

# Daniel 5:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

## Analysis

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Despite Daniel's stinging rebuke and pronouncement of doom, Belshazzar fulfills his promise: clothing Daniel in scarlet, putting gold chain around his neck, and proclaiming him third ruler. This shows the king's character—he keeps his word regarding rewards while ignoring the spiritual message. Perhaps he hoped honoring the prophet might avert judgment; perhaps he was simply following through mechanically on his promise. Either way, these honors prove empty: Belshazzar dies that very night (v.30), making Daniel's 'third ruler' position obsolete before dawn. This demonstrates worldly honors' transience: political positions, royal appointments, and earthly recognition pass away quickly. The irony is profound: while bestowing temporary honors on Daniel, the king ignores the eternal implications of the interpretation. This warns against valuing earthly rewards over spiritual realities.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern rulers took oaths and public promises seriously—failing to honor them would damage royal credibility. Belshazzar's fulfillment of the reward demonstrates this cultural value, even in hopeless circumstances (the city would fall within hours). The scarlet clothing, gold chain, and proclamation as third ruler had immediate effect—those present witnessed Daniel's elevation. Yet history

rendered it meaningless: by morning, Belshazzar was dead, Babylon had fallen to Persia, and the political order Daniel was elevated within ceased to exist. This historical detail emphasizes earthly honors' impermanence compared to eternal realities. Daniel's true honor came not from Belshazzar's empty title but from faithful service to God and preservation into the Persian period (chapters 6, 9-12).

## Related Passages

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**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. What does Belshazzar's fulfilling his promise while ignoring the spiritual message teach about selective obedience?
2. How does Daniel's temporary honor (third ruler) becoming obsolete overnight illustrate earthly positions' transience?
3. Why might Daniel have accepted these honors after initially refusing them (v.17)?

## Interlinear Text

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אֶרְגָּוֹן אֶלֶל	לְדַנְיָאֵל	וְהִלְבֵּשׁוּ	בְּלִשְׁמָצָה רַ	אִמְרָה	בַּיּוֹם יוֹן
with scarlet	Daniel	and they clothed	Belshazzar	commanded	Then
H711	H1841	H3848	H1113	H560	H116
וְהִכָּרָה זֶה	צִמְרֵה הָ	עַל וְהִי	זָהָב אֶלֶל	דִּי	וְהִמְוִנָה אֶלֶל
and made a proclamation	his neck	about	of gold	H1768	and put a chain
H3745	H6676	H5922	H1722		H2002
בְּמַלְכוּתָא:	תִּלְתָּהּ אֶלֶל	שֶׁל יֵט	לְהִי אֶלֶל	דִּי	עַל וְהִי
in the kingdom	the third	ruler	him that he should be	H1768	about
H4437	H8531	H7990	H1934		H5922

## Additional Cross-References

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**Daniel 5:7** (Kingdom): 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.

**Daniel 5:16** (Kingdom): And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

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