

Daniel Chapter Five

Exiles- the writing is on the wall

Note to Circle Group Leaders: You will notice that Pastor Dave is not preaching on Daniel 4, but rather skipped ahead to Chapter 5 for this week. Next week will feature a guest speaker, who is not speaking from Daniel. In case your group wants to study chapter 4, we will provide chapter 4 questions next week. However, the sermon will not support it. You can choose to do Chapter 4, use your notes to discuss the sermon, do a social meeting or take a break.

Facts about Daniel have drastically changed. It has been many years since chapter one and the young men were taken into captivity. Daniel is perhaps in his eighties now. Nebuchadnezzar is dead, and ruling in his place is his son. The seventy years promised by Jeremiah have probably been seen by Daniel, who may be looking for his people to be at last returned to Israel. The focus of this chapter is the theme of judgment, at last brought by God to the nation that had dared to lift its hand against Israel.

"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." - Genesis 12:3

Culture takes sacred things and misuses God's purpose

Daniel 5:1-6

1 King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. 2 While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father[a] had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. 3 So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. 4 As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

5 Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. 6 His

face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking.

1. What phrase (verse 2) indicates that Belshazzar might not have been using good judgment when he ordered the gold objects to be brought so that they might drink from them? Why do you think they went after the vessels from the Temple of God?
2. As they drank the wine, presumably from the temple cups, who did they praise?
3. The human hand apparition (verse 5) would have frightened even sober men. What was the king's reaction?
4. Why do you think God provided such a frightening apparition?
5. What messages would God write on your wall of life?

Daniel brings purpose to those whose thirsts are dry

Daniel 5:7-16

7 The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers[b] and diviners. Then he said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

8 Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. 9 So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled.

10 The queen,[c] hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. "May the king live forever!" she said. "Don't be alarmed! Don't look so

pale! **11** There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. **12** He did this because Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means.”

13 So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, “Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah? **14** I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom. **15** The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. **16** Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

6. The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers, and diviners. Why did the king turn to Daniel?

7. How would our world benefit by turning to God for answers?

8. What are some of the qualities that the king knows of Daniel?

Daniel brings meaning to those whose thirsts are dry

Daniel 5:17-24

17 Then Daniel answered the king, “You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means. **18** “Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. **19** Because of the high position he gave him, all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and

feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. **20** But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. **21** He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and sets over them anyone he wishes. **22** “But you, Belshazzar, his son, *[d]* have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. **23** Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. **24** Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

9. What five things did Belshazzar do that Daniel listed as offensive? (verses 22 and 23) What are some things that we do which might be loathsome to the Lord?

Everything will be laid out before the Lord and all the people judged

Daniel 5:25-31

25 “This is the inscription that was written: mene, mene, tekel, parsin

26 “Here is what these words mean:

Mene*[e]*: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.

27 Tekel*[f]*: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

28 Peres*[g]*: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

29 Then at Belshazzar’s command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom. **30** That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, *[h]* was slain, **31** and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two. *[i]*

10. Why did the end come for Babylon? Why might the end come for our country? How might it come?

11. How has God put the “writing on the wall” for the whole earth? (Matthew 24:42-44) If you knew God was coming tonight, what would you do differently?

Matthew 24:42-44

42 *“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. **43** But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. **44** So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

12. What things should we be doing as we look for the Second Coming? When the Lord does return, how can we insure we are found ready for Him?

13. Was this judgment in any sense of help or benefit to Belshazzar? How is this like the Great White Throne judgment? (Revelation 20:11,12)

Revelation 20:11,12

11 *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. **12** And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.*

14. How can we be sure of being found in the Book of Life? (John 14:6)

John 14:6

6 *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*