

# Kids' Chronicle

THURSDAY, February 11, 1993

VOLUME II, ISSUE NO. 3

BY CINDY BASSETT

## The writing on the wall

There was nothing special about today. It wasn't a holiday, someone's birthday or even the weekend. Yet, even so, King Belshazzar had decided to throw another big party. It didn't matter to him that other kings would be remembered for building splendid monuments or winning impressive wars against their enemies. The way things were going, he would be known forever as the party king.

Tonight he had invited over one thousand of his nobles and army officers. For the past two hours, they had taken the finest wine in the kingdom and toasted everyone and everything.

Suddenly, King Belshazzar stood up at the head table and announced loudly, "I'm bored."

"Perhaps we could play some of those games you're so fond of," someone said.

The king yawned. "No, I'm tired of those, too."

"Why don't we sing some of those silly songs?" one of his nobles offered.

King Belshazzar grinned. "That might be amusing, but I have an even better idea. Where are those fancy goblets that King Nebuchadnezzar brought back with him when he conquered the Hebrews in Jerusalem?" he asked the chief servant.

The servant looked uneasy. "You mean the sacred vessels from the Temple in Jerusalem?"

"Exactly, go and fetch them for me."

As soon as the king saw the servant returning with the goblets, he proclaimed, "Let us drink to our

gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and any others we can think of!"

It was strictly forbidden to disagree with the king. But, in this instance, his servant felt he must speak up. "Your majesty, these holy vessels are reserved for the Hebrew God. Using them as you suggest would be a great offense."

"Give them to me!" King Belshazzar snapped as he grabbed one of the goblets.

Soon everyone joined in the revelry until a shriek from a corner of the room abruptly silenced them. "Look, over there! I see a hand on the wall!"

"It must be a shadow from the lamp stand," someone said.

"No, there are fingers of a hand and they are writing something," the person who had screamed insisted.

The crowd was speechless until the fingers stopped writing and vanished, leaving four words scrawled on the wall: "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Peres."

"What does it mean?" someone asked.

"Wash it off," another suggested.

"No!" King Belshazzar shouted when he finally found his voice. "Bring in my royal astrologers and magicians. Whoever explains the message will receive a handsome reward and become the third ruler in my kingdom!"

But no one could interpret the words. Then someone remembered Daniel, a Hebrew, who had been brought to Babylon as a slave. "Daniel is known as a prophet. Maybe he can help."

"Keep your gifts," Daniel said fla-



Illustrations by Kathy Welsh

tly when he was brought before King Belshazzar. "You've made a serious mistake as king. No matter how grand you think your kingdom is, it is God who rules the world and everything in it!"

Then pointing to the wall, Daniel said, "Mene: God has numbered your days as king. Tekel: You have been weighed on God's scales and found lacking. Peres: Your kingdom will be divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

Read More About It: Book of Daniel, Chapter 5.

### Q & A

1. Why was King Belshazzar such a bad ruler?
2. Name some leaders today who have abused their power.

## The Bible Times

539 B.C.

Babylon — King Darius, the Mede, has assumed the throne in Babylon after his troops conquered the capital city in a surprise attack yesterday.

Babylon fell in a short time with little resistance. Formerly it was thought that the high double walls that surround the city made such assaults relatively impossible.

According to sources, however, there were no guards on duty at the time of the attack. King Belshazzar, who was slain during the raid on the palace, was hosting a banquet last night for his nobles.

A former noble, who refused to be identified, claimed that a mysterious message suddenly appeared on a palace wall just before the attack. Daniel, a Hebrew prophet summoned to explain the words, predicted that King Belshazzar's reign would come to an end because of his poor judgment and refusal to honor God.

King Belshazzar's former nobles have all retreated into the mountain areas surrounding the city.

### The life of Daniel

Daniel was a prophet who lived during the time when the Hebrews were taken to Babylon to serve as slaves. The Babylonians worshipped many false gods. Even though Daniel was tested many times, he refused to give up his faith in God. Use the Scripture references below to help you answer the questions below. Answer key on page 17.

1. Names of Daniel's 3 friends who were trained with him to serve the king. (Daniel 1)
2. What was the only food that Daniel wanted to eat for 10 days instead of the royal food and wine? (Daniel 1)
3. What special ability did Daniel have? (Daniel 2)
4. What did King Nebuchadnezzar construct and command that everyone worship? (Daniel 3)
5. Daniel and his friends were put in here as punishment for not obeying this command of King Nebuchadnezzar. (Daniel 3) 6. Daniel was placed here by King Darius because he refused to stop praying to God. (Daniel 6)
7. Whom did God send to save Daniel from King Darius' punishment? (Daniel 6)

### Talking to God

Dear God

*Let me never forget that nothing we create in the world can ever compare with your eternal glory.*

"For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end."

Daniel 6:26

### King Solomon's Wisdom

"The wealth of the rich is their fortified city; they imagine it an unscalable wall. Before his downfall, a person's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor."

Proverbs 18:11-12

## Kids' Club

**Win a \$50 Savings Bond!!!**  
**Why does God test you?**  
 Write an answer of 100 or fewer words. Include your name, home address, telephone number, school and grade. The winner will earn a \$50 U.S. Savings Bond. The winner will be notified by phone. The essay will be printed in an upcoming edition of *Kids' Chronicle*. Send your entry to: Cindy Bassett, c/o *Catholic Courier*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.  
**Deadline for entries is Feb. 25, 1993.**

**THANKS TO OUR SAVINGS BOND DONOR:**  
 651 Plymouth Ave. N., Rochester, NY 14608  
 (716) 548-1740  
 Quality Sausage and Meat Products Since 1880

**THE AQUINAS INSTITUTE**  
*The Tradition Continues*  
 (716) 254-2020  
 1127 Dewey Ave., Rochester 14613

**BISHOP KEARNEY HIGH SCHOOL**  
 "An Education For Life."  
 342-4000  
 125 Kings Hwy. S. Rochester, 14617

**DeSales Regional High School**  
 In our 80th year of providing quality Catholic Education to young adults in the Finger Lakes.  
 315-789-5111  
 90 Putney Street, Geneva, 14456

**MCQUAID HIGH JESUIT SCHOOL**  
 Designated as an "Exemplary School" by the U.S. Dept. of Education  
 1800 S. Clinton Ave., Roch. 14618  
 (716) 473-1130

**HAZARETH SCHOOLS**  
 The Hall—The Academy  
 A Tradition You Can Trust  
 458-8583  
 458-3786

*Mercy*  
 Educating Today's Young Women for Tomorrow's World  
 Our Lady of Mercy H.S.  
 1437 Blossom Rd., Roch. 14610  
 288-7120