

# Daniel 5:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

## Analysis

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Daniel specifies the sacrilege: 'But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee...and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.' The indictment contrasts Belshazzar's worship of lifeless idols with the living God who controls his very breath. The irony is devastating—praising objects 'which see not, nor hear, nor know' while ignoring God who holds his 'breath' and controls 'all thy ways.' Every breath Belshazzar took was gift from the God he insulted.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern temple vessels captured in warfare were placed in victors' temples, symbolizing one god's supremacy over another. Nebuchadnezzar had stored Jerusalem temple vessels in Babylon god-houses (1:2). Belshazzar's use of these sacred objects for drunken revelry while praising Babylonian gods

constituted deliberate sacrilege. The catalog of idol materials (silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, stone) mocks their composition from created matter. This echoes prophetic ridicule of idolatry throughout Scripture (Isaiah 44:9-20; Psalm 115:4-8).

## **Related Passages**

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## **Study Questions**

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1. How does the contrast between lifeless idols and the living God who controls our breath expose idolatry's ultimate foolishness?
2. What does Belshazzar's use of sacred vessels teach about how treating holy things with contempt reveals the heart's rebellion against God?

## Interlinear Text

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וְעַל	מָרָא	שָׁמַי אַן	הִתְרוֹמָּה מִתְּ	וּלְמַאֲנֵי א	דִּי
thysself against	the Lord	of heaven	But hast lifted up	the vessels	H1768
H5922	H4756	H8065	H7313	H3984	
וּבְרִיכְתָּהּ יְיָ	וְאָתָּה וְאַתָּה	קִדְמָה יְיָ	הֵיכָּל יְיָ	וְאָתָּה וְאַתָּה	וְאָתָּה וְאַתָּה
of his house	and they have brought	before	thee and thou	and thy lords	
H1005	H858	H6925	H607	H7261	
וְלֹאֵלֹהִים א	וְלֹאֵלֹהִים א	וְלֹאֵלֹהִים א	וְלֹאֵלֹהִים א	וְלֹאֵלֹהִים א	וְלֹאֵלֹהִים א
thy wives	and thy concubines	wine	have drunk	H0	and the God
H7695	H3904	H2562	H8355		H426
וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א
of silver	and gold	of brass	iron	wood	and stone
H3702	H1722	H5174	H6523	H636	H69
וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א
hast thou not	which see	hast thou not	hear	hast thou not	know
H3809	H2370	H3809	H8086	H3809	H3046
וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א
in them and thou hast praised	and the God	H1768	thy breath	in whose hand	
H7624	H426		H5396	H3028	
וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א	וְאֶבֶן א
is and whose are all	thy ways	H0	hast thou not	glorified	
H3606	H735		H3809	H1922	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Job 12:10** (Parallel theme): In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

**Daniel 4:37** (Resurrection): Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

**Isaiah 2:12** (References Lord): For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

**Isaiah 37:23** (Parallel theme): Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

**Jeremiah 10:23** (References Lord): O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

**Job 31:4** (Parallel theme): Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

**Proverbs 20:24** (References Lord): Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

**Jeremiah 50:29** (References Lord): Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel.

**Hebrews 4:13** (Parallel theme): Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

**Isaiah 37:19** (References God): And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.