

## Daniel--Daniel 5

### Writing on the Wall

#### I. Additional Scriptures...

1. Vessels of the temple (1 Kings 7:48-50; 2 Chr 4:19-22; Daniel 1:2).
2. Folly of idol worship (Isa 44:10-19; Jer 10:1-5).

#### II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **Babylonian Captivity.** Daniel is likely in his seventies.

Daniel Chapter 1	Daniel Raised to Power	604 B.C.
Daniel Chapter 2	The image dream	602 B.C.
Daniel Chapter 3	The fiery furnace episode	600 B.C.
Daniel Chapter 4	The tree dream	570 B.C.
Daniel Chapter 7	Vision of the four beasts	556 B.C.
Daniel Chapter 8	Vision of the ram and goat	c. 554 B.C.
Daniel Chapter 5	Handwriting on the wall	539 B.C.
Daniel Chapter 9	Vision of seventy heptads	538 B.C.
Daniel Chapter 6	The Lion's Den	537 B.C.
Daniel Chapters 10-12	The final vision	536 B.C.

Content from: James E. Smith, *The Major Prophets*, p. 522

#### III. Summary.

Belshazzar is now on the throne in Babylon and he hosts a feast for 1,000 of his lords. Belshazzar commands that the gold and silver vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem be brought that they might drink from them. They drank wine and praised their gods. In the same hour of this heathen worship there came a man's hand which wrote on the wall. The wise men were brought in and promised great reward if they would read the writing and interpret it. None could do so.

Suggestion was made that Daniel had been used by Nebuchadnezzar to interpret dreams and Daniel was brought in to the king, offered a reward, and asked to make known the interpretation.

Daniel began by reminding Belshazzar about God giving Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom and how pride developed in the heart of Nebuchadnezzar. God caused him to be driven from men and to dwell with the wild asses and to eat grass like oxen. Daniel pointed out the Belshazzar that he had not learned the lesson he should have from the experience of Nebuchadnezzar. Rather than praising the man-made gods, Daniel told him, he should have been praising God, in whose hand was his breath.

The writing on the wall was: MENE, God has numbered your kingdom and finished it; TEKEL, You are weighed in the balances and found wanting; PERES, the kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. That night Belshazzar was slain and Darius became king.

#### IV. Outline.

1. A great feast is celebrated by Belshazzar and a thousand of his lords (1).

2. The command was given to bring the gold and silver vessels taken from the temple so they could drink out of them (2-4).
3. A man's hand came out and began writing on the wall of the palace, frightening the king (5-6).
4. The wise men were called for, but could not interpret the writing (7-9).
5. The queen suggested Daniel might tell the meaning of the words and he was called (10-16).
6. Daniel boldly spoke against the idolatry and pride of the king and read the message to him (17-28).
7. Daniel was given gifts and made the third ruler (29).
8. Belshazzar is slain and Darius the Mede takes the throne (30).

## V. Questions.

### True or False

01. \_\_\_\_\_ Belshazzar was just as full of pride as Nebuchadnezzar had been.
02. \_\_\_\_\_ Belshazzar was the only one allowed to drink from the temple vessels.
03. \_\_\_\_\_ Darius was the son of Belshazzar.
04. \_\_\_\_\_ The king laughed and was amused when he saw the hand writing on the wall.
05. \_\_\_\_\_ Daniel told Belshazzar the gold and silver vessels came from the house of God.

### Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. \_\_\_\_\_ How much time passed between the drinking from the temple vessels and the appearance of the hand which wrote on the wall: (a) three days; (b) one month; (c) less than an hour.
07. \_\_\_\_\_ How much time passed between the time Daniel gave the interpretation of the writing on the wall and the time of Belshazzar's death: (a) one year; (b) five years; (c) less than 24 hours.
08. \_\_\_\_\_ Which of the following did Daniel use to describe Belshazzar's gods: (a) they see not; (b) they hear not; (c) they know not; (d) a,b, & c; (e) none of these.
09. \_\_\_\_\_ Darius was how old when he took the throne: (a) 62; (b) 45; (c) 18.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ What happened to Nebuchadnezzar when he heart was lifted up with pride: (a) he was slain; (b) he was deposed; (c) his glory was taken from him; (d) a & b; (e) b & c.

### Fill in the Blanks

11. At the feast of Belshazzar, the people drank wine and praised the gods of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Belshazzar clothed Daniel with \_\_\_\_\_.
13. "Then was king Belshazzar greatly \_\_\_\_\_, and his countenance was \_\_\_\_\_ in him, and his lords were astonished."
14. Jer 10:\_\_\_\_\_ They are \_\_\_\_\_ as the palm tree, but \_\_\_\_\_ not: they must needs be borne, because they \_\_\_\_\_ go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do \_\_\_\_\_.
15. MENE means God has \_\_\_\_\_ thy kingdom and finished it.

*Each Question is worth 7 Points*

**My Score is:** \_\_\_\_\_

Answers will be given on next week's handout

**ANSWERS for Lesson 01-17...** [01--Nebuchadnezzar, 28-29; 02--certain Chaldeans, 8; 03--most mighty men of the army, 20-22; 04--Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, 18; 05--Jehovah God, 17; 06--c, 1; 07--a, 28; 08--b, 12; 09--c, 19; 10--a, 27; 11--cut, pieces, 29; 12--4, boldness, Jesus; 13--Jeremiah, deliver; 14--not, serve, golden, 18; 15--90, 9, 1.]

**VI. Lessons & Applications.**

1. *In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote ... in that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain* (Daniel 5:5, 30). The swiftness of the response that God gave to the disrespect shown toward sacred items from the temple is remarkable. It brings to mind the action taken against Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10:1-2, or the striking of Uzzah for touching the ark in 2 Samuel 6:6-7. These things are written for our learning (Rom 15:4), and we ought to learn the importance of having the authority of Christ for all that we do in the church (Col 3:17) and of not being disrespectful toward the pattern for the church set forth in the New Testament.
2. *Then the king's countenance was changed and his thoughts troubled him* (Daniel 5:6). The hand coming out from nowhere and writing on the wall was an unusual sight. The king was caused by this sight to change from a mood of revelry to thinking serious thoughts. There is a great deal of warning and instruction in the New Testament about the importance of and need for sober, sound, serious thinking (1 Th 5:6, 8; 1 Tim 3:2, 11; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 4, 6; 1 Pet 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). The time we have on this earth is a time of preparation for eternity. We need to be thinking in such a way that we continue in a state of continual preparedness for the end of time (Mt 25:13). The foolish behavior of the king and his court, sadly, is the way many people spend most of their time today.
3. *...if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet...and shalt be the third ruler* (Daniel 5:16). The king had a strong desire to know what the meaning of the writing was. His interest was riveted on those few words. This writing came from God and God's prophet came to reveal the meaning to the king. I would submit that the written word of God will be of great interest to men if they ever come really to know of its **tremendous importance and value**. So many people have no clue how valuable the Bible and its message of salvation is. How wonderful to find men like the Ethiopian of Acts 8 with open Bibles and open minds. How can we create interest in that which God has written today? If we can answer this question, we can help many souls.
4. *...though thou knewest all this...* (Daniel 5:22). Daniel is bold and straightforward in condemning the king for not acting upon knowledge that he had. The Bible teaches that we have a responsibility as hearers of the word of God. Jehovah God had been revealed to Nebuchadnezzar as the One Who sets up and tears down kingdoms. Belshazzar was familiar with what had taken place in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Failing to learn from it cost him his throne and his life. The one who is a wise builder, Jesus says, is the one who hears and obeys (Mt 7:24-27).
5. *and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know...* (Daniel 5:23). Daniel delivers plain talk to the king about idolatry. Paul has another kind of idolatry in mind when he warns about putting to death covetousness (Col 3:5).
6. *and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified* (Daniel 5:23). Listen to the powerful rebuke of Belshazzar's foolish ways. Misplaced priorities is a huge understatement of Belshazzar's position. What are we here on earth for other than to glorify God (Mt 5:16; Rom 15:6, 9; 1 Cor 6:20; 1 Pet 4:16; Rev 15:4).
7. *weighed in the balances and found wanting...* (Daniel 5:27). Judgment is a frequent theme of the prophets. The fact is that it is appointed to men once to die and then comes the judgment (Heb 9:27). No one will want to be found wanting on that great day!

## VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

P K T H O U S A N D M J U I K O L P U J  
 M S J U Y J M B C H A I N G T E B D C V  
 Q C S W X C C O U N T E N A N C E D T R  
 V A S T O N E F R T G B Y H N H L M H I  
 P R I I K M J U Y H N G T G B A S R I V  
 R L V E L D C V B N M O J H G N H F R D  
 S E E R T V G B N H Y L I K L G A P D O  
 L T U J M T E G B R F D V E D E Z C V F  
 Q W S E D L C R V B G T Y H N D Z U J M  
 S L I K P Y H N T G B R F V E D A C W E  
 A L X M C V B B R A S S T Y B I R O N R  
 D C E E R F V B G T D Y H H N M J U O L  
 P T L S I K U J M O T G B A R F V E M D  
 C W S X S Q A Z O Z A F I N G E R S E Q  
 W S X C R E Z W C V B N M D Y U I K N O  
 Q A Z W S X V C V F R T G B N H Y U E L  
 T G B Y H N M J U I K I P L U J Y H N R  
 E D V B N H Y T Y U J K I O L P E D C W  
 P I K M J U Y T T E K E L B F R V B R E  
 D U P H A R S I N C E R W S C V B N J U

[These words are from the first paragraph of Daniel chapter 5. You can find them in the puzzle above.]

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|-----------------|--------------|
| 01. Belshazzar  | 02. thousand |
| 03. vessels     | 04. temple   |
| 05. gold        | 06. silver   |
| 07. brass       | 08. iron     |
| 09. wood        | 10. stone    |
| 11. fingers     | 12. hand     |
| 13. countenance | 14. changed  |
| 15. scarlet     | 16. chain    |
| 17. third       | 18. MENE     |
| 19. TEKEL       | 20. UPHARSIN |