

## **Three Foolish Men** by Lester Roloff

The first foolish man we will talk about today is King Belshazzar. Belshazzar got off to a bad start because he had a wicked daddy, King Nebuchadnezzar. In Daniel 5 we read, "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was at Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God... and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."

Have you ever noticed that a man who lives in sin lives in fear? Have you ever noticed that a man who lives like the devil carries a guilty conscience and he's always afraid? The man who doesn't live right is scared of his own shadow. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Isaiah 57:20-21

What did Belshazzar do? "The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished. Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him, whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father... made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel... now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation. Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the Gods is in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they

should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing."

The king's wise men looked at the handwriting on the wall and shook their heads and said, "We can't read a word of it." Why, I guess they couldn't. That's God's writing! They couldn't read God's handwriting and said, "Let Daniel be called."

When they needed a real man of God, where did they go? They went to Daniel. They called this young man and said, "He has an excellent spirit, the wisdom of God is on him and he can interpret difficult sentences and dreams." God's people come to Jesus for their helps and needs. "...my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

So Daniel was called and of course the king made him that tremendous offer. "I've heard of thee, that thou canst read the writing and make known unto me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet and have a chain of gold about thy neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then Daniel said, Let thy gifts be to thyself." In other words, "Keep what you have. I will read the writing unto the king and make known to him the interpretation." Now, Daniel took his pulpit stand. What he saw written on the wall, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," so far as Daniel was concerned, was as simple as kindergarten writing, because it was God's writing, and it was easy for him to read. I'm pretty sure that Belshazzar was a little behind on his Gospel preaching, and Daniel said, "Before I read what you want to know and what's made you tremble and run your magicians out, I just want to tell you something about your old daddy. Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, had a kingdom and whom he would he slew and whom he would he set up and whom he would he put down. But he came to the place in his life when pride filled his old heart and God had to snatch him off the throne and put him in the pasture to eat grass like the oxen until he learned that God rules down here. Belshazzar, though thou knewest all this, thou hast not humbled thine heart. You didn't profit by your daddy's mistakes. You've been a very foolish man. You not only drank wine, but you thought because you were the king you could send and get the sacred vessels. You pulled a very foolish stunt, Mr. Belshazzar, and according to the writing on the wall, your kingdom is being divided and given to the Medes and the Persians. You've been feasting and playing when you ought to have been fasting and praying. The enemy is marching right now. Now, here's a personal message just for you, Mr. Belshazzar, the king. Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. You are all unbalanced at the end of the trail. You've put your emphasis where you ought not to have put it. You're fixing to stand now in the balances of God and there's not enough merit in your guilty liquor-soaked soul to balance the scales of God. Belshazzar, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Dear friends, that night the enemy came in and Belshazzar was gone. What a price! He was a very foolish man. He might have had a big time in time, but he's sure had a bad time ever since time ran out for him. I remind you, sinner

friend, you need not squander your time down here if you want to enjoy eternity.

The second foolish man we remind you of is Felix, who was a governor. We read about him in Acts, chapter 24. When Paul was brought before him, as recorded in verse 25, "... he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee." Dear friend, when he made that announcement, he signed his death-knell for eternity. You will never find in the Bible where Governor Felix ever said "the time is now convenient. I'm ready to listen to the Gospel and receive the Lord Jesus Christ." I want to say this to every precious sinner, it never has been convenient to get saved.

This foolish man, Felix, said "... a more convenient season, and I'm going to be saved." Christian, you were not saved at a convenient time. The flesh never finds it convenient, even to go to church if the Gospel is being preached. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Romans 8:5-7.

There is a battle raging all the time. There never has been anybody's flesh that ever got converted. It's the spiritual man that gets converted and the spiritual man has to overpower the flesh. After you get saved, there are two men. There is a carnal man and there's a spiritual man. If you'd look at it like that, it would sure solve a lot of your problems. The one you feed the most will have the victory. It's time for God's people to sit down and say, "Lord, what am I feeding tonight? Am I feeding my soul?" The one who is going to win out in this battle is the one you feed the most. We need to feed our spiritual man on spiritual food.

The third foolish man we mention is Agrippa, who was a king. As Paul, that great preacher, that man with the burning soul, stood in his presence, scarred from 195 deep lacerations on his back, he gave his testimony to King Agrippa. Then he asked him, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Acts 26:27-28.

Dear friends, so far as this Bible is concerned, that foolish man stumbled into the fires of hell, because as he looked into the face of a loving soul-winner, he said, "Almost. Almost. Almost." Oh, don't be like that, sinner friend. But Paul looked at him and said, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." " I don't want you to be locked up in chains like I am, but I want you to be free inside with Jesus."

" What will you do with Jesus? Neutral you cannot be. Some day your heart will

be asking "What will He do with me?"

I can tell you. He will do with you tomorrow what you did with Him today. It's as simple as room for room. You make room in your heart down here and He'll make room for you up yonder.

Don't be like these three foolish men -- two kings and a governor. Belshazzar mocked God by defiling the sacred vessels. Felix put off making a decision to ask the Lord to save him. Agrippa never admitted his need to be saved.

They were three of the most foolish men who ever lived, and they are still paying tonight for their foolishness. There are some times you can be foolish and get over it, but you have to get over it in time and not in eternity. If you think you can wait until our long eternity begins and then get everything fixed up, you're wrong. There are some things that need to be fixed down here. The Psalmist said, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed."