

"THE BOOK OF DANIEL" LESSON 9

The Hand Writing On The Wall (5:1-31)

Introduction:

1. So far in our study of the book of Daniel, we have seen...

a. The faith of young Daniel, who made the commitment not to defile himself -

Daniel 1

b. The first dream of Nebuchadnezzar, interpreted by Daniel - Daniel 2

1) Prophecy of the rise and fall of four world empires

2) Foretelling the establishment of the kingdom of Christ

c. The faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the face of fire - Daniel 3

d. The second dream of Nebuchadnezzar and its fulfillment, confirming that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men - Daniel 4

2. We now come to the Daniel 5, where we find an incident familiar to many...

a. The event is often called: "The Hand Writing On The Wall"

b. As with any Old Testament account, it was written for our admonition - 1Corinthians 10:11;

1 Corinthians 10:11 “Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.” (ESV)

I. BOOZE AND IDOLATRY IN A KING'S COURT (1-4)

Daniel 5:1-4 “King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand. Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords,

his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.” (ESV)

A. BELSHAZZAR, THE KING...

1. The time is now about 539 B.C.

a. Nebuchadnezzar had died in 562 B.C.

Daniel 4:4-5 “I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me.” (ESV)

b. He was succeeded by his son, Evil-Merodach - 2Kings 25:27;

2 Kings 25:27 “And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison.”

(ESV)

1) After two years he was assassinated by Nergilissar, his brother-in-law.

2) Who in turn died four years later (556 B.C.), leaving the throne to his infant son, Labashi-Marduk.

3) Labashi-Marduk was soon deposed by a priestly revolution.

c. Nabonidus, a former priest under Nebuchadnezzar, was made king in 556 B.C.

1) Who was more interested in scholarly and religious pursuits.

2) So he appointed his son Belshazzar as ruler of Babylon in his place.

d. Belshazzar therefore became co-regent in 550 B.C.

1) He was "second" in command

2) Which explains why he offered Daniel only the "third" position in the kingdom - cf. Dan 5:16,29;

3) Nebuchadnezzar is called his "father" - Daniel 5:2,11,13,18,22;

a) Nabodonius (Belshazzar's father) may have been Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law, and it was common to refer to one's ancestor as "father".

b) Or "father" may be used figuratively.

2. Belshazzar throws a big feast –

Daniel 5:1-3 “King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand. Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords,

his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.”(ESV)

a. Nebuchadnezzar had taken gold and silver vessels from the temple in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 36:10 “In the spring of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon, with the precious vessels of the house of the LORD, and made his brother Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.” **(ESV)**

b. Belshazzar adds insult to injury by using them in the feast

B. THEY PRAISED THE GODS OF GOLD AND SILVER...

1. The king and guests foolishly praised the creation rather than the Creator.

2. Would we ever stoop so low? We do if we succumb to the sin of covetousness! -

Ephesians 5:5 “For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous

(that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (ESV)

Colossians 3:5 “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” (ESV)

a. When we make mammon (material riches) our god -

Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” (ESV)

b. When we make created things the prime focus of our time and interest.

[As we continue in Daniel 5, notice how quickly things change as we read of...]

II. PANIC AND HUMILIATION IN A KING'S COURT (5-9)

Daniel 5:5-9 “Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts

alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king declared to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could

not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and his color changed, and his lords were perplexed.” (ESV)

A. THE HAND WRITING ON THE WALL...

1. The fingers of a man's hands appear -

Daniel 5:5a “Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared...”

2. They write on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace -

Daniel 5b “...and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand.”

3. Belshazzar sees the part of the hand that wrote -

Daniel 5c “...And the king saw the hand as it wrote.” (ESV)

B. THE QUAKING KING...

1. In the case of King Belshazzar...

a. One moment his heart is puffed up with pride...

b. The next moment, his knees are knocking together -

Daniel 5:6 “Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together.” (ESV)

-- A vivid illustration of: "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall." – Proverbs 16:18

3. All he saw was a man's hand...

a. What if he had seen the face of God?

b. If just a tiny manifestation of God's power had that effect, then what would be the effect of coming face to face with God?

Hebrews 10:31 “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (ESV)

C. THE HELPLESS ADVISORS...

1. Once again, a king appeals first to those unable to help -

Daniel 5:7-9 “The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king declared to

the wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and his color changed, and his lords were perplexed.”

Isaiah 45:1 “Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:” (ESV)

2. Just as Nebuchadnezzar did in Daniel 2,4;

3. People often do the same thing today in times of crisis.

a. They go to the wrong place for help!!!

1) Looking to their own strength or wisdom

2) Or that of other people

b. When they need to trust in God first -

Proverbs 3:5-10 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.” (ESV)

Matthew 6:33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (ESV)

QUESTIONS And/or
OBSERVATIONS

Prayer Time

LESSON TEN

III. THE ARRIVAL OF GOD'S MAN (10-16)

Daniel 5:10-16 “The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall, and the queen declared, “O king, live forever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In

the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanter, Chaldeans, and astrologers, because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king

named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.” Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, “You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. Now the wise men, the

enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” (ESV)

QUESTIONS And/Or OBSERVATIONS

Prayer Time