

## **Weighed on God's Scales and Found Wanting** by T DeWitt Talmage

"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."—Dan. 5:27.

Babylon was the paradise of architecture. The most elaborate structures of modern times are only the evidence of her fall.

After the site of Babylon had been selected, two million men were employed for the construction of the wall and principal works. The walls of the city were sixty miles in circumference. They were surrounded by a trench, out of which had been dug the material for the construction of the city. There were twenty-five gates of solid brass on each side of the square city. Between every two gates a great watchtower sprang up into the heavens. From each of the twenty-five gates, on either side, a street ran straight through to the gate on the other side, so that there were fifty streets, each fifteen miles long, which gave to the city an appearance of wonderful regularity.

The houses did not join each other on the ground, and between them were gardens and shrubbery. From housetop to housetop bridges swung, over which the inhabitants were accustomed to pass.

A branch of the Euphrates went through the city, over which a bridge of marvelous structure was thrown and under which a tunnel ran. To keep the river from overflowing the city in times of freshet, a great lake was arranged to catch the surplus, in which the water was kept as in a reservoir until times of drought, when it was sent streaming down over the thirsty land.

A palace stood at each end of the Euphrates bridge; one palace 1 3/4 miles in compass, and the other palace 7 1/2 miles in circumference.

The wife of Nebuchadnezzar, having been brought up among the mountains of Media, could not stand it in this flat country of Babylon, and so to please her, Nebuchadnezzar had a mountain four hundred feet high built in the midst of the city. This mountain was surrounded by terraces, for the support of which great arches were lifted. On the top of these arches flat stones were laid; then a layer of reeds and bitumen; then two rows of bricks, closely cemented; then thick sheets of lead, upon which the soil was placed.

The earth here deposited was so deep that the largest trees had room to anchor their roots. All the glory of the flowery tropics was spread out at that tremendous height, until it must have seemed to one below as though the clouds were all in blossom and the very sky leaned on the shoulder of the cedar. At the top an engine was constructed which drew the water from the Euphrates, far below, and made it spout up amid this garden of the skies. All this to please his wife. I think she must have been pleased.

In the midst of this city stood also the temple of Belus. One of its towers was one eighth of a mile high, and on the top of it an observatory, which gave the astronomers great advantage, since, being at so great height, one could easily talk with the stars. This temple was full of cups and statues and censers, all of gold. One image weighed one thousand Babylonish talents, which would be equal to fifty-two million dollars.

### **BUT GREAT BABYLON IS DOOMED!**

But why enlarge? This city is besieged and doomed. Though provisioned for twenty years, it shall fall tonight.

See the gold and silver plate flash on the king's table. Pour out the rich wine from the tankards into the cups. Drink, my lords, to the health of the king. Drink to the glory of Babylon. Drink to the defenders of the city. Drink to a glorious future.

Startle not at the splashed wine on the table, as though it were blood. Turn not pale at the clash of the cups, as though it were the clang of arms. On with the mirth! A thousand lords reel on their chairs and quarrel and curse. The besotted king sags back on his chair and stares vacantly on the wall. But that vacant look takes on intensity. It is an affrighted look. As he gazes, the lords gaze. Every eye is turned to the wall.

Darkness falls upon the room. The blaze of the gold plate goes out. Out of the black sleeve of the darkness a finger of fiery terror trembles through the air and comes to the wall, circling about as though it would write, and then, with sharp tip of flame, engraves on the plastering the doom of the king, "Weighed in the balances, and found wanting!"

The bang of heavy fists against the palace gates is followed by the crashing in of the doors. A thousand gleaming daggers strike through a thousand quivering hearts.

And now Death is the king, and his throne a heap of corpses. An unseen balance had been set up in the festal hall. God swung it. Belshazzar's opportunities on one side of the balance; his sins on the other. Down went his sins; up went his opportunities. Weighed, and found wanting!

### God's Scales Weigh Sin

There has been a great deal of cheating in this country by false weights and measures. Government appointed commissioners to stamp the weights and measures. Much of the wrong has been righted.

I speak of another kind of scales. We all have been in the habit of making mistakes in our weighing of men and things. There is, indeed, only one pair of balances absolutely perfect, and that is suspended from the throne of God Almighty.

Other balances get out of order. The chain breaks, or the metal is clipped, or the equipoise in some other way is broken; and a pound does not always mean a pound; and you pay for one thing and get another.

But the balances of God never lose their adjustment. With them, a pound is a pound, right is right, wrong is wrong, a soul is a soul, and eternity is eternity. God has a bushel measure, a peck measure and a gallon measure. Whenever a merchant measures a bushel of wheat or salt or corn, God weighs it immediately after him. The merchant's measure may be wrong, but God's measure is just right. If a merchant measures a gallon of oil and does not give the proper quantity, God measures it and says, "So many drops too few! Recording angel, write it down." If a farmer comes to town with apples for sale and he does not give full measure, the apples are immediately put into God's peck, and record is made of twenty apples too few.

We may cheat ourselves, and we may cheat our neighbors, but in the last day we shall find that what we learned at school in our boyhood is true: sixteen ounces make a pound, and twenty hundred weight makes one ton, and 128 solid feet make one cord of wood. No more, no less.

But I am not now to speak of the weighing of coffees and sugars, but of the weighing of principles, of individuals, of churches, and of worlds. Many suppose that sin is imponderable; but it is heavy enough to crush a world. Yea, our earth itself is to be put on the scales, with all its mountains, valleys and seas.

You would think that the Alps and Pyrenees and Himalayas and Mount Washingtons and all the cities of the earth on one side of the scale would crush it. No! God will at last see what opportunities the world had and what opportunities it neglected. And He will sit down on the white throne to see the old world weighed and will see it rise in the balance lighter than a feather; and He will cry out to His messengers who carry the torch, "Burn that world. Weighed, and found wanting.

### **CHURCHES THAT DO NOT WIN SOULS ARE WANTING**

God is every day estimating churches. He puts a great church into the scales. He puts the minister and the choir and the grand structure that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars on the same side. On the other side of the scales He puts the idea of spiritual life that the church ought to possess or brotherly love or faith or sympathy for the poor.

Up goes the grand meetinghouse with its minister and choir. God says that a church is of much worth only as it saves souls; and if, with all your magnificent machinery, you save but a handful of men when you might save a multitude, He will spew you out of His mouth. Weighed, and found wanting!

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## **GOD WEIGHS NATIONS TOO**

God is also estimating nations. He put the Spanish monarchy in the scales a few months ago and found it insufficient and cast it aside. He put the French monarch, with his empire, in the scales. Napoleon cried out, "See what I have done to enlarge the boulevards! I kindled up the glories of the Champs Elysees! I enlarged the Tuileries! I built the gilded opera house!" Then God put on one side of the scales the emperor and the boulevards and the Champs Elysees and the Tuileries and the gilded opera house. But on the other side of the scales He put that man's abominations and the outrages he had committed against the French nation. Down went the sins; up went the emperor, with all his surroundings. Weighed in the balance, and found wanting!

I have heard persons say that ministers ought to deal with things in the abstract and not be personal, but I want to become more personal. What success would a hunter have if he went out to shoot deer in the abstract? He puts the butt of the gun to his shoulder, lays his eye along the barrel, takes sure aim, draws the trigger; and crash go the antlers on the rocks! What if a physician, called into your house, should treat your ailments in the abstract? How long before the inflammation would heal or the pain be assuaged? What folly to talk about sin in the abstract when you and I have in our souls a malady that must be cured or it will kill us, miserably and forever!

## **MAN'S MORALITY NOT SUFFICIENT WHEN GOD WEIGHS YOU**

God lifts the balances tonight. The judgment day is coming. Every day is a day of judgment. We are this moment being canvassed, inspected, weighed. But do not let us all get on the scales at once. We will take one at a time. Who will get on first? Here is a volunteer. He is a moralist—as upright a man as there is in Brooklyn. Get in, Brother.

What is it that you have with you in that bundle? He says, "It is my reputation for morality and uprightness and integrity." Leave that behind. It is not fair that you carry a bundle with you. We just want to measure you. Have you slandered your neighbors? You say, "Never have I slandered them." What outrages have you committed against society? You say, "None." So far, so good. Have your thoughts always been right? You answer, "No." I put down one mark against you.

Have you served God as you ought? "No." Another mark against you. Have you loved the Lord Jesus Christ with all your soul? "No." Another mark against you.

Come now, be frank. Have you not, in ten thousand things, come short of your duty? "Yes." Then I put down ten thousand marks against you.

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Bring me a larger book in which I may make record of your deficits and neglects. Do not jump out of the scales until I have examined them. You stand on one side, with all your kindnesses and charities and conciliations of behavior. On the other side I put this one weight, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." Down goes the weight; up go your good works. Weighed in the balance, and found wanting!

### **ORTHODOXY WITHOUT A NEW HEART FAILS**

Who will come next? Here comes a formalist who gets on the scales—a man whose religion is made up of genuflections, postures and outward proprieties. Brother, what is that you have in your pocket? He says it is a Westminster Assembly Catechism. What is it you have in that other pocket? He says that it is the Heidelberg Catechism. What is that you have under your arm? He says it is a church record. What are those books that I see scattered around on your side of the scales? He says they are Calvin's Institutes.

My brother, we did not come here to weigh books, however good they may be. We want on this scale nothing but your soul. Your orthodoxy won't save you. Men have gone to Hell with a catechism in each pocket. The forms of religion are only the scaffolding for putting up the spiritual house. Alas! if you have mistaken the scaffolding for the temple itself.

"But I cross myself ever so many times," you say. That will not save you.

"But I give liberally to the poor." That will not save you.

"But I read a chapter every night before I go to bed." That will not save you.

"But I sit at the communion table." That will not save you.

"But my name is down on the church book." That will not save you.

"But I have been a professor of religion for thirty years." That will not save you.

I place on your side of the balance all the edicts, all the religious counsels, all the communion tables that were ever built; and on the opposite side of the balance I put this hundred-pound weight: "Having a FORM of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Tim. 3:5).

Weighed in the balance, and found wanting!

### **WORLDLY SUCCESS WITHOUT CHRIST IS FOUND WANTING**

Here comes a worldling—you cannot mistake him. His eyes, his hand, his heart are full of business—stocks, dividends, percentages, scrip, "buyer, ten days," "buyer, thirty days." His heaven is a successful bargain; his eternity, so many feet front by so many feet deep. He wants to go to Heaven, because where there is so much gold it must be that "money is easy."

The most tremendous question he ever asks himself is, "How low can I buy these goods, and how high a price can I get for them?" The day is full of rush and

din, and he sleeps and sweats under a nightmare of dollars. Sunday is a vulgar interruption, and he hopes, on his way to church, to drum up a new customer. Day by day he has been weighing confections, weighing fruits, weighing meat, weighing ice or weighing coal, not knowing that he all the time was being weighed.

I pile up beside him, on his side of the scales, the hogsheads and the barrels and the money-vaults and the storehouses and the cargoes, but all these give to the worldling no additional weight. At the very moment we were congratulating him on the fine store, the full-blooded stock, the princely income, God and the angels were looking upon the scene and announcing the solemn truth: Weighed in the balance, and found wanting.

### **JUDGMENT TIME ANY MOMENT! HURRY TO MAKE SIN!**

But I must go on faster and look at the last great scrutiny. We are passing on, heedless of the most astounding considerations. In a moment the ground may break through and let you fall into the grave. The pulses of life, now so regularly drumming in the march, any moment may cry, "Halt!"

On a hair-hung bridge we walk over bottomless chasms. When we go to bed at night, we know not that we shall see the day dawn. When we go forth from our homes, we know not that we shall return again.

Dangers lurk about your path and are ready to break upon you from ambush. In a moment the door of eternity may swing open and invisible ushers conduct you in for reward or for retribution. A crown of glory is being burnished for your brow, or bolts are being forged for your prison. Angels of light are making ready to shout over your deliverance, or fiends of darkness reaching up their skeleton hands to pull you down into ruin consummate.

Suddenly the judgment will be here. The angel, with one foot on the sea and the other on the land, will swear by Him that liveth forever that time shall be no longer!

Hark! I hear the jarring of the mountains. It is the setting down of the balances. Look! There is something like a flash from the cloud. It is the glitter of the shining balances. All the unforgiven souls of earth must get into the scales. They may struggle to keep out, but God will put them in. Let the universe look on and see the last great weighing. The world may have weighed them and pronounced them moral. They may have weighed themselves and given a self-gratulatory decision, but now God weighs them in unmistakable balances.

On this side of the scales are placed the souls of the unpardoned—their wealth all gone, their crowns all gone, their titles all gone. Nothing remains but the naked souls of the unforgiven.

On the other side of the scales are placed wasted Sundays, mis-improved

privileges, disregarded sermons, innumerable opportunities of pardon. Hark! How the scales come down on this last side, loud as thunder! God, looking at the balance, shall announce, in the presence of men and devils and cherubim and archangels, while groaning earthquake and crackling conflagration and judgment trumpet, and everlasting storm shall repeat it: Weighed in the balance, and found wanting!

### **WHEN THE BORN-AGAIN IS WEIGHED, CHRIST GETS ON THE SCALES WITH HIM**

"But," you ask, "how, if we repent tonight and come to God, will we at last be weighed?" Yes! Yes! There is no escape from the scrutiny. The wicked have been tested and driven away in their wickedness.

Now let the righteous get on the balances. "Oh!" you say, "let me off; I cannot stand the test." Get in, ye righteous! "What, with all my sin?" No time to discuss that matter. The bell of judgment is tolling. The balances are adjusted—get in you must.

All your opportunities of being better and doing more good are placed on one side of the scales, and you get in on the other. You are too light to budge the balances in your favor.

On your side are spread all the kind words you ever spoke, all the Christian deeds you ever did. Too light yet!

On your side are put all your prayers, all your repentance, all your faith. Too light yet!

Come and get on this side—Paul, Luther, Baxter, Payson and Doddridge—and help the Christian bear down the scale. Too light yet!

Get on this side, all ye martyrs who went through the fire and flood—Wickliffe, Ridley, and Latimer. Too light yet!

Come, angels of God, get on the scales and see if ye can not turn the balance in favor of the saints; for the judgment is ending, and let not the righteous be banished with the wicked. Too light yet!

Place on this side all the sceptres of light and all the palm branches of triumph and all the thrones of glory. Too light yet!

But at this point Jesus, the Son of God, steps up to the balances. He puts one scarred foot on the Christian's side of the scales, and they tremble and quiver from top to bottom. He puts both feet on, and down go the scales on the Christian's side with a stroke that sets all the bells of Heaven a-chiming! This Rock of Ages is heavier than any other weight.

But, Christian, you may not get off so easily. I place on the opposite scale all the sins that you ever committed and all the envies and hates and inconsistencies of a lifetime; but altogether they do not budge the scales.

Christ, on your side, has settled the balances forever. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1). Go free! Go free! Sins all pardoned, shackles all broken, prison doors all opened. Go free! Go free!  
Weighed in the balance, and nothing wanting!