drinking from the Jerusalem temple vessels and praising idols of rock, metal, and wood. He ignored the lesson of humility learned by the former king Nebuchadnezzar, he insulted God rather than glorify Him, and so God sent a message by carving words into the court's wall.

At last, Daniel explains the meaning of the words. The *interpretation of the message* is clear and to the point.

MENĒ, MENĒ, TEKĒL, UPHARSIN is the *inscription that was written out* on the wall. These are Aramaic words of measurement. The first two words refer to weights (a TEKĒL, or shekel, was a monetary unit; a MENĒ was the weight of 50 shekels). UPHARSIN (or 'and pharsin') means "a half," referring to a half mina (25 shekels). Though they are written on the wall as nouns, "a mene, a mene, a shekel, and a half-mene," Daniel sees their meaning through their verbal forms: Menâh (to number), teqāl (to weigh), peres (to divide).

God has made a decision:

MENĒ— from the verb menâh, which means 'to number or to reckon.' This means *God has numbered* the lifespan of Belshazzar's *kingdom* and has decided to *put an end to it*.

The reason for God's decision:

'*TEKĒL*'— from the verb teqāl, which means 'to weigh.' Belshazzar has *been weighed on the scales* of God's judgement and *found deficient*. By God's reckoning, Belshazzar falls short as a ruler. This is why his kingdom is being ended.

The fate of the kingdom is revealed in the final word:

PERĒS—a simple form of the same word *PHARSIN*, meaning 'to divide.' Belshazzar's *kingdom* has *been divided* and *given over to the Medes and Persians*. "

Babylon is finished as an empire. God has numbered its days, judged Belshazzar as deficient, and will give Babylon over to the Medes and Persians.

Biblical Text

²⁵ “Now this is the inscription that was written out: ‘MENĒ, MENĒ, TEKĒL, UPHARSIN.’

²⁶ This is the interpretation of the message: ‘MENĒ’—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. ²⁷ ‘TEKĒL’—you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient.

²⁸ ‘PERĒS’—your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.”