

Daniel 5

"The Handwriting on the Wall"

Part 2

Introduction: Last week in our study of Daniel we started into Daniel 5. Here in this chapter, we meet a new king and in verse 2 we are told he is the son of Nebuchadnezzar. We determined last week that he was the son of Nabonidus and he was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar had died about 23 years before this chapter. There are about 30 years between chapter 4 and chapter 5. When we get to chapters 8 and 9, we shall see that the events in those chapters take place between chapters 4 and 5.

Notice Daniel 5:1-2

As we enter this chapter Belshazzar has organized a great feast for 1000 of his lords. This may have been an attempt to calm the fears of his people. While this feast was happening the Medes and the Persians were outside the walls of Babylon. The Babylonians knew it for they Medes and the Persians had already conquered the surrounding peoples. Belshazzar felt secure because of the structure of the city and the supplies they had. They had enough food within the city for 20 years and the river ran through the city, so they had an abundant water supply. Notice the history of how the city and the walls were built.

According to the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, Babylon occupied about 14 square miles with a double wall system enclosing a moat between the two walls. The outer wall was 87 feet thick, wide enough for four chariots to drive on side-by-side. It was 350 feet high with 100 gates, plus hundreds more towers that reached another 100 feet above the walls.

The walls around the city were approximately 112 miles in length. The king felt secure because of what surrounded him, but he was deceived for it would be this very night that he will die and Babylon will be overthrown.

In verse 2 we are told that the king brought out the sacred vessels of the Temple. These were the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem. They were put away and displayed as trophies when Nebuchadnezzar was king. Now under Belshazzar they will be used to praise the gods of Babylon. This showed the attitude of Belshazzar toward the God of Israel. But there is something else here to see. The king had taken that which was holy and he desecrated these vessels.

Application:

Do we not see this in our day? That which was at one time holy and sacred has now been overtaken by the world and used to assist people in their worship of the gods of this world. Let me give you an example. Remember what Sunday used to be like? No stores were open and it was considered to be a day when people went to church and then they rested. If you needed something for Sunday, you had to buy it on Saturday. There was a movie made years ago that focused upon the NFL and in the movie, there was a statement that was made that magnifies what has happened. The statement was made by the NFL commissioner and he said, "We/the NFL now own the day that used to belong to the church." This is just a small slice of what has happened. There was a time when the pulpit was sacred. But now in many churches it had been defiled with homosexuals, women pastors, a watered-down gospel, and the list goes on and on. Notice the words of Feinberg.

"Have you noticed how in recent years the world has stepped into the 'sanctuary' of faith and laid its ruthless hands on some of the things we hold most sacred? Our day has seen this impious sacrilege carried into many other realms, as well. Is God unmindful of this? Will He not visit for such defiance?"

Notice Daniel 5:3-4

Last week we considered from these verses "The Blinding Power of Idolatry" which is exactly what we see here. Belshazzar knew about the One True God from his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. But he rejected the Light that God gave him. He chose instead to go down the path of idolatry, and this path was leading him to eternal damnation. The worship of the idols opened the door for the demonic world to flood into the Babylonian Empire. Let us notice what is said about the destruction of the city of Babylon and the commercial system, in the Tribulation.

Revelation 18:9-14

⁹ *And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,*

¹⁰ *Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.*

¹¹ *And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:*

¹² The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

¹³ And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

¹⁴ And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

I show you these verses so that you can see the focus of the city. It is an idolatrous city. Now let us notice what is said about the spiritual condition of the city.

Revelation 18:1-2

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

² And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

The final Babylon will be a city under demonic influence and the Babylon in Daniel would have been the same because of the rejection of the Truth.

➤ **The Party is Over**

➤ **Part 2**

Notice Daniel 5:5

As the feast was in full swing God stepped in. The hand appeared and began to write upon the plaster of the wall. It is interesting that it happened by the candlestick. This was probably the candlestick from the Temple in Jerusalem. The point for us to see is that God did the handwriting where the king was sure to see it. He did it in the light because He wanted to be sure to get the king's attention. The verse says, "in the same hour" and the idea here is that it was suddenly. The message had been sent, and it was irreversible.

Proverbs 29:1

He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Paul used the word "sudden" when he described the coming of the Day of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

² *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

³ *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

Application:

One of the points to see in this is how quickly life can change and with the suddenness of change many people been caught completely off guard and they have died in their sins. I wonder how many people have waited and put off salvation knowing that they needed to be saved but they believed they had much more time when SUDDENLY the end came and it was too late? I am sure hell is full of people who thought they had more time, but their time ran out and it ran out "SUDDENLY".

Notice Daniel 5:6

The hand terrified the king to the point of collapse. This is a reminder of how men will react to the coming of the Day of the Lord.

Isaiah 13:6-8

⁶ *Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.*

⁷ *Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:*

⁸ *And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.*

Luke 21:25-26

²⁵ *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;*

²⁶ *Men's hearts failing them for fear*, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

Notice Daniel 5:7-8

This is the third time in Daniel that the wise men were called and each time they came up empty. This shows the unbelieving world's inability to know spiritual Truth.

Application:

This is a reminder to us that we need to be careful where we get our advice from. We are not to look to the world for the world has no ability to understand spiritual Truth. Many people have been led down paths of heartache because they made the choice to listen to advice from unsaved people.

Illustration:

I have known of married couples going through difficult times and one of the spouses looks to a group of unsaved friends to get advice and the advice they are given appeals to the sin nature and when it is followed the marriage falls apart. It is important to understand that as sinful creatures we are prone to get advice from people who we know will tell us what we WANT to hear. But what we need to hear is sound Biblical advice/the Truth. When it comes to the decisions of life, we need to know what the Bible says. We do not need to know what the world thinks or believes.

Notice Daniel 5:9-12

The Queen here is believed to be the wife of Nabonidus which would be Belshazzar's mother. She had come to know about Daniel because of what happened in Nebuchadnezzar's life. As she tells the king about Daniel, she makes it clear that Daniel was different. He stood apart from the other wise men. What was it that separated him? It was the Spirit of God. Daniel had not been invited to the feast, and it was most likely because of his stand, but he would be the man the king would turn to when there were unanswered questions.

Application:

Daniel shows us that it is possible to live Godly in a corrupt society. This is the way God expects us to live. There are going to be times when we do not get invited to certain events but that is fine. The reason we are not invited is because our lifestyle brings conviction to those who are living for the world.

1 Kings 22:5-9, 13-14

⁵ And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day.

⁶ Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

⁷ And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?

⁸ And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

⁹ Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.

¹³ And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.

¹⁴ And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.

Conclusion:

Let us live for the Lord for He has equipped us to be separate from the world.

2 Peter 1:2-4

² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

³ According as his divine power **hath given** unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Let us not be discouraged when the world lets us out. But let us be ready to give an answer when the people of the world have questions. When we do answer let us be sure that we speak the Truth even if it is not what the people want to hear. The people of the world need to hear the Truth. It is only the Truth that will set them free. When I think of the unsaved, I think of the Words of Jesus in Matthew 11.

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.