

A dramatic scene of a whale's tail breaching the surface of a dark blue, stormy sea. The sky is filled with lightning bolts, and rain is falling diagonally across the frame. The overall mood is intense and powerful.

EPIC TALES

RELEARNING THE ANCIENT BIBLE STORIES IN A BRAND-NEW WAY



Next Up Beirut Blast Shockwaves Will Be Felt by Hezbollah for a Long Time



Gantz delivers a statement to the media in Ramat Gan, March 1, 2020. Credit: Ariel Schell/AP

Editorial | Gantz Refuses to See the Writing on the Wall

Haaretz Editorial 18:04:2020 | 02:23

Watch Video



Names to watch in Panthers' coaching search

Greg Olsen sees "writing on the wall" in Carolina

Darin Gantt

7 months ago

STAY FOOLISH

Analyzing Apple's next moves

Is the writing on the wall for the Apple TV?

Does the pricey set-top box still have something to offer?



By Dan Moren Contributor, Macworld

The Owners of Whiting Petroleum Stock Could Have Seen the Writing on the Wall

7/20/2020 10:48am EDT

By Will Ashworth, InvestorPlace Contributor

Bloomberg pointed out in early June that Whiting Petroleum's (NYSE:WLL) CEO, Brad Holly, got a \$900,000 pay raise when the company filed for bankruptcy. While that was good news for Holly and his family, it was terrible news for the long-term owners of WLL stock.

FOX NEWS FLASH · Published June 19, 2020

Last Update June 19

Greg Gutfeld says Klobuchar 'saw the writing on the wall' before bowing out of Biden running mate race

By Charles Creitz | Fox News

Writing on the Wall

Daniel chapter 5

EPIC TALES



Setting of the Story

The events recorded in Daniel 1–4 pertained to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who expanded and united the Babylonian Empire. Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC after ruling 43 years. The ensuing years of Babylonian history till its overthrow by Cyrus in 539 BC were marked by progressive deterioration, intrigue, and murder. Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach who ruled for two years (562–560 BC, see 2 Kings 25:27–30; Jeremiah 52:31–34). Evil-Merodach was murdered in August 560 BC by Neriglissar, Nebuchadnezzar’s son-in-law and Evil-Merodach’s own brother-in-law. Neriglissar then ruled four years (560–556 BC). He is the Nergal-Sharezer mentioned in Jeremiah 39:3, 13. At his death, he was succeeded by his young son Labashi-Marduk, who ruled only two months (May and June 556 BC) before he was assassinated and succeeded by Nabonidus, who reigned 17 years (556–539 BC).

– Source: Bible Knowledge Commentary

EPIC TALES

Setting of the Story

- Nabonidus did much to restore the glory that had belonged to Babylon under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Nabonidus' mother was the high priestess of the moon god at Haran. Perhaps because of her influence, he had great interest in restoring and expanding the Babylonian religion and did much to restore abandoned temples. He was absent from Babylon for 10 of his 17 years, from 554-545 BC. In Haran he restored the temple of the moon god Sin, and then he attacked Edom and conquered parts of Arabia where he then lived for some time.
- Belshazzar was Nabonidus' eldest son and was appointed by his father as his co-regent. (Nebuchadnezzar is referred to as Belshazzar's father [Daniel 5:2, 11, 13, 18; cf. v. 22] in the sense that he was his ancestor or predecessor.) This co-regency explains why Belshazzar was called king (5:1) and why he exercised kingly authority even though Nabonidus actually held the throne.

– Source: Bible Knowledge Commentary

EPIC TALES

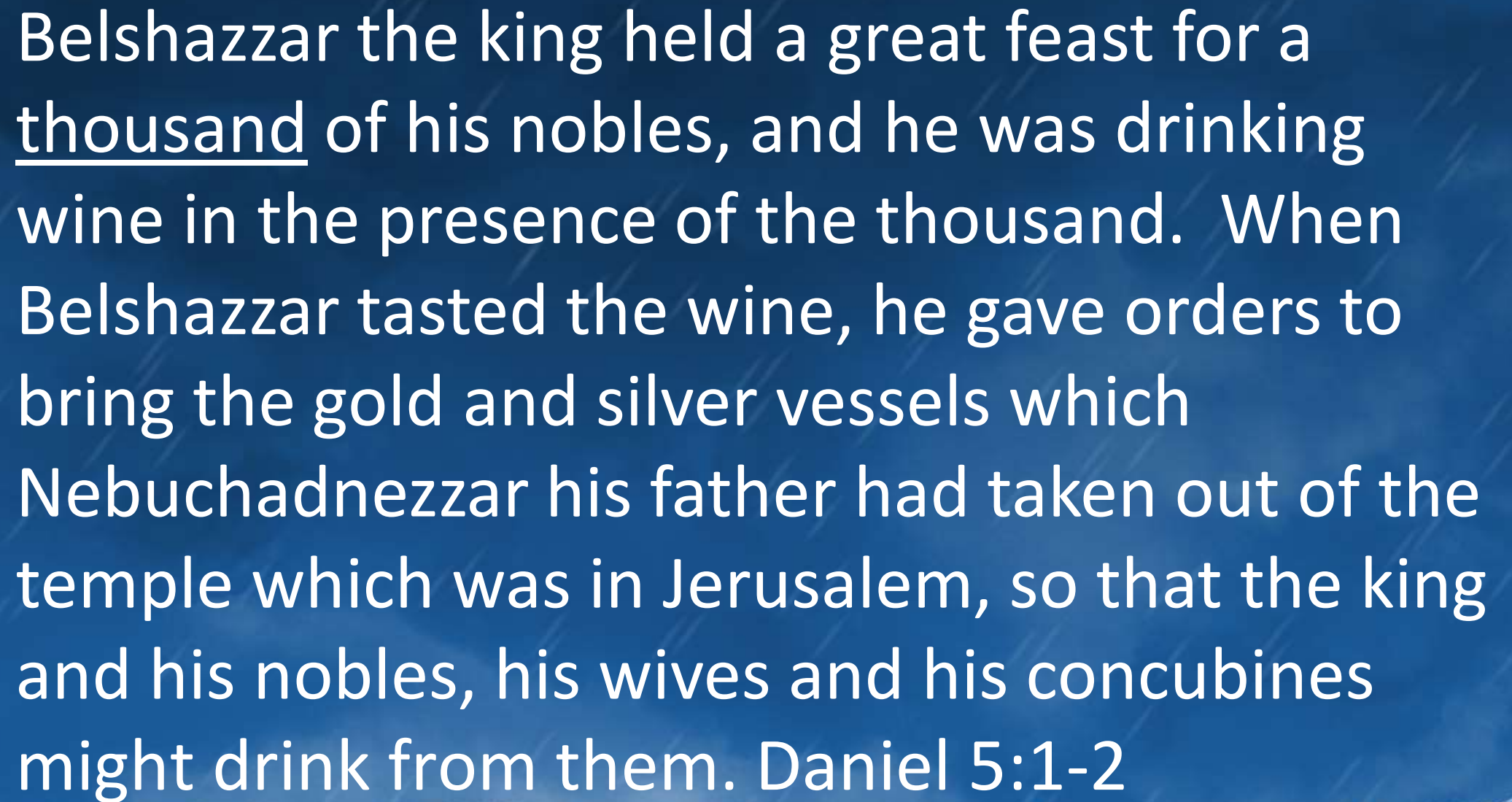


Setting of the Story

We enter the story at a critical juncture in Babylonian history. Babylon had been in decline and their nemesis had become King Darius, who ruled the Medes and Persians. The city of Babylon was shut up tight and was under siege by their enemies for many months. The great walls of the city had thus far kept the inhabitants safe and given Belshazzar a false sense of security. He was so secure that he prepared a vast banquet for his Lords and Noblemen, and for their wives and concubines.

- Source: J. Mike Minnix

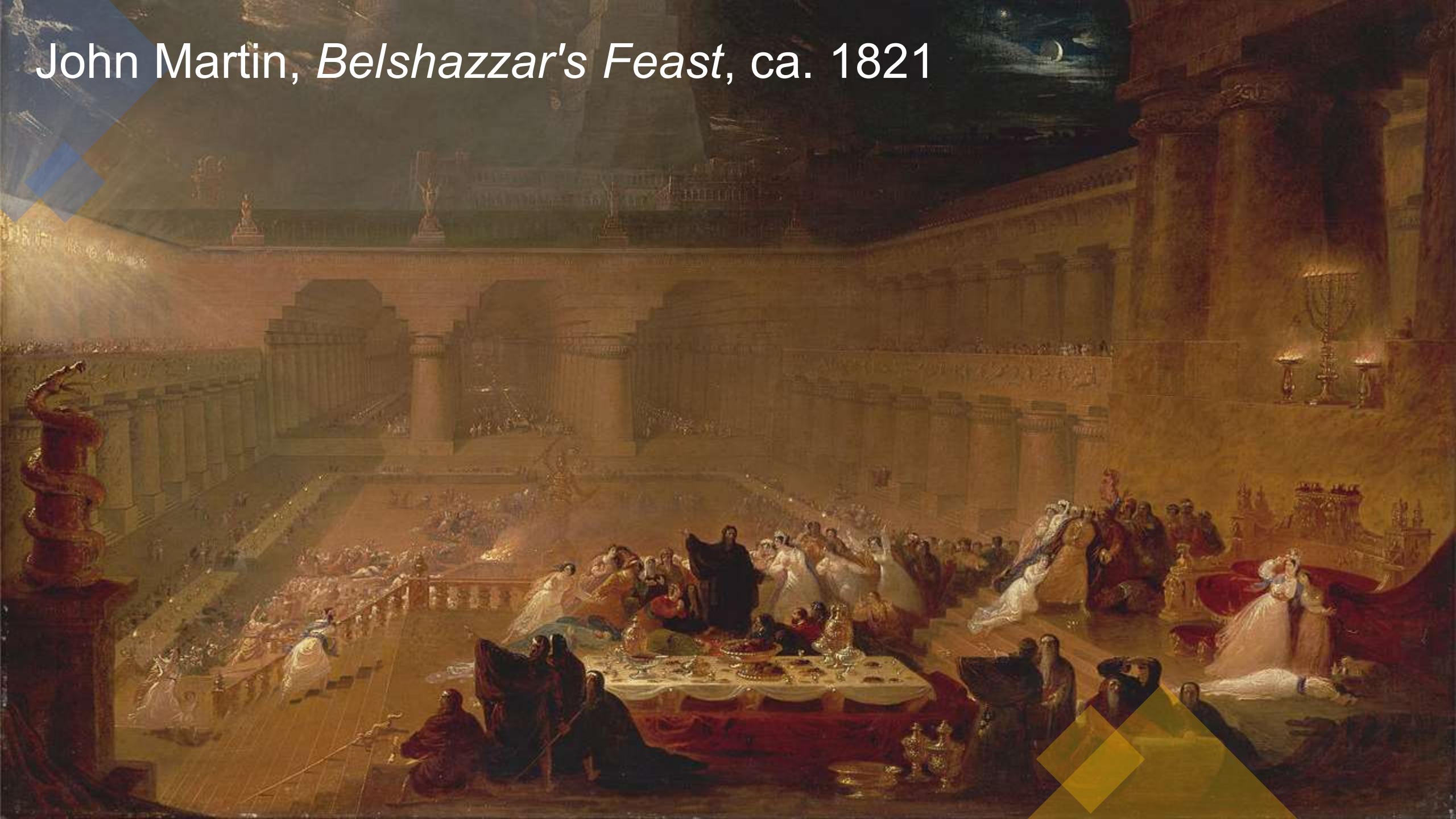
EPIC TALES

A whale's tail is visible on the left side of the image, emerging from the dark blue ocean. The background is a deep blue sky with a subtle pattern of light rays or rain falling diagonally across the scene.

Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand. When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. Daniel 5:1-2

EPIC TALES

John Martin, *Belshazzar's Feast*, ca. 1821



Setting of the Story

Babylon was being besieged by the Persian army, led by Ugbaru, governor of Gutium, while Belshazzar, inside the city, was giving a great banquet for 1,000 of his nobles. Belshazzar's name means "Bel (another name for the god Marduk) has protected the king." Perhaps the banquet was given to show Belshazzar's contempt for the Persians and to allay his people's fears. Archeologists have excavated a large hall in Babylon 55 feet wide and 165 feet long that had plastered walls. Such a room would have been sufficient to house a gathering of this size. Belshazzar considered his city secure from assault because of its massive walls (three hundred and fifty feet high and eighty-seven feet broad, surrounded by a great moat, fed by the waters of the Euphrates River). Within the city were supplies that would sustain it for 20 years. Therefore the king felt he had little cause for concern.

- Source: Bible Knowledge Commentary

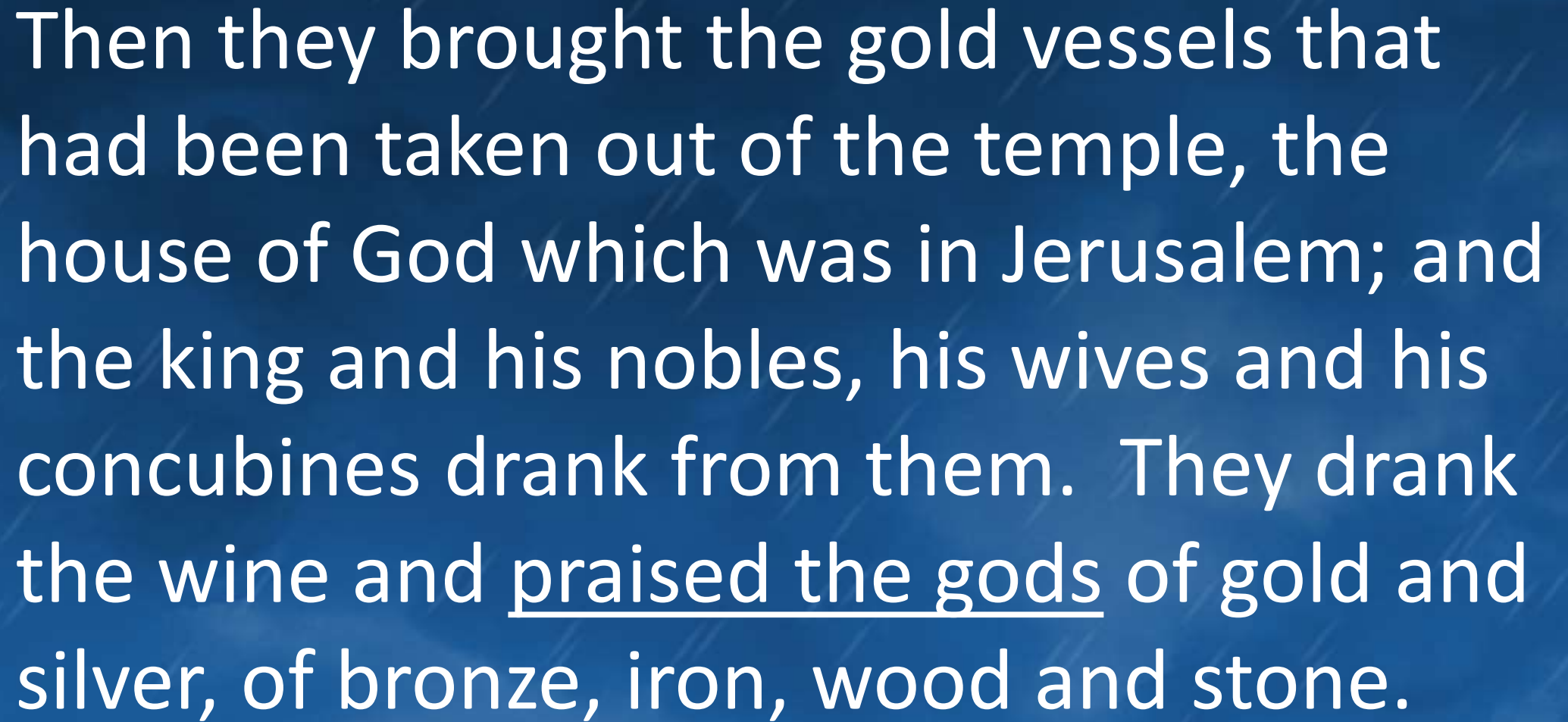
EPIC TALES

Setting of the Story

- Archeologists have unearthed the banquet hall of Babylon and they tell us that it was large enough to feed 5,000 people at a single, expansively long table. The room is said to have contained 4,000 columns. – Source: J. Mike Minnix
- The city is so large it can grow its own produce, water in abundance. It is impregnable and invincible. No engine device at that time could breach those walls; no army could storm those gates. And in contempt, Belshazzar, inside the safety of the city that could be besieged forever and never fall, throws this party. But what the inebriated king did not know is that the strength of a kingdom, and the strength of a city, and the strength of a nation is never on the outside, but on the inside. He did not know that an empire, won by war, must be consolidated by justice and righteousness. - Source: W.A.

Criswell

EPIC TALES

A blue whale's tail is visible on the left side of the image, emerging from the dark blue ocean. The background is a deep blue sky with a subtle pattern of white diagonal lines.

Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

Daniel 5:3-4

EPIC TALES

A whale's tail is visible on the left side of the image, emerging from the blue ocean. The background is a deep blue sky with a subtle pattern of white lines.

**Looking
back**

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

Daniel 1:1-2

EPIC TALES

Looking back

Also King Cyrus brought out the articles of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and put in the house of his gods; and Cyrus, king of Persia, had them brought out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and he counted them out to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. Now this was their number: 30 gold dishes, 1,000 silver dishes, 29 duplicates; 30 gold bowls, 410 silver bowls of a second kind and 1,000 other articles. All the articles of gold and silver numbered 5,400. Sheshbazzar brought them all up with the exiles who went up from Babylon to Jerusalem. Ezra 1:7-11

EPIC TALES




The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans Under the Command of Titus, AD 70, by David Roberts

Looking back

- Nabonidus, Belshazzar's father, had attempted to strengthen the Babylonian religion. In keeping with that, this act by his son may have been an attempt to undo the influence of Nebuchadnezzar's honoring the God of Israel.
- "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?' Daniel 4:34–35

EPIC TALES

A close-up photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the dark blue ocean. The tail is dark grey and has a white patch near the tip. The water is choppy with white foam around the base of the tail.

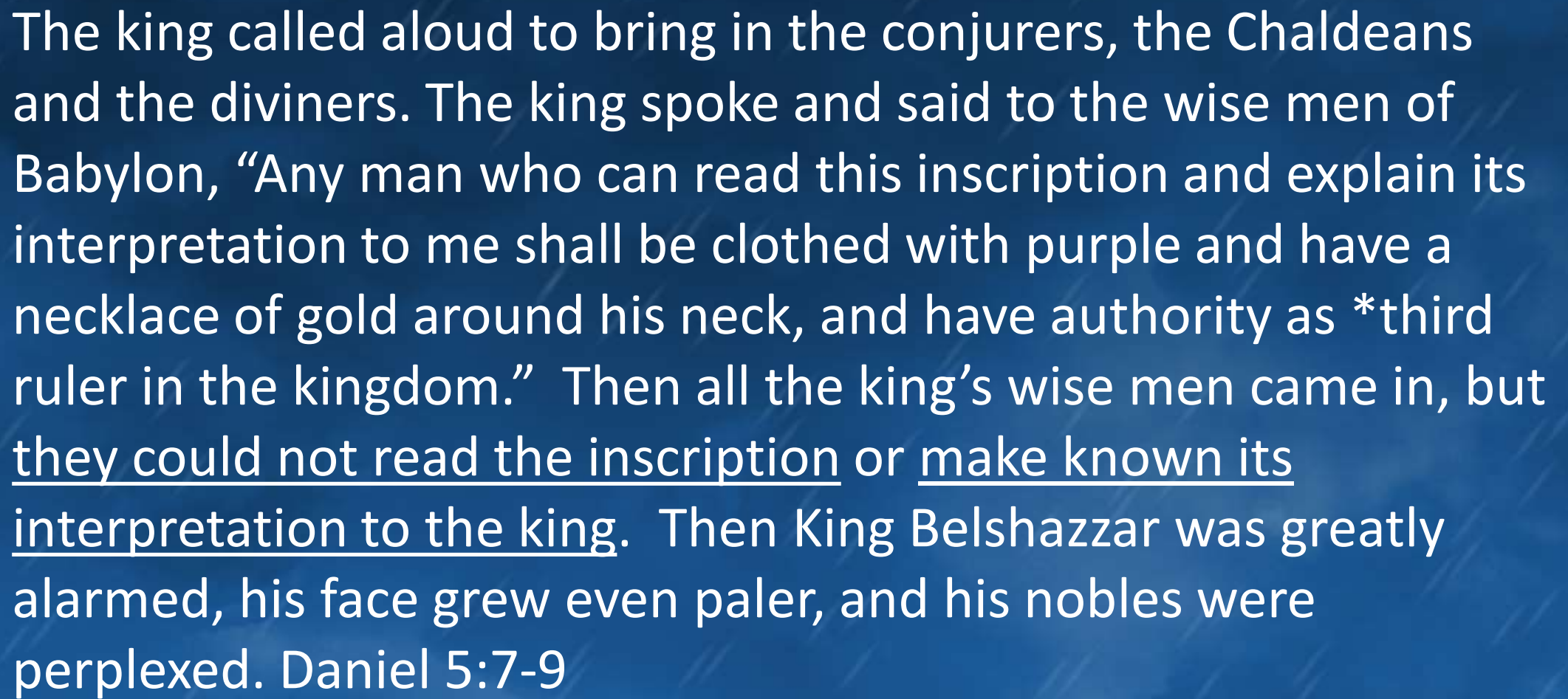
Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. Then the king's face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together.

Daniel 5:5-6

EPIC TALES



וְאֵלֶיךָ תִּשְׁבָּעוּ
וְאֵלֶיךָ תִּשְׁבָּעוּ

The background of the slide features a photograph of a whale's tail breaching the surface of the ocean. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a lighter blue. The whale's tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the point of exit from the water.

The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, “Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as *third ruler in the kingdom.” Then all the king’s wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew even paler, and his nobles were perplexed. Daniel 5:7-9

*Since Nabonidus was king and Belshazzar his coregent, the highest office to be conferred was that of the third highest ruler. The king’s offer shows the extremity of his fear. – Source: Bible Knowledge Commentary

EPIC TALES

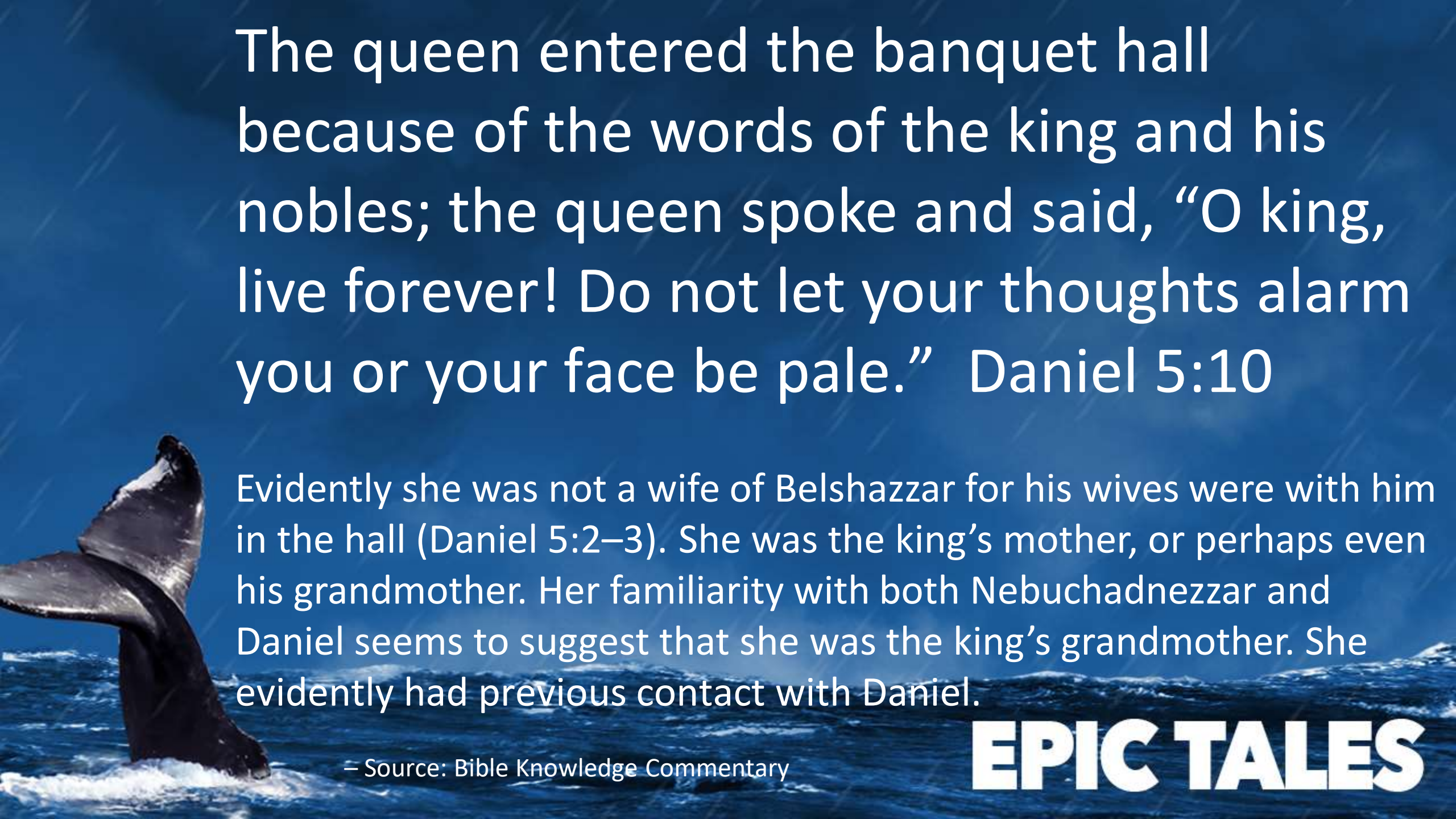
“they could not read the inscription” Daniel 5:8

Could the king’s advisors not read Aramaic?

- Some think it was written in a code
- Some think it was written vertically, not horizontally
- Some think it was written backwards
- Some think the first two letters of each word were interchanged



EPIC TALES

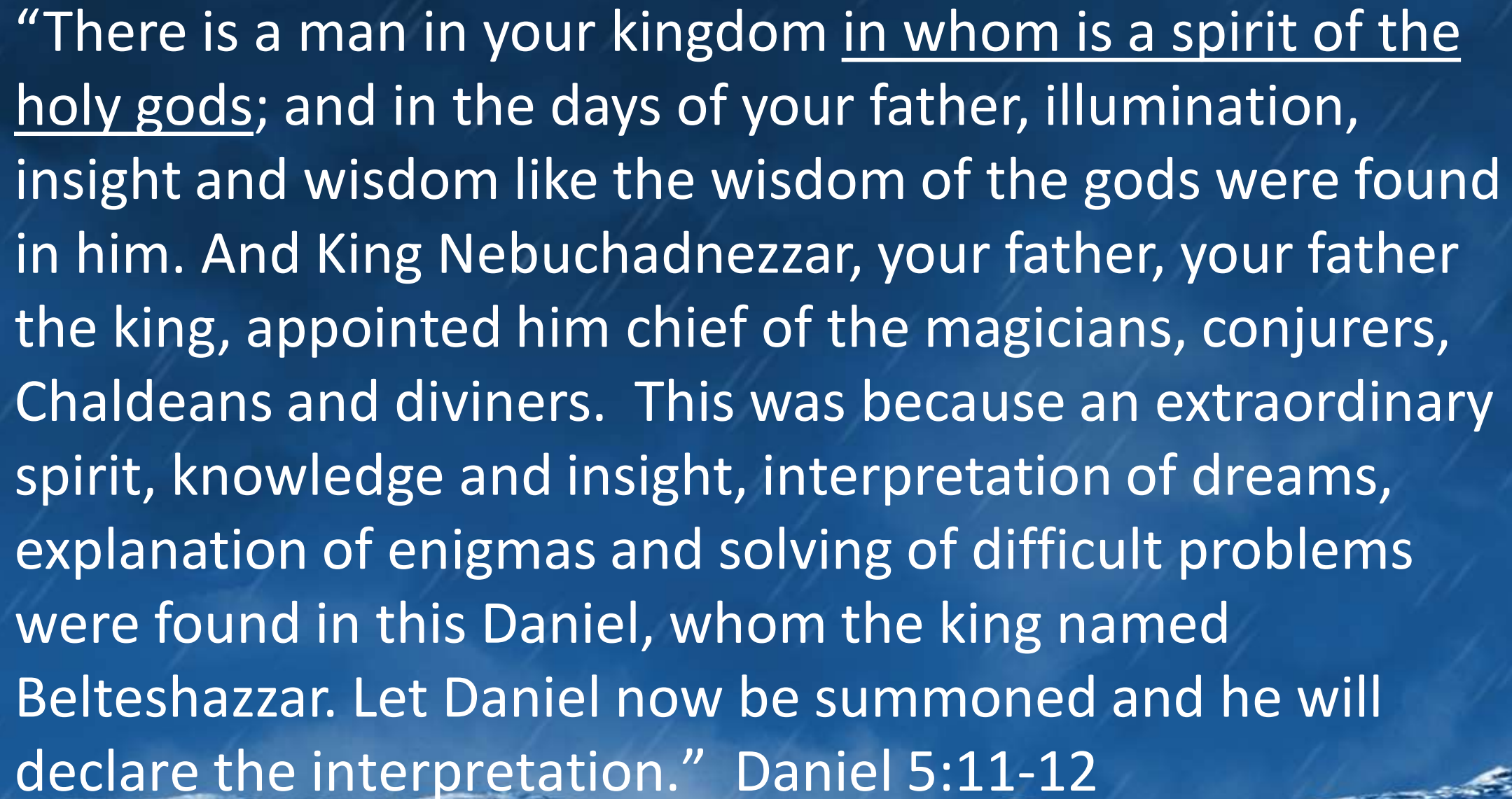
The background of the image is a deep blue sky with a subtle pattern of white diagonal lines. In the lower-left corner, a dark whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean, creating white foam. The text is overlaid on this background.

The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; the queen spoke and said, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale.” Daniel 5:10

Evidently she was not a wife of Belshazzar for his wives were with him in the hall (Daniel 5:2–3). She was the king’s mother, or perhaps even his grandmother. Her familiarity with both Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel seems to suggest that she was the king’s grandmother. She evidently had previous contact with Daniel.

– Source: Bible Knowledge Commentary

EPIC TALES

A whale's tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean, creating a splash of white water. The background is a clear, deep blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

“There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans and diviners. This was because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation.” Daniel 5:11-12

*Daniel is almost 90 years old

EPIC TALES


Setting of the Story

When Nebuchadnezzar died, his son Evil-Merodach took the kingdom, reigned over three years, and Neriglissar murdered him. And in that conspiracy and in that usurpation, the old ministers were discarded and shunted aside. And among them, of course, was Daniel. And for a generation, he had lived in obscurity. But in the great crisis, the old, aged prophet, he's toward ninety years of age now, he's sent for, and he stands before the king.

– Source: W.A. Criswell

EPIC TALES

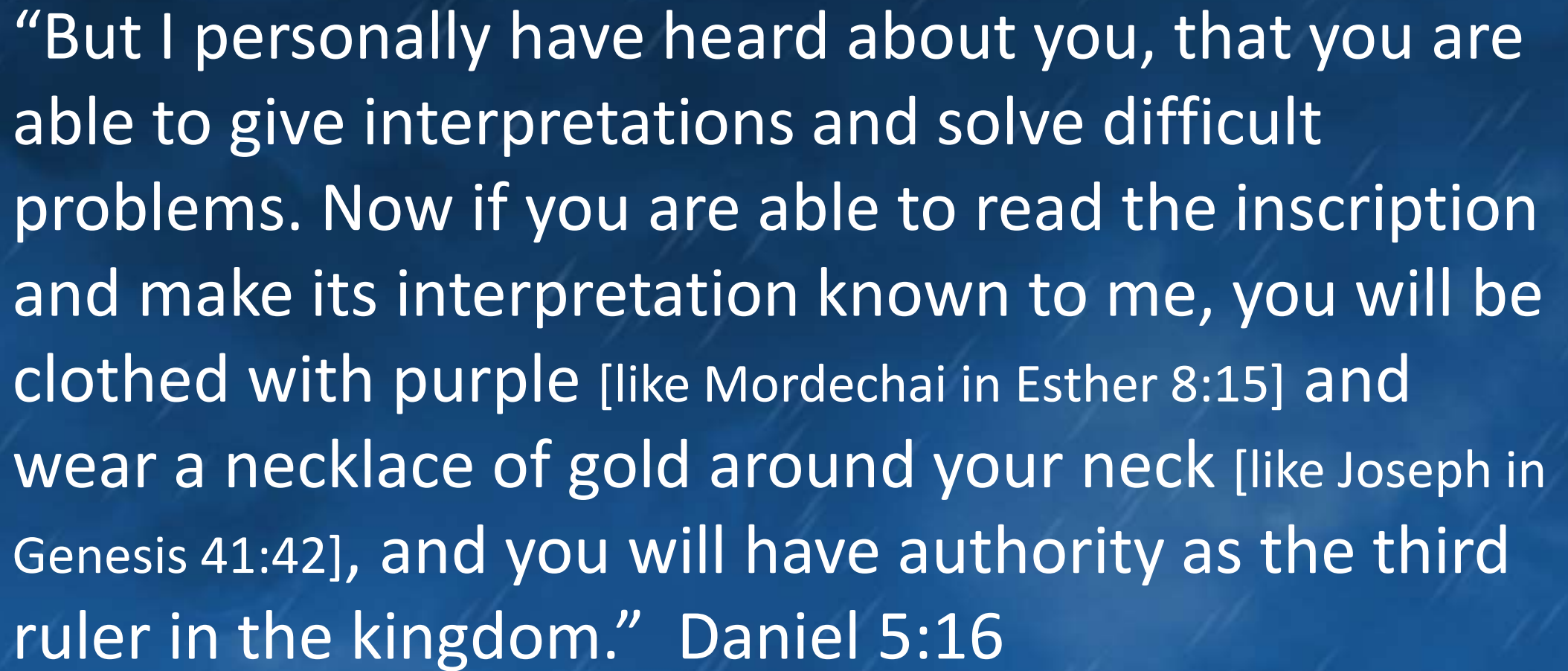




Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke and said to Daniel, “Are you that Daniel who is one of *the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you. Just now the wise men and the conjurers were brought in before me that they might read this inscription and make its interpretation known to me, but they could not declare the interpretation of the message.” Daniel 5:13-15

* the intelligent and talented young people taken as slaves

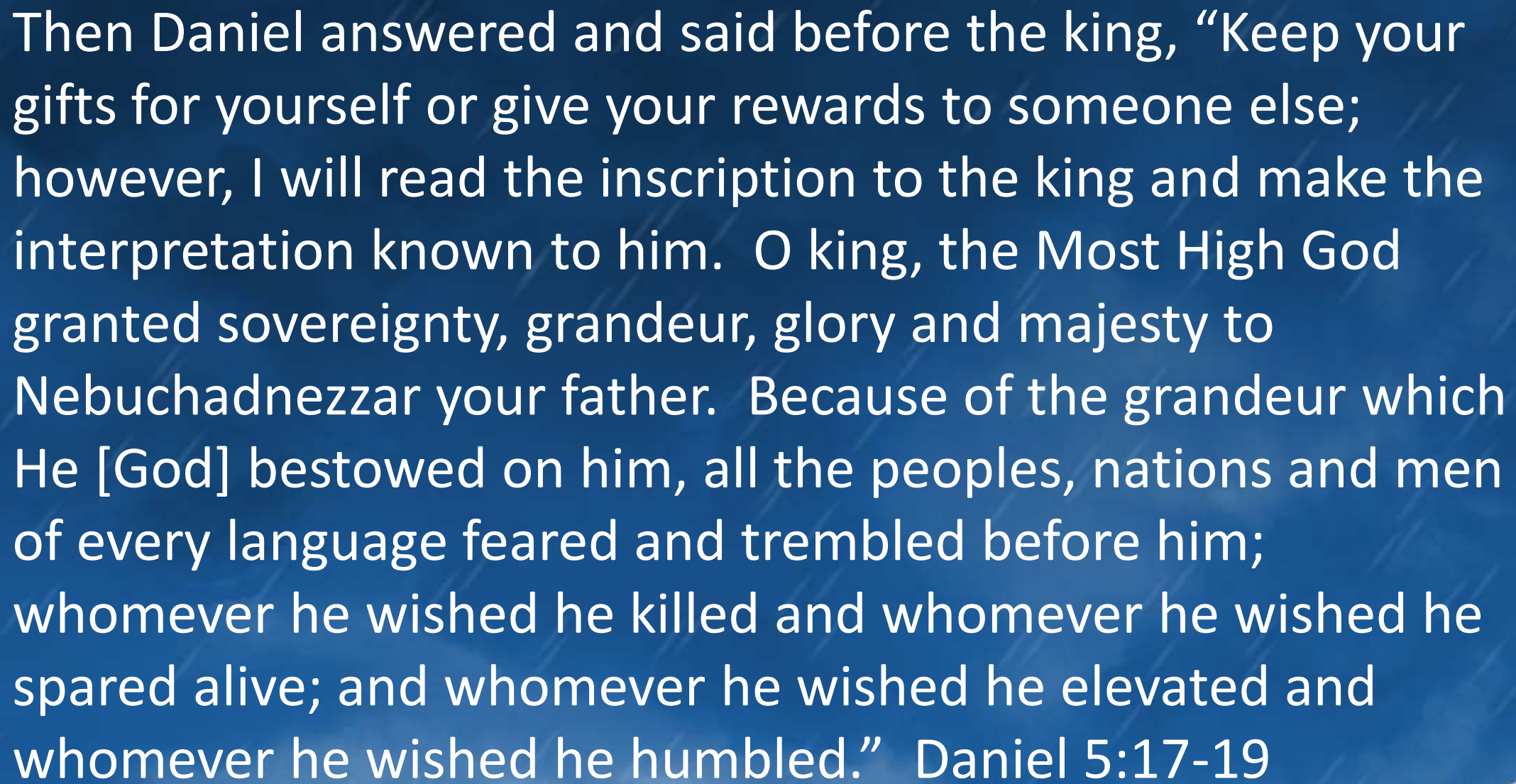
EPIC TALES

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the surface of a deep blue ocean. The water is slightly choppy with white foam around the base of the tail. The background is a clear, bright blue sky.

“But I personally have heard about you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple [like Mordechai in Esther 8:15] and wear a necklace of gold around your neck [like Joseph in Genesis 41:42], and you will have authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.” Daniel 5:16

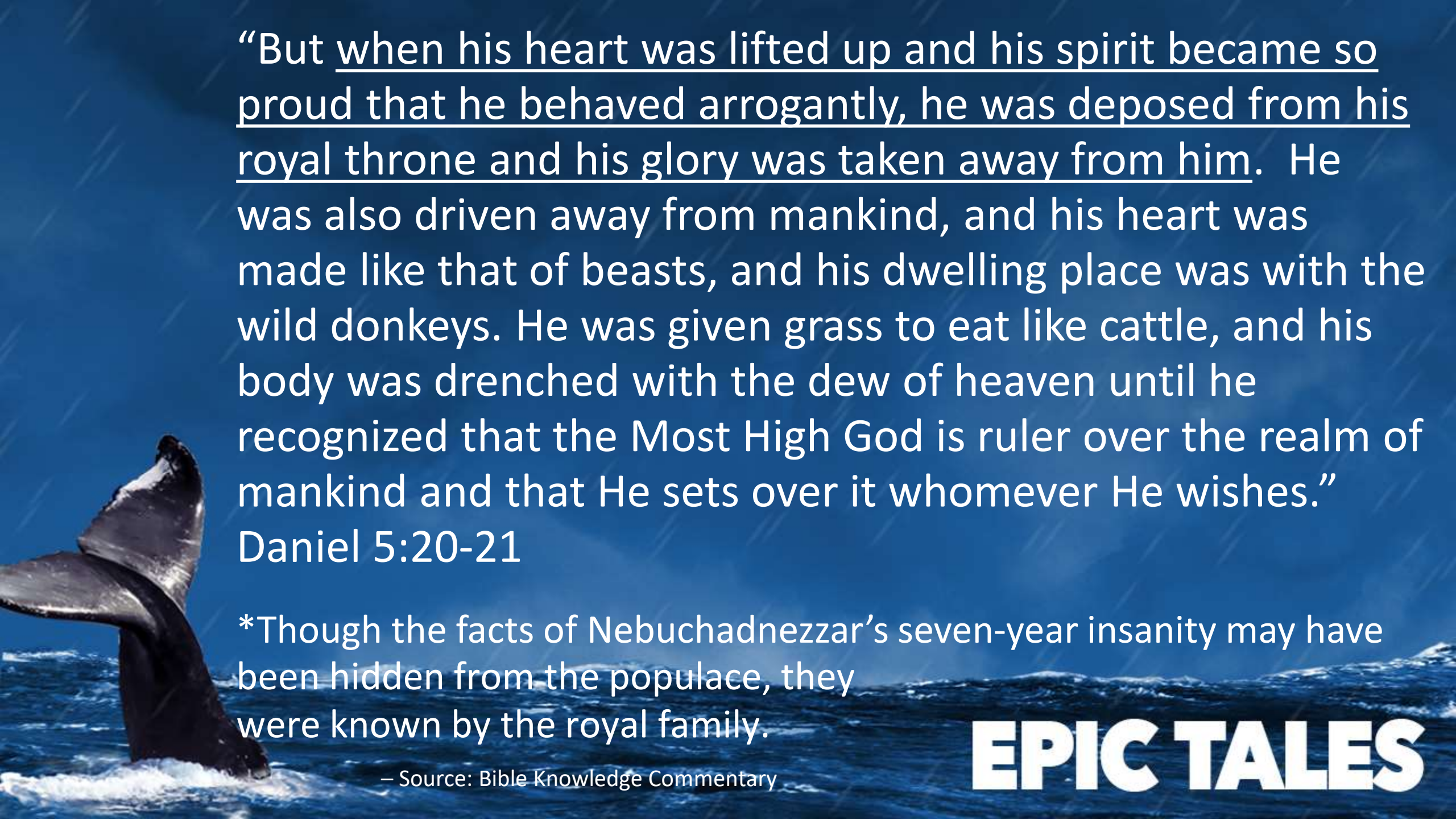
*When things are difficult, non-believers will often turn to believers to get spiritual answers and be very grateful for the counsel

EPIC TALES



Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him. O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father. Because of the grandeur which He [God] bestowed on him, all the peoples, nations and men of every language feared and trembled before him; whomever he wished he killed and whomever he wished he spared alive; and whomever he wished he elevated and whomever he wished he humbled.” Daniel 5:17-19

EPIC TALES

A whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean, creating a splash of white water. The background is a clear, deep blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.


“But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne and his glory was taken away from him. He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like that of beasts, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes.”

Daniel 5:20-21

*Though the facts of Nebuchadnezzar’s seven-year insanity may have been hidden from the populace, they were known by the royal family.

– Source: Bible Knowledge Commentary

EPIC TALES

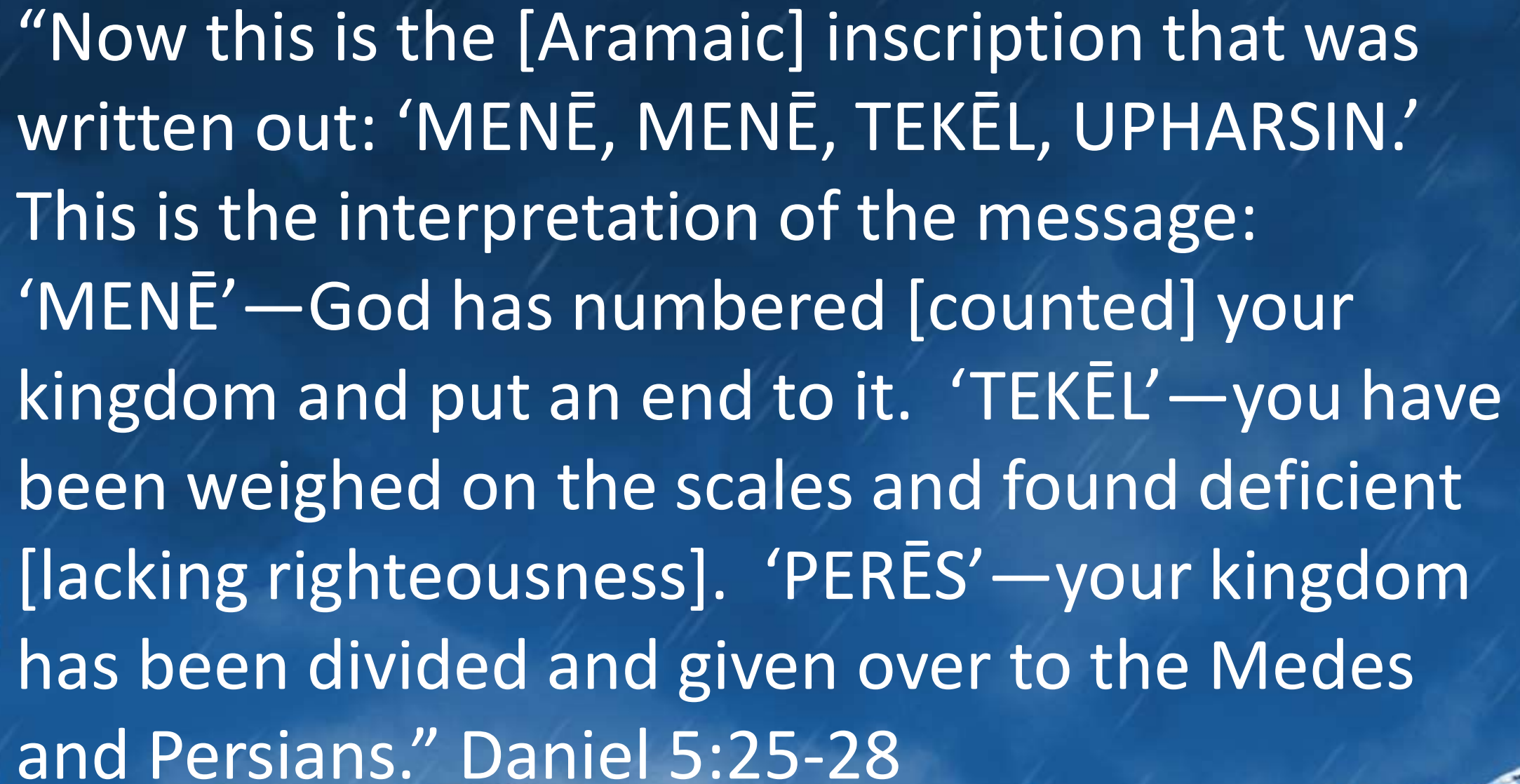


“Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified. Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out.” Daniel 5:22-24

EPIC TALES

Rembrandt, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 1635





“Now this is the [Aramaic] inscription that was written out: ‘MENĒ, MENĒ, TEKĒL, UPHARSIN.’ This is the interpretation of the message: ‘MENĒ’—God has numbered [counted] your kingdom and put an end to it. ‘TEKĒL’—you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient [lacking righteousness]. ‘PERĒS’—your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.” Daniel 5:25-28

EPIC TALES

מנא מנא תקל ופרסינ

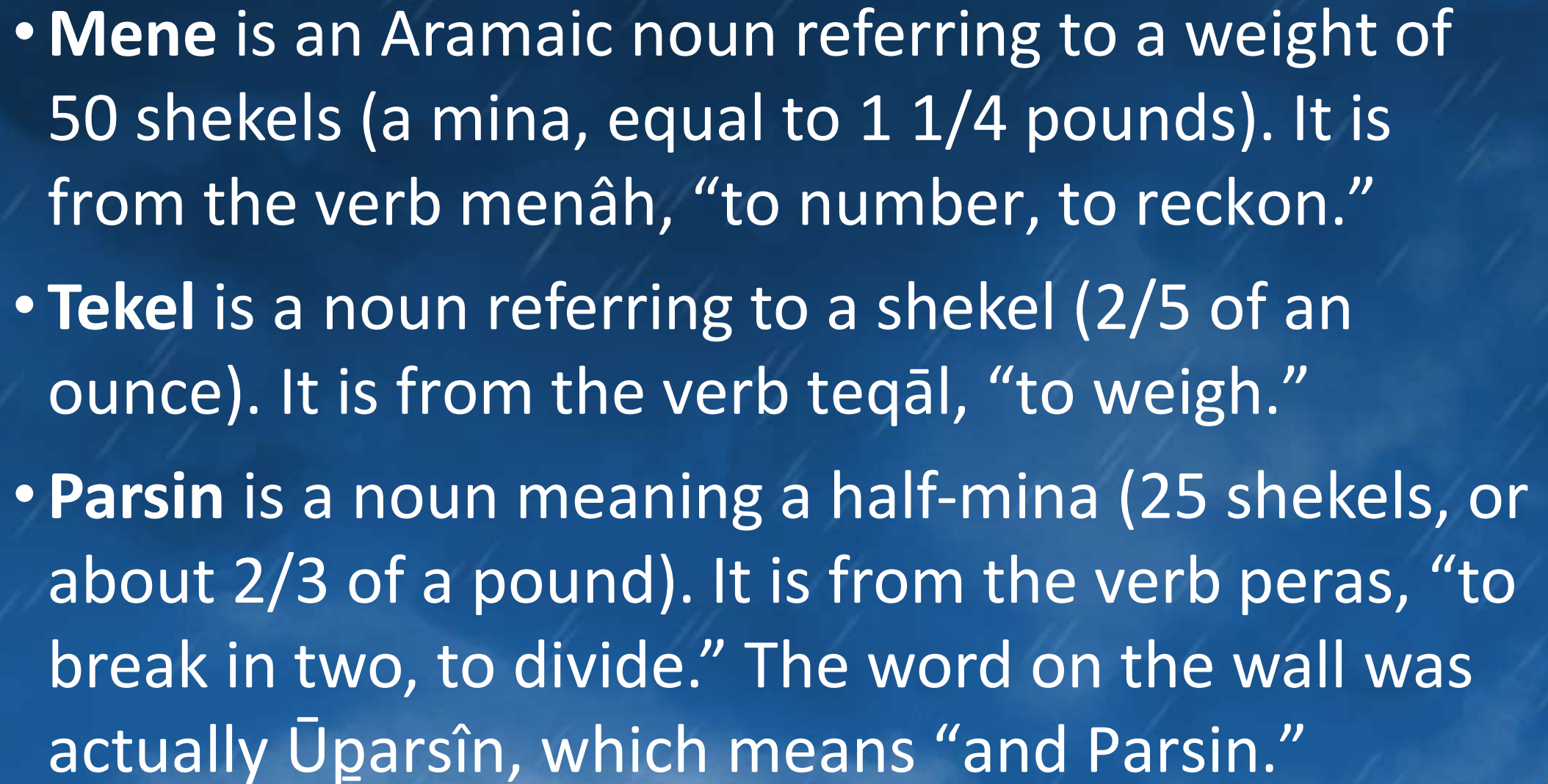


EPIC TALES

4 3 2 1
מִנָּא מִנָּא תִּקְל וּפְרָסִין

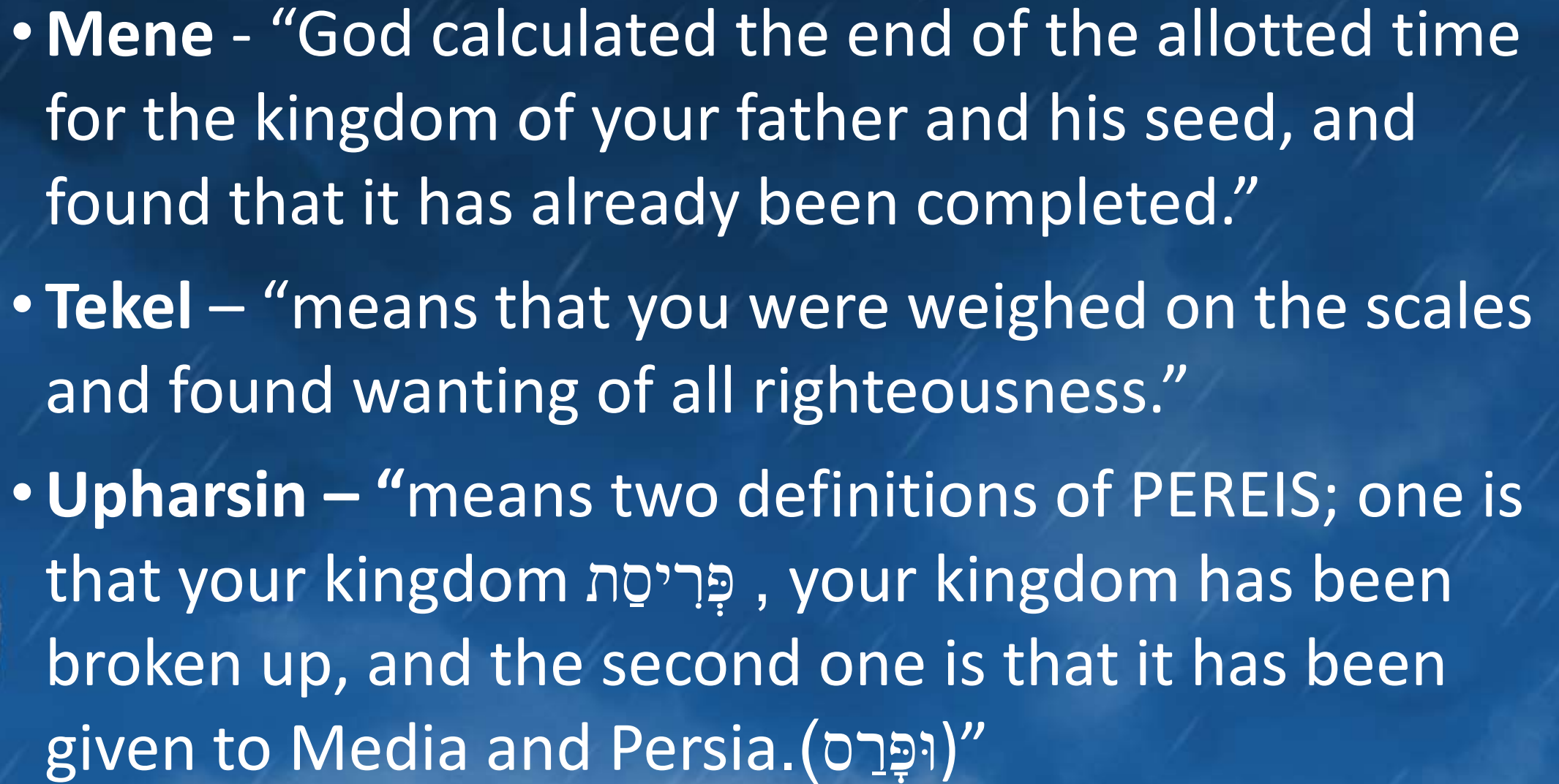
1 2 3 4
Mene mene tekel upharsin

The Chaldean wise men are unable to read the writing on the wall, let alone interpret it, but Daniel does so by supplying vowels in two different ways, first so the words are read as nouns, then as verbs.

- 
- **Mene** is an Aramaic noun referring to a weight of 50 shekels (a mina, equal to 1 1/4 pounds). It is from the verb menâh, “to number, to reckon.”
 - **Tekel** is a noun referring to a shekel (2/5 of an ounce). It is from the verb teqāl, “to weigh.”
 - **Parsin** is a noun meaning a half-mina (25 shekels, or about 2/3 of a pound). It is from the verb peras, “to break in two, to divide.” The word on the wall was actually Ūparsîn, which means “and Parsin.”

-Source: Bible Knowledge Commentary

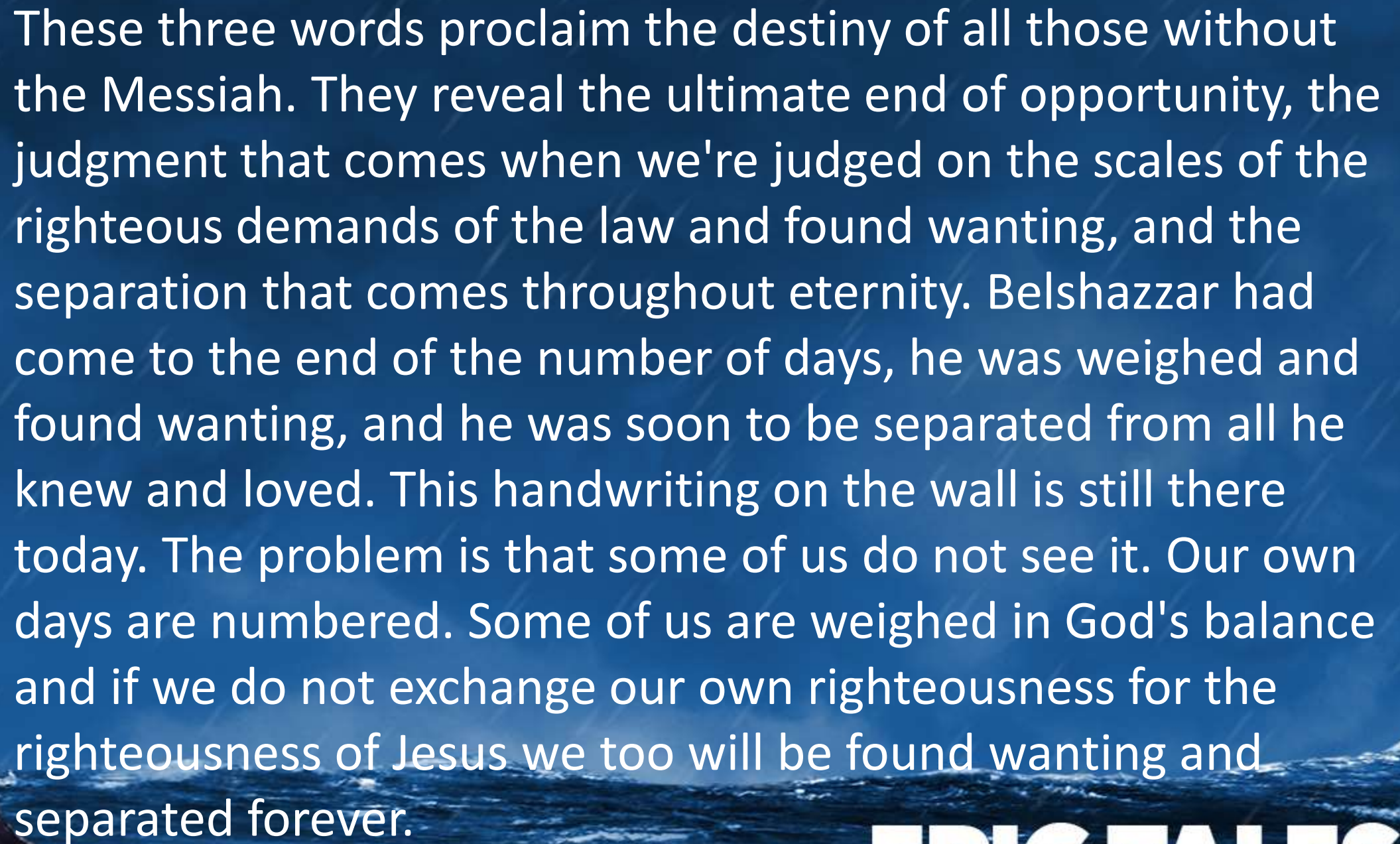
EPIC TALES

- 
- **Mene** - “God calculated the end of the allotted time for the kingdom of your father and his seed, and found that it has already been completed.”
 - **Tekel** – “means that you were weighed on the scales and found wanting of all righteousness.”
 - **Upharsin** – “means two definitions of PEREIS; one is that your kingdom פְּרִיסָה , your kingdom has been broken up, and the second one is that it has been given to Media and Persia. (וּפָרְסָה)”

- Source: Rashi

EPIC TALES

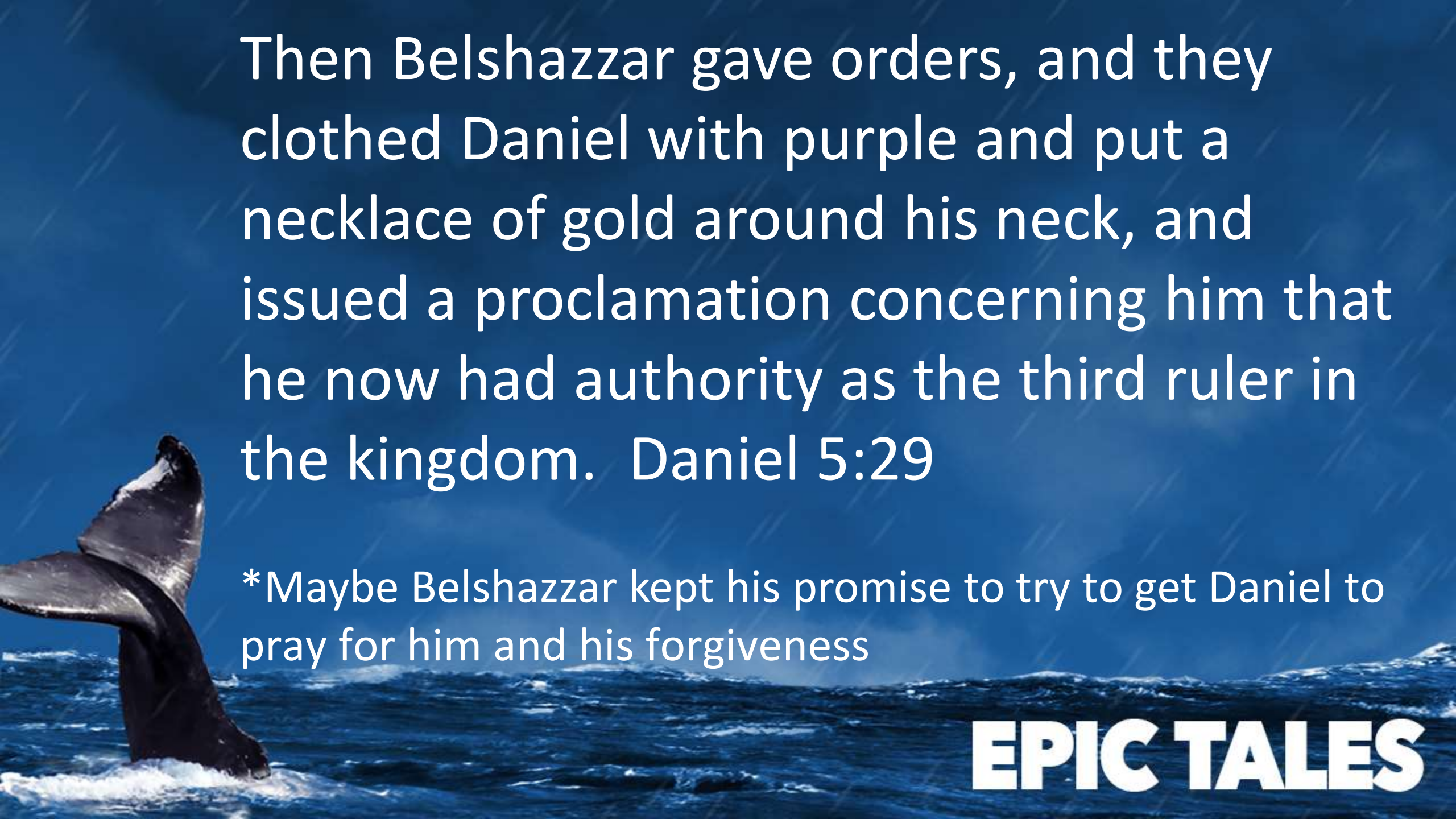


A whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean, creating a splash of white water. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

These three words proclaim the destiny of all those without the Messiah. They reveal the ultimate end of opportunity, the judgment that comes when we're judged on the scales of the righteous demands of the law and found wanting, and the separation that comes throughout eternity. Belshazzar had come to the end of the number of days, he was weighed and found wanting, and he was soon to be separated from all he knew and loved. This handwriting on the wall is still there today. The problem is that some of us do not see it. Our own days are numbered. Some of us are weighed in God's balance and if we do not exchange our own righteousness for the righteousness of Jesus we too will be found wanting and separated forever.

– Source: O.S. Hawkins

EPIC TALES

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the dark blue ocean. The tail is dark grey and has a white patch near the tip. The water is choppy with white foam at the base of the tail.

Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom. Daniel 5:29

*Maybe Belshazzar kept his promise to try to get Daniel to pray for him and his forgiveness

EPIC TALES

That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. Daniel 5:30

*The river Euphrates ran into the city through a tunnel, and while the party was going on, the enemy Darius and his soldiers found a dried lake bed and diverted the Euphrates into it. Then, they marched into the city by going through the empty water tunnel and under the gates. They caught the Babylonians totally unprepared for battle. The king was killed and the Medes and Persians took Babylon captive.

*King Belshazzar was either assassinated by the Medes who invaded his banquet or by his own counselors who rebelled after they heard the interpretation of Daniel.

EPIC TALES



Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (Daniel 2)

The rule of the Medes and Persians was the second phase of the times of the Gentiles (the silver chest and arms of the image in Daniel 2). The events in Daniel 5 illustrate that God is sovereign and moves according to His predetermined plans. Those events also anticipate the final overthrow of all Gentile world powers that rebel against God and are characterized by moral and spiritual corruption. Such a judgment, anticipated in Psalm 2:4–6 and Revelation 19:15–16, will be fulfilled at the Second Advent of Jesus Christ to this earth.

- Source: Bible Knowledge Commentary



Head of Gold

ASSYRIO-BABYLONISH MONARCHY
THE LION

(Nebuchadnezzar - Belchassar)

671 - 538 B.C.

Breast and Arms of Silver

MEDO - PERSIAN EMPIRE
THE BEAR

(Cyrus and Darius)

538 - 331 B.C.

Belly and Thighs of Brass

GRECO - MACEDONIAN KINGDOM
THE LEOPARD

(Alexander the Great)

331 - 160 B.C.

Legs of Iron

THE GREAT ROMAN EMPIRE
THE DRAGON

(under the Caesars)

160 B.C. - 395 A.D.

Feet and Toes - Part Iron and Part Clay

KINGDOMS OF THE (10) TOES

- | | | | |
|------------|-----|-------------|------|
| 1. Italy | 496 | 6. Portugal | 1138 |
| 2. France | 752 | 7. Prussia | 1139 |
| 3. England | 803 | 8. Austria | 1159 |
| 4. Belgium | 806 | 9. Spain | 1179 |
| 5. Holland | 922 | 10. Greece | 1829 |

496 - 1829 A.D.



So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two. Daniel 5:31

The nouns are monetary weights: a *mānê*, equivalent to a Jewish mina or sixty shekels, a *taqêl*, equivalent to a shekel, and *pārsîn*, meaning "half-pieces". If the "half-pieces" means two half-shekels, then the various weights—a *mānê* or sixty shekels, another shekel, and two half-shekels—add up to 62, which the tale gives as the age of Darius the Mede, indicating that God's will is being worked out.

- Source: Wikipedia

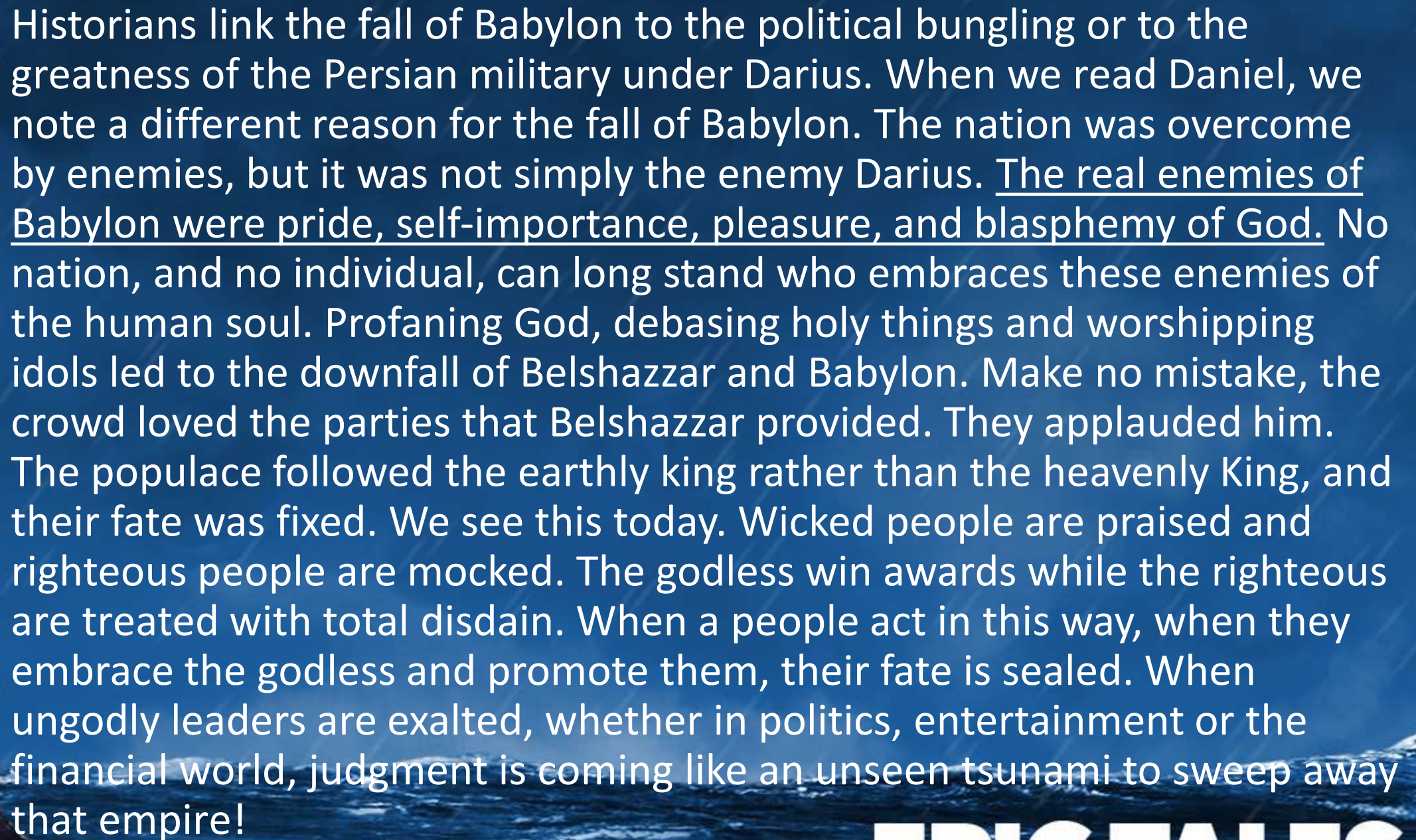
EPIC TALES



A dramatic scene of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the dark, turbulent ocean under a stormy, dark blue sky. The water is choppy with white foam from the waves. The overall mood is epic and mysterious.

Why did the kingdom fall?

EPIC TALES

A photograph of a whale's tail breaching the surface of the ocean. The tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the point of exit. The background is a clear blue sky with some light clouds. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Historians link the fall of Babylon to the political bungling or to the greatness of the Persian military under Darius. When we read Daniel, we note a different reason for the fall of Babylon. The nation was overcome by enemies, but it was not simply the enemy Darius. The real enemies of Babylon were pride, self-importance, pleasure, and blasphemy of God. No nation, and no individual, can long stand who embraces these enemies of the human soul. Profaning God, debasing holy things and worshipping idols led to the downfall of Belshazzar and Babylon. Make no mistake, the crowd loved the parties that Belshazzar provided. They applauded him. The populace followed the earthly king rather than the heavenly King, and their fate was fixed. We see this today. Wicked people are praised and righteous people are mocked. The godless win awards while the righteous are treated with total disdain. When a people act in this way, when they embrace the godless and promote them, their fate is sealed. When ungodly leaders are exalted, whether in politics, entertainment or the financial world, judgment is coming like an unseen tsunami to sweep away that empire!

- Source: J. Mike Minnix

EPIC TALES

World Empires

Persian Empire	550 - 334 BC
Roman Empires	31 BC - 476 AD
Byzantine Empire	330 - 1453 AD
Arab Empire	632 - 1917 AD
Spanish Empire	1469 - 1898 AD
Ottoman Empire	1293 - 1917 AD
British Empire	1588 - 1947 AD
Russian Empire	1721 - 1917 AD
United States	1776 - ?

EPIC TALES



What about our culture today?

These same fingers had written before and they will write again. When God sent the plagues upon ancient Egypt, the Pharaoh's counselor came to him after the plague of the lice and exclaimed, "This is the finger of God." (Exodus 8:19) When Moses was in the wilderness God gave him the two tablets of the testimony of the law, tablets of stone written with the finger of God. (Exodus 31:18) Centuries later God came and clothed Himself in human flesh and once again we read that when He was confronted with a woman in adultery who was hovered over by self-righteous Pharisees, "Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with his finger." (John 8:6) In Babylon, God visited Belshazzar's drunken party and left the handwriting on the wall for all to see. The Lord Himself came to Belshazzar's feast and wrote a message of judgment on the wall. We need to be reminded that His handwriting is still on the wall today as a warning to our own culture. Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin is written across our culture today.

– Source: O.S. Hawkins

EPIC TALES

**What
about
our
culture
today?**

“If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:13-14

EPIC TALES

A dramatic scene featuring a whale's tail breaching the surface of a dark blue, stormy sea. The sky is filled with rain and several bright lightning bolts. The overall mood is intense and powerful.

EPIC TALES

RELEARNING THE ANCIENT BIBLE STORIES IN A BRAND-NEW WAY