

of the discoveries of the ancient world have been seen to fit exactly with the statements of the Bible. Often these discoveries have shed a flood of light on Biblical statements. This has not always been the case. After all most of the OT was written a long distance from the great centers of the ancient empires. In those days travel was often slow and hazardous. Most of our archaeological records are in languages quite different from Hebrew. The Bible only occasionally refers to events in the great empires of antiquity, and the records of those empires only occasionally refer to events in Palestine. It's natural then that sometimes there would seem at first to be a conflict between archaeological discoveries and the Biblical facts.

A very interesting case of this type relates to the fifth chapter of the book of Daniel. Most of you are familiar with the story contained in that chapter. Yet I shall refresh your memory as to its principal details. I trust many of you have your Bibles with you tonight and will turn to Daniel 5 as I remind you of the principle it contains. It begins with the statement: Belshazzar the king made a great feast. Then it tells how the king had his servants bring out the gold and silver vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem. Using these sacred vessels Belshazzar and his men spent some time in debauchery. Then we read in v. 5 that the finger of a man's hand came out and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace. The king saw the part of the hand that wrote. King Belshazzar became curious and desired to know what it meant. He was not a man who possessed great patience, so we read in v. 7 that he called in his wise men and said to them, Whosoever shall read this writing and show 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.