

# Daniel 5:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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Belshazzar immediately summons Babylon's wise men—astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers—offering extravagant rewards for interpretation: scarlet/purple clothing (royal colors), gold chain (symbol of high office), and position as 'third ruler' in the kingdom. The offer reveals desperation: the king will give nearly anything for understanding. 'Third ruler' reflects political reality—Nabonidus was first, Belshazzar (co-regent) second, so the highest available position was third. This echoes chapter 2 and 4's pattern: when confronted with divine revelation, human wisdom proves inadequate. The wise men will fail (v.8), preparing for Daniel's entrance and interpretation. This repeated pattern demonstrates that spiritual understanding comes through divine gift, not natural ability, education, or compensation. Truth can't be purchased; it must be revealed.

## Historical Context

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Scarlet/purple dyes were expensive in the ancient world—requiring thousands of murex snails to produce small amounts of dye, making purple clothing a status symbol reserved for royalty and highest officials. A gold chain represented official authority—visible symbol of the king's favor and delegated power. The offer of

'third ruler' position showed genuine desperation: Belshazzar would share his power with whoever could interpret. This reflected ancient beliefs that those who could decode divine messages possessed supernatural wisdom worthy of highest honor. Yet all their learning, all their methods, all the promised rewards couldn't unlock God's message. Only Daniel, empowered by God's Spirit, could interpret—and he refused the rewards (v.17), showing his motivation was God's glory, not personal gain.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. What does Belshazzar's lavish offer of rewards reveal about his desperation and misunderstanding of spiritual truth?
2. How does the inability of highly educated experts to interpret God's message challenge modern confidence in human expertise?
3. Why can't spiritual truth be purchased or earned through human effort, education, or compensation?

## Interlinear Text

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כַּשְׂדִּי א	לֹא שָׁפִי א	לְהַעֲלֶה	בְּחַיִּל	מֶלֶךְ א	יָקָר ה
the Chaldeans	in the astrologers	to bring	aloud	And the king	cried
H3779	H826	H5954	H2429	H4430	H7123
בְּבָבֶל	לְחַכֵּי י	וְאָמַר רַ	מֶלֶךְ א	עָנָה	וְגִזְבִּי א
men of Babylon	to the wise	and said	And the king	spake	and the soothsayers
H895	H2445	H560	H4430	H6032	H1505
וּפְשָׁרָהּ	דָּנָה ה	כְּתֹבָה ה	יָקָר ה	אֶנֶשׁ	כָּל דָּי
me the interpretation	this	writing	cried	Whosoever	
H6591	H1836	H3792	H7123	H606	H1768 H3606
וְהָבָא	דִּי	וְהָמוֹנֶכָּ א	יִלְבֹּשׁ	אֶרְגָּמָן א	וַיַּחַבֵּן נִי
of gold	H1768	and have a chain	thereof shall be clothed	with scarlet	and shew
H1722		H2002	H3848	H711	H2324
יִשְׁלַט:	בְּמַלְכוּתָּ א	וְתִלְתָּ י	צַמֵּר ה	עַל	
ruler	in the kingdom	and shall be the third	his neck	about	
H7981	H4437	H8523	H6676	H5922	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Daniel 5:29** (Kingdom): 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.

**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.

**Daniel 2:48** (Kingdom): Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

**Daniel 2:6** (Parallel theme): But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

**Isaiah 47:13** (Parallel theme): Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.

**Ezekiel 16:11** (Parallel theme): I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

**Daniel 2:2** (Kingdom): Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.