

Belshazzar: God Sovereign in Judgement

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we're going to turn to our Bibles now, to our reading this morning, which you'll find in Daniel chapter 5. If you have one of the Blue Vistos Bibles, it's page 742. And Paul began last week a very short series in the central chapters of Daniel, and three of these great kings that ruled the world in those days.

There's Nebuchadnezzar, and then his grandson, his successor, Belshazzar, and then King Darius.

So last week you looked at chapter 4, which ends with the great humbling and then the restoration of King Nebuchadnezzar, who came to know and understand the true and living God and proclaimed those extraordinary words in the last verse of chapter 4.

But here in chapter 5 we have a very different story indeed. King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of a thousand.

Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and silver that Nebuchadnezzar, his father, had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.

[1 : 2 3] And they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem. And the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.

They drank wine, and they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone. Immediately, the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace opposite the lampstand.

And the king saw the hand as it wrote. And then the king's color changed. His thoughts alarmed him. His limbs gave way. His knees knocked together. And the king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, the astrologers.

And the king declared to the wise men of Babylon, Whoever reads this writing and shows me its interpretation shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

And all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. And King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed.

[2 : 3 4] His color changed. And his lords were perplexed. The queen, perhaps the queen mother, as the footnote says, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall.

And the queen declared, O king, live forever. Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.

In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, made him chief of all the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers.

Because an excellent spirit, knowledge and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems, were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar.

Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation. Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered him and said to Daniel, You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king, my father, brought from Judah.

[3 : 42] I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing, to make known to me its interpretation.

But they could not show the interpretation of the matter. But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

And Daniel answered and said before the king, Let your gifts be for yourself and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation.

O king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar, your father, kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples and nations and languages trembled and feared before him.

Whom he would, he killed. And whom he would, he kept alive. Whom he would, he raised up. And whom he would, he humbled. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne.

[5 : 11] And his glory was taken from him. He was driven from among the children of mankind. And his mind was made like that of a beast. His dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox.

And his body was wet with the dew of heaven. Until he knew that the most high God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.

And you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this. But you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven.

And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you and your lords and your wives and your concubines. And they have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know.

But the God in whose hand is your breath and whose are all your ways you have not honored. Then from his presence, the hand was sent.

[6 : 21] And this writing was inscribed. And this is the writing that was inscribed. Mene, Mene, Tekel and Parson. This is the interpretation of the matter.

Mene, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end. Tekel, you have been weighed in the balances and find wanting.

Perez, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians. Then Belshazzar gave the command and Daniel was clothed with purple.

A chain of gold was put around his neck and a proclamation was made about him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. That very night, Belshazzar, the Chaldean king, was killed.

And Darius, the Mede, received the kingdom, being about 62 years old. Amen. May God bless to us his word.

[7 : 29] Good morning. Please do turn back to Daniel chapter 5, which we read a little earlier.

Daniel chapter 5. There's an old hymn by Joseph Alexander that begins with these words.

There is a line by us unseen that crosses every path, the hidden boundary between God's patience and his wrath.

Chapters 4 and 5 of Daniel illustrate that hidden boundary in glorious technicolor, don't they? Daniel chapter 5, as we saw last week, showed us the wonderful kindness and patience of the Lord toward King Nebuchadnezzar.

Things did work out for him in the end. But Daniel chapter 5 is a very different story. Sometimes things don't end well.

[8 : 43] Sometimes it is too late. And it was too late for King Belshazzar, who experienced God's wrath. It is a sobering chapter.

The hidden boundary between God's patience and his wrath. Sobering in content, but also sobering in the speed at which the events unfold.

I want you to imagine a series of images. Images that show a before and after. You know the sort of thing. You'll get them on TV after a natural disaster.

Showing a city before and after the earthquake or the tsunami has struck. Well imagine a series of photos showing the city of Babylon. So here's the first couple of photos.

The first photo is set before you. And it shows you the wide angle shot of Babylon. Full of life and celebration. The streets bustling with people going around their day-to-day business.

[9 : 45] You can see the glow of fires in people's homes. Well the second image shows the very same scene. But this time the streets are empty.

The fires are out. The Mede and Persian occupation forces now patrol the streets. Enforcing the curfew. Here's another couple of photos.

And this time it shows the royal palace. The first shows the palace rowdy with thousands of the lords, the kings and the banqueting enjoying plentiful wine.

The wives and concubines are there. The place is jumping. But the second photo shows the very same scene. But this time the place is empty.

Glasses of wine lie smashed on the floor. Food has been dropped all over the palace as people flared. And the last couple of photos. They focus in on just one man.

[10 : 47] The first photo shows King Belshazzar in full party mode. Golden goblet in one hand. Full to the brim with wine. A concubine on the other arm.

And his crown firmly fixed upon his head. The second photo. Well it shows King Belshazzar lying dead. Blood flowing from his side.

The golden goblet now empty. The concubine gone. And the crown removed from his head. The picture of Babylon in verse 1.

It's completely different to the Babylon of verse 31, isn't it? This is about as a dramatic a fall from grace as you can imagine. And it is the fulfillment of the very words that chapter 4 ended with.

Look there again. Which Willie read earlier. Chapter 4 verse 37. Those who walk in pride. God is able to humble. You couldn't have a more vivid illustration of that truth.

[11 : 52] Uttered by the King Nebuchadnezzar. Than these events of chapter 5 of Daniel. The decline and fall of a once great nation is staggering. It begins verse 1 with Babylon.

In the throes of a great banquet. Feasting and celebration and revelry. And yet within a few hours. The Babylonian Empire was no longer. The King is dead.

The empire in the hands of another king. Darius the Mede. And what is abundantly clear. Is that even the most impressive of human institutions.

Even the most powerful of empires. Is transitory. Even the great Babylon. Is temporary. Even it exists at the pleasure of the true king.

The Lord God of heaven. Now it's essential that as we begin to remember. That this account is not here. To give us a comprehensive account of the Babylonian Empire.

[12 : 48] This is not a history of Babylon. But rather as one writer put it. It is a tract for nourishing Israelite faith. This was written to Israelites.

It was written for a purpose. To give them great strength. To strengthen them in their faith. Strengthen their faith in the Lord God of heaven. During their early years.

In the return from exile. To remind them. That their God was sovereign. That he was in control. And that those who walk in pride.

The Belshazzars of this world. He is able to humble. So we'll look at it in two sections. First. Verses one to nine. A king.

Utterly defiant. Is brought to his knees by God. And we see in these first nine verses. The arrogance. Of prideful man. And total disdain.

[13 : 44] For the God of heaven. But we also see. How quickly. Man's pride is brought crashing down. We're introduced there in verse one. To King Belshazzar. Now some time has passed.

Since the end of chapter four. Just over 20 years have passed. Since chapter four. Verse 37. And Belshazzar is in fact. The grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

There's been one or two other kings in between. None have lasted all that long. But Belshazzar. Nebuchadnezzar's grandson. And he's a man. Who does not seem to have learned the lessons.

His grandfather learns. His grandfather who learned. As we saw last week. The hard way. To humble himself before the Lord God. This king.

Belshazzar. Is instead totally defiant. Towards the Lord God. Look at what he does here. In these opening verses. He throws a lavish party. Now fair enough you might think.

[14 : 42] Kings do that sort of thing. But once the party's underway. A thought strikes him. He commands. That the sacred vessels. Of gold and silver. That his grandfather.

Had taken out of the temple. In Jerusalem. He commands. That they be brought into the party. And they're brought out. And verse four. They're enjoying it. They're drinking wine from him. And they praise.

Not the Lord God of heaven. Whose temple. These vessels come from. But rather. They praise the gods of gold. Silver. Bronze. Iron. Wooden. Stone. Bell Shorzal's attitude.

Toward God. Is one of utter defiance. And contempt. Isn't it? And as Dale Ralph Davis puts it. Contempt. For God's stuff.

Well it equals contempt. For God himself. And that is a true observation. Isn't it? Just think about. The way in which you treat. The belongings of others. That does indicate.

[15 : 40] Your real attitude. Towards them. So for example. If you borrow. Somebody's car. And you return it. With the fuel. Empty. The car. Dirty.

And rubbish. Lying all over the place. Then you're not just showing contempt. Towards the car. Are you? You're showing contempt. Toward the owner of the car. The person you borrowed it from. And likewise.

In a far more serious way. Bell Shorzal's total scorn. Towards these items. From the temple. It indicates. His real scorn. Towards the Lord God of heaven. Whose items they were.

Later on in the passage. Daniel describes. The attitude there. In verse 23. He says that. Belshazzar here. Lifted himself up. Against the Lord God of heaven.

In what he does here. He knew. What he was doing. He knew exactly. Where these items came from. And so. He didn't sin.

[16 : 36] In ignorance. But rather. In full knowledge. Of what he was doing. This was flagrant. And public defiance. Of God. Notice there. In verse 1. He's doing this.

In front. Of the thousand. All eyes. Were on him. As he called. For the vessels. From Jerusalem. To be brought out. He brazenly. And publicly. Mocks.

The living God. But God. Will not be mocked. And we see. In an instant. Belshazzar. Is brought. To his knees.

God. Would not be mocked. Then. And he will not be mocked. Today. Those who defy him. Need to take note. Of all that happens.

In the rest of the chapter. A day. Will come. Perhaps soon. Perhaps. Way down the line. But it will come. A day of reckoning.

[17 : 31] When all those. Who mock the living God. Whatever form it takes. Whether it's mocking. His church. Whether it's the mocking. Of Christians. Whether it's the mocking.

Of God's plans. And purposes. For his world. Whatever it is. Those who mock. The Lord. Well. Their mocking. Will have to be accounted for. And for Belshazzar.

That day. Had already come. Look on to verse five. Immediately. Immediately. The fingers of a hand. Appeared. And wrote. On the plaster.

Of the king's wall. The king saw. As the hand wrote. His color. Changed. His thoughts. Alarmed him. His limbs. Gave way. His knees.

Knocked together. God. Brought. The brazen. And brash. King Belshazzar. To his knees. And utter sobriety. In an instant. You can just imagine. The whole room.

[18 : 26] Can't you? A whole room. Full of partying. And feasting. Suddenly. Falling. Absolutely. Silent. Everyone. Turns. To look. The musicians.

Stop playing. You can hear. A pin drop. It doesn't take much. For the pomp. And pride of man. To give way. To fear. And trembling.

Does it? And the Lord. Does that here. In an instant. What is Belshazzar. To do? A hand. Has appeared.

Out of nowhere. Scratched. Some words. On the wall. He cannot understand. What is he going to do? Well his first port of call. Is the religious crowd.

The usual suspects. They're familiar aren't they? If you read through Daniel. We saw them last week. The usual suspects. Are dragged in. The enchanters. The astrologers. The wise men of Babylon.

[19 : 20] And he promised them the world. If you can tell me what this means. He promised them great riches. Great power. But. They're absolutely stumped.

No one has an answer. And as we saw last week. Again. And again. And again. The religious pagans of the day. Had no answer. Had Belshazzar not learned that?

Had he not learned? Well clearly not. And the king. Verse 9. Is greatly alarmed. Nobody has the answer. He's looked.

Hasn't he? In the wrong place. For the answers. And that's still very much the case today. When people hit a crisis. As they undoubtedly will at some point in their lives.

Where do they turn to for answers? Where do you turn? When crisis comes. When crisis comes. Who do you look to? What do you look to? The horoscopes.

[20 : 18] The latest self-help guru. The charismatic so-called Christian leader. Who promises you. Who promises you. Healing. And solutions to your worldly problems today.

Is that where you turn to. Is that where you turn to? Because those things may provide a temporary fix. But there's nothing really there. Nothing to give answers to the deepest.

Most profound questions that you and I will face. If we haven't faced them already. We will. People. So Belshazzar. He found. No answers.

From the gurus of the day. In his moment of crisis. And as a last resort. Last resort. He turns. To Daniel. So then our second point.

As we look at verses 10 to the end. Our second point. A king. Utterly desperate. Is brought. The word of God again. But.

[21 : 15] It's too late. We see here. The desperation. That's looked. In all the wrong places for answers. Turning only to the word of God. At a last resort.

But. For him. It was too late. Look down there. Verse 10. The queen. Mother. Likely. Nebuchadnezzar's wife. The queen. Mother.

Comes to the rescue. She reminds. Belshazzar. Of what. He already knew. That there was a man. In the kingdom. Who was known. For being able to. Answer these sort of questions.

These perplexing questions. He'd done it. Time and again. And as a last resort. Daniel's brought in. And notice. The writer. She was careful. To record. That. Belshazzar.

Clearly knew. About this. Daniel guy. Or well. He should have. He ought to have done anyway. Daniel had been there. All along. Notice. The end of verse 11.

[22 : 09] The queen says. That your father. Nebuchadnezzar. Made him chief. Of the magicians. The astrologers. The enchanters. He was. He was. The senior guy. In the nation.

Under the king. You knew about him. Belshazzar. You knew he was the chief. Look on to verse 13. The king. Said to Daniel. You are that Daniel.

One of the exiles. Of Judah. Whom. The king. My father. Brought. From Judah. What a totally. Dismissive attitude. Isn't it? Total arrogance. From Belshazzar.

Oh yes. You're one of those Jews. One of the exiles. I've heard about you. But clearly. Under Belshazzar's rule. Daniel. The great Daniel.

The bible teacher. The one. Who had once been chief. Over many. Well. He had been relegated. Sidelines. Put into early retirements. And only now.

[23 : 04] Only now. As a last resort. As he turned to. And as we see. It really is. Too late. For Belshazzar. He's failed.

To listen to Daniel. Who's been there. All along. How foolish. Belshazzar. Has. Demeaned. Daniel's God. He's despised.

Daniel's status. But Daniel's the only one. The only one. Who can help him. And so now. Daniel speaks. And it is a devastating.

Assessment. Of Belshazzar. It's clear. That he has failed. To learn the lesson. Of his predecessor. King Nebuchadnezzar. He's failed. To humble himself.

Before the Lord God. And that is where Daniel begins. Verse 18. He begins speaking about. King Nebuchadnezzar. And he says that God. Gave him.

[23 : 58] His kingdom. God gave him. His greatness. All the nations. Feared Nebuchadnezzar. Because of all. That God had given him. But. Verse 20.

When his heart. Was lifted up. And his spirit. Was hardened. So that he dealt proudly. He was brought down. From his kingly throne. His glory. Was taken from him.

Now we saw that last week. As we looked at chapter 4. Nebuchadnezzar was driven. From his throne. He was made to eat grass. Like a wild animal. Total humiliation.

And God did that. God humbled him. So that. Verse 20. He would know. That the most high God. Rules the kingdom of mankind.

And sets over him. Who he will. That was the drumbeat. Of chapter 4. Wasn't it? Until he knew. That the most high rules. He had to learn that. And he learned it the hard way.

[24 : 58] All he had. Was from God. Yet. He grew proud. And so God. Humbled him. And as you see. At the end there. In chapter 4.

Nebuchadnezzar responded rightly. Didn't he? He acknowledged God. For who he really was. He worshipped him. Daniel reminds.

Belshazzar. Of all this. All the history he knew. And then. He comes with the killer blow. Verse 22. And you. His son.

Belshazzar. Have not. Humbled your heart. Though you knew all this. But you've lifted up yourself. Against the Lord of heaven. Look on to the end of verse 23.

The God. In whose hand is your breath. And whose are all your ways. You have not. Honored. You knew all this.

[25 : 52] Says Daniel. He knew. All that had happened. To Nebuchadnezzar. He knew it. And yet. He remained prideful. So.

Belshazzar's problem. Was not. Ignorance. But rather. It was. Insolence. In possession of abundant knowledge. About the living God. He would only show him contempt.

And by desecrating. The temple vessels. He openly. Marked. Israel's God. By singing praises. To the dumb day. He's a Babylon. He refused. To honor the God. Who gave him his very breath.

Death. It's a vivid illustration. Isn't it? What the apostle Paul writes. About in Romans chapter one. For although. They knew God. They did not honor him.

As God. Or give thanks to him. But. They became futile. In their thinking. Their foolish hearts. Were darkened. Belshazzar. Is a vivid. Example.

[26 : 49] That having the right. Information. It doesn't guarantee. The right response. He knew it all. He knew it. But he refused.

To humble his heart. It's very sobering. Isn't it? And it plays out. On our own experience. On a national level.

For many centuries. We've been so privileged. Here in Britain. Haven't we? To have God's word. Taught. And honored. It's formed the very basis. Of our constitution. A rich heritage.

But as a nation. We've turned our backs. On the word of God. His messengers. We've had the right. Information. For centuries. But there's been. Widespread rejection. We see it on the personal level too.

People exposed. To good teaching. Over many years. They've perhaps grown up. In a living church. But. They reject it. They refuse. To humble themselves.

[27 : 46] Before God. It's not information. That's lacking. It's a very sobering reality. Some people will choose darkness over light. Like Belshazzar.

But here's the really sobering thing. Sometimes. Sometimes for people like that. It is too late. Nebuchadnezzar.

Was given the opportunity to repent. He was prideful. But God was patient. Wasn't he? He humbled himself. He repented. And Belshazzar too.

Has been given time to repent. He knew all that happened to his predecessor. But he's refused to humble himself. But for him. It was too late.

It was too late. He had had a lifetime of opportunity. Just think. Of the shadow. Of God's abundant grace. And mercy. And kindness. That would have stretched down.

- [28 : 44] Through the years. In that Babylonian throne room. The stories of Nebuchadnezzar. His personal testimony. He would have heard that. He knew it. The very presence of Daniel. The one who was unafraid. To speak truth to power. All. Always there. He'd been there all the time. Belshazzar had years. Years of opportunity.
- But the opportunity wasn't taken. And now. It was being withdrawn from him. It was too late. And then Daniel. Explains the words.
- That are on the wall. Verse 25. Mene. God. Has numbered the days of your kingdom. And brought it to an end. Tekel.
- You have been weighed in the balance. Found wanting. Perez. Perez. Your kingdom is divided. And given to the Medes. And Persians. It's all over. For Belshazzar. It's all over.
- [29 : 43] Indeed. It's all over. For the Babylonian empire. Verse 30. That very night. It all comes to an end. Just as the Lord said it would.
- You see. It is possible. It's possible to resist. God's call of grace. It is possible to miss out. On that opportunity to repent. Belshazzar had that opportunity. He had a lifetime to repent. But he refused. And ultimately.
- God honored that. To know that God is gracious. As Belshazzar undoubtedly did. We're told that. He knew it.
- To know God is gracious. And yet turn. Yet refuse to turn from sin. In the light of that grace. Well that is to fall under God's righteous judgment.
- [30 : 39] That was for him. The sin from which there was no remedy or pardon. It wasn't so much. The outward and blatant sins. Of Belshazzar.
- That were the issue. But rather. It was his continued. And persistent impenitence. His refusal. To receive mercy. His refusal to heed Daniel's testimony.
- That is what did it for Belshazzar. As one preacher puts it. The rioting. And drunkenness. In Belshazzar's life. Was only the shell.
- The outer expression. Of his rebellion against God. And such rebellion. Can take very different forms. Even very respectable. And religious forms.
- So don't be distracted. By the nature of his sin. Because there's an underlying problem. His refusal to repent. And return to the Lord.
- [31 : 35] His great sin. Was his persistent refusal. To humble himself before God. That is the unforgivable sin. And so I wonder.
- Is that you. Here this morning. Are you refusing to humble yourself. You've got the knowledge. You know the information. You just haven't humbled yourself.
- It's a sober warning. Do not dare presume. Upon the grace of God. That he's shown to others. Don't think. Don't presume. That God will be as patient with you.
- As he's been with somebody else. You know. So don't wait. To humble yourself. Before God. Don't wait. Don't put it off. Another moment. Sometimes. It is too late.
- Don't presume. God will deal with you. Like a Nebuchadnezzar. Time and time and time again. He had opportunity. Don't presume.
- [32 : 33] God will deal with you that way. When he may well deal with you. As a Belshazzar. See those who walk in pride. God is able to humble. And he will humble.
- If not today. Then one day. There is a day coming in history. An immovable day. Where in the Lord Jesus Christ. Will return.

And every knee. Will have to bow then. And he will then. Either call people to himself. As those who have humbled themselves. And they will reign with him. In his everlasting kingdom.

Or. He will send people away. As those he never knew. It's a sobering message. Isn't it?

But as we close. A couple of implications. One. Is an encouragement. And the second. A challenge. Here's the encouragement. No worldly power. Can thwart God's purposes.

[33 : 31] What we read about here. Is the demise. Of one of the great kingdoms. One of the great empires. The Babylonian empire. Comes to a crashing end.

At the end of this chapter. And it comes to an end. At the decree. Of the living God. So we ought to take. Comfort in that fact. Take heart. Nothing is beyond.

The control of God. The things we see around us. In our culture. That perplex us. That concern us. The people in power. The empires of the day.

They are not beyond his control. It's the opposite. They are totally under his control. So when individuals. Even kings. Oppose. God and his people.

God can convert them. Advance his cause. Like he did with Nebuchadnezzar. Or he can judge them. And remove them. As he did with Belshazzar.

[34 : 24] And that is a great comfort. Isn't it? Our God reigns. He's on the throne. Now we may not see that in our lifetime. But one day.

There will be a great weighing in the balance. That day will come for all. And for Daniel. It did come in his lifetime. Captured by King Nebuchadnezzar.

He lived to see the collapse of that very empire that captured him. Despite all its impressiveness and power. It was after all. Transitory. Temporary. Tenuous.

And that is a great encouragement. Isn't it? But there's also a great challenge in this chapter. Two challenges really. First. Perhaps you have never actually humbled yourself before the living God.

Perhaps like Belshazzar. You've known much about God and his grace. But you've never actually responded in obedient trust. If that's you.

[35 : 25] Here this morning. Then you must. You must humble yourself before it's too late. Only God knows the number of days appointed for any life.

No one knows their last day. No one knows their last promotion. Their last journey. No one knows their last conversation.

Their last embrace of a loved one. No one knows their last sight of home. No one knows that. And no one living in defiance of God knows their last chance.

Usually that day will be like any other day. The last opportunity to repent. To turn to God. It will look like a hundred others. But it is the last.

And it's gone. The last church service. The last knock on the door. As a psalm we sung earlier instructs us.

[36 : 25] So teach us Lord. The heavenly art of numbering our days. That wisdom may incline the heart to walk in all your ways. If we do not number our days.

God will. Humble yourself. And the second challenge is this. It's urgency. Urgency.

Our sole task as Christ's church is to witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. To proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. To call men and women, boys and girls, to repent and turn to Christ the Lord.

And doesn't this passage press upon us the absolute urgency of that task? Because for some it will be too late. Those are very chilling words, aren't they?

In verse 30. That very night. That very night. So don't wait to humble yourself before the Lord Jesus Christ.

[37 : 31] Don't wait. That is both our message and our motivation. Don't wait. The hymn I quote at the very beginning has this as its refrain.

And we'll finish with this. Oh, come today. Do not delay. Too late it soon will be. To Jesus fly.

For mercy cry. He waits to welcome thee. Let's pray. Our Father God, we thank you for your words.

We thank you for these chapters which speak of your absolute sovereignty. Sovereignty in salvation. But also sovereignty in judgment. So Lord, help us to heed the warning.

Help us to humble ourselves before you, the living God. Help us to humble ourselves, Lord, before it is too late.

[38 : 49] Help us, for we ask it. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.