

Daniel 5

Writing on the Wall



“You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting”

Daniel 5 Overview

- This is one of the most well known Bible stories, along with chapters 3 & 6:
 - Chapter 3 – Fiery Furnace
 - Chapter 5 – Writing on the Wall
 - Chapter 6 – Lions Den
- It perfectly continues the themes of Chapter 4:
 - “He is able to humble those who walk in pride” (4:37), and
 - “that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms, and He gives them to anyone He wants” (5:21)
- Main Idea - God sees our sin and brings about judgment on those who refuse to repent and trust Him.
- Pride & a sense of indestructability led them and us to ignore the handwriting on the wall. When God speaks, we need to listen carefully.

Daniel 5 Overview

- Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC, after a reign of 43 years.
- Historical records prove this scene took place in 539 BC, 23 years after the events of chapter 4, after which the Kingdom of Babylon came to an end.
- Parallels chapter 4 to show another king being humbled, but this time the king is not brought to repentance.
- King Belshazzar is Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, and was a co-ruler with his father Nabonidus.
- The king throws a party on the very night that enemy armies surrounded the city, but the party was centered around drunkenness, sensuality, and idolatrous worship of idols, all while blatantly MOCKING the Most High God (temple vessels).

Daniel 5: 1-2 – A New King

- ¹ **Belshazzar** the **king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords**, and **drank wine** in the presence of the thousand.

For centuries, critics claimed Daniel was wrong because there was no record of King Belshazzar – then in 1881...

Cylinders of Nabonidus
Name Belshazzar as Last King

- ² While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the **gold and silver, vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which *had been* in Jerusalem**, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines **might drink from them**.



70 Years has passed
from Daniel 1 & King
Neb. Died.

Daniel 5:3

- ³ Then they brought the **gold vessels** that had been taken **from the temple** of the house of God which had been **in Jerusalem**; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines **drank from them**.



He mentions twice that they were from the **Jerusalem temple**, emphasizing they were used to worship God Almighty.

Sacrilegious Act – not only defies & mocks God by drinking out of them, but it was probably a drunken orgy used to worship the idols of Babylon.

Daniel 5: 4

⁴ They drank wine, and praised the gods of **gold and silver, bronze and iron**, wood and stone.



Same metals
as the Statue
Vision

God Hates IDOLS
– 1st Two
Commandments

ISAIAH 47 Predicted the Fall of Babylon would Happen Like this 100 Years Earlier

¹⁰ “For you have trusted in your wickedness; **You have said, ‘No one sees me’**; Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; And you have said in your heart, ‘I am, and *there is* no one else besides me.’ ¹¹ Therefore evil shall come upon you; You shall not know from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you; You will not be able to put it off. And **desolation shall come upon you suddenly, Which you shall not know.**

Daniel 5: 5-6

⁵ In the same hour **the**
fingers of a man's hand
appeared and wrote
opposite the lampstand
on the plaster of the wall
of the king's palace; and
the king saw the part of
the hand that wrote.

Exodus 31:18

And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone, **written with the finger of God.**

Archeological finds have found this banquet hall and proven that it had white plaster walls!!

Daniel 5: 5-6

⁶ Then the king's **countenance changed**, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the **joints of his hips were loosened** and his **knees knocked against each other**.



Daniel 5:7-8

⁷ The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise *men* of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be **clothed with purple** and *have* a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

⁸ Now all the king’s **wise men came, but they could not read the writing**, or make known to the king its interpretation.

This a perfect example of when sinful, lost man, experiences the **FEAR of GOD**

3rd Time that the “wise men” were useless, and only the Most High God of Daniel could help.

Daniel 5:9

⁹ Then King Belshazzar was **greatly troubled, his countenance was changed**, and his lords were astonished.

¹⁰ The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change.

Daniel 5:11

¹¹ There is a man in your kingdom in whom *is* the Spirit of the Holy God. And 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, astrologers, Chaldeans, *and* soothsayers.

¹² Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.”

Daniel 5:13-16

¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, “**Are you that Daniel** who is one of the captives from Judah, **whom my father the king brought from Judah?**”

¹⁴ **I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.**

¹⁵ Now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing.

¹⁶ And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. **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.”**

Daniel 5:17 - 19

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor.

¹⁹ And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down.

Daniel 5:20-21

²⁰ But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him.

²¹ Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that **the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.**

Daniel 5:22-24

²² “But you his son, Belshazzar, **have not humbled your heart**, although you knew all this.

²³ **And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven.** They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And **you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.**

²⁴ **Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him,** and this writing was written.

Daniel 5:25-28

²⁵ “And this is the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

(numbered, numbered, weighed, divided)

²⁶ This *is* the interpretation of *each* word.

MENE: **God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;**

²⁷ TEKEL: **You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;**

²⁸ PERES: **Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”**

Judgement of God

*"Thou art
weighed
in the
balances
and art
found
wanting."*

- Daniel 5:27 -



Daniel 5:29-30

²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and *put* a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

³⁰ **That very night Belshazzar**, king of the Chaldeans, **was slain**. ³¹ **And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, *being* about sixty-two years old.**

ISAIAH Predicted the Fall of Babylon would Happen Like this 100 Years Earlier, by a man named CYRUS

Isaiah 44:10

¹⁰ “For you have trusted in your wickedness; **You have said, ‘No one sees me’**; Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; And you have said in your heart, ‘*I am, and there is no one else besides me.*’ ¹¹ Therefore evil shall come upon you; You shall not know from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you; You will not be able to put it off. And **desolation shall come upon you suddenly, Which you shall not know.**

Isaiah 44:28

²⁸ Who says of **Cyrus**, ‘*He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” And to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”*’

Isaiah 45:1-4

45 “Thus says the LORD to His anointed, **To Cyrus**, whose right hand I have held—

To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut:

² ‘I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron.

³ **I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the LORD, Who call *you* by your name, Am the God of Israel.** ⁴ For Jacob My servant’s sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.

Israel Compared Trump to King Cyrus to the Extent of Minting a Gold Coin



Who is King Cyrus, and why did Netanyahu compare him to Trump?

Mysterious Persian ruler is credited for helping Jews return from exile to Jerusalem 2,500 years ago, rebuild the Temple

By [ANDREW SILOW-CARROLL](#)

8 March 2018, 8:42 pm



Historical Records

- The exact date of the Medo-Persian invasion of Babylon by Darius was Oct 11, 539 BC.
- The invading army did not attempt to storm the 40 foot high walls which were 56 miles long (15 miles square) and 25 feet in width, but instead they diverted water from the Euphrates River which ran under the walls, and waded under the walls.
- Greek Historians Herodotus and Xenophon (4th & 5th centuries BC) not only precisely documented the how the invasion occurred, but they noted that the invasion happened while the Babylonians were feasting in drunkenness.
- Daniel was also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (100-200 BC) and in the Greek Septuagint (1st Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible written in 250 BC), proving that Daniel was historical fact long before the prophecies of the future empires and Christ's first coming occurred.)

Daniel 5 - Summary

1. God Sees our Sin when we Mock His Glory (5:1-4)
2. God Confronts our Sins, and we should Tremble when He does (5:5-9)
3. God exposes our Sins, and we are found Wanting (5:10-28)
4. God Deals with our Sins of Unrepentance with Appropriate Judgement (5:29-31).

Daniel 5 - Summary

- 1. Search your heart for sin,**
- 2. Confess it,**
- 3. Turn from the sin,**
- 4. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and give you Power to overcome the sin and walk in God's will.**

Questions

1. Do we see people like Belshazzar today (who defy and even mock God)? Are these people beyond the hope of salvation?
2. Do you think we are prone to view ourselves as indestructible? How do you see this tendency in your own life? (sin makes us foolish)
3. How do we try and convince ourselves we are beyond being punished by God?
4. Why does God not demonstrate comparable power to warn and punish people today who mock Him? (think of the mocking of Jesus Christ at the Cross – love and grace)
5. What kinds of things does God do to wake us up to our sin & foolishness?
6. How are God's acts of discipline a demonstration of His grace?
7. How does Belshazzar's response differ from Nebechadnezzar's?