

They called Daniel in and he said to them, This means that God is through with you; your kingdom is going to be divided and given to the Medes and Persians. If you said that to a modern dictator he would say, Put this man in close confinement and keep him there for a few years to prove this terrible thing he's predicting about me is completely false. But Belshazzar was a better character according to the Biblical account. We read in in v.9, "Then commanded Belshazzar and they clothed Daniel with scarlet and put a chain of gold around his neck and made a proclamation condemning him that he would be the third ruler of the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain, and his prediction was fulfilled.

According to the critics this account was written 500 years after the end of the Babylonian empire. If they are ~~not~~ right it's not at all strange that they would speak of Belshazzar as the last king because all that was known up to a few years ago of the final days of the kingdom of Babylon was that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon. King Nabonidus was not slain when Babylon was taken, but he was simply sent into exile.

So the story here was a beautiful story invented 400 years later when the people had forgotten the facts, but it did not fit as far as anybody knew a few years ago of the time of the end of the Babylonian kingdom. Then Prof. Pinches of the British Museum was not satisfied with that and early in this century he went into the British Museum and he found a tablet from the latter days of the kingdom of Babylon that had been excavated and brought to the British Museum -- the great bulk of them are contract tablets, lists of property, wills, etc. Most scholars are interested in getting the ones that have beautiful ~~poetry~~ poetry or historical statements on them.

There are a great many of them that have not been translated, or at least translated and published. He looked for those tablets of the latter days of the kingdom of Babylon. Then Prof. Daugherty of Yale University took up the study and carried it on and he wrote a book in the Yale Oriental Research Series in 1929 called Nabonidus and Belshazzar. He showed that the name Belshazzar was found on contracts of that period. So there was such a man as Belshazzar.

Then he found there was a contract where someone representing Belshazzar, the king's son made a contract to rent a house for two years. So you had Belshazzar in the royal family. Then he found there were tablets in which the oath was taken in the name of Nabonidus and Belshazzar. He found that oaths were never taken except in the name of a deity, or ruler of the kingdom. So Prof. Dougherty wrote his book and no scholar today denies the fact, though most don't say anything about it, that Belshazzar was indeed ruling in Babylon as co-king along with his father. His father spent the latter years before the Persian conquest in retirement studying archaeology!