

Anchored in the Drift: Time's Up

**Key Scripture:** Daniel 5:1-30 (with context from Daniel 4)

## Overarching Theme

- The book of Daniel proclaims that **God is sovereign** over every kingdom, even in exile or when it appears the world's powers (or "gods") are winning.
- We live in a modern "Babylon" — a culture that increasingly challenges and despises the truth that there is one God who reigns over all.
- The call is to remain **anchored in God** rather than drifting with the world's arrogance and pride.

## Main Points from Daniel 5

- **Arrogant Defiance (Daniel 5:1-4)** King Belshazzar (not the biological son but in the royal line) throws a banquet for 1,000 nobles. In brazen arrogance, he uses the gold and silver vessels taken from God's temple in Jerusalem for drunken revelry and praises false gods of metal, wood, and stone. *This is a direct affront to the living God.*
- **The Handwriting on the Wall (Daniel 5:5-9)** Suddenly, fingers of a human hand appear and write on the wall near the lampstand. The king's face pales in terror; his knees knock (the Hebrew implies he lost control of his bodily functions in fear). His wise men cannot interpret it.
- **Remembering Daniel (Daniel 5:10-16)** The queen mother reminds Belshazzar of Daniel (Belteshazzar), who served under Nebuchadnezzar and had the spirit of the holy gods. Daniel, now likely in his 80s, is summoned.
- **Daniel's Bold History Lesson & Interpretation (Daniel 5:17-28)**
  - Daniel refuses the king's gifts (purple robe, gold chain, third ruler in the kingdom).
  - He recounts Nebuchadnezzar's pride, God's warning, the king's humbling (living like a beast for seven periods), and eventual repentance and restoration (see Daniel 4).
  - Belshazzar knew this history but **did not humble himself**. Instead, he exalted himself against the Lord of heaven.
  - Interpretation of the writing: **Mene**: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. **Tekel**: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. **Peres**: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.
- **God's Justice & Sovereignty (Daniel 5:29-30)** That very night Belshazzar is slain. Darius the Mede takes the kingdom at age 62. While the Babylonians partied, the Medo-Persian army diverted the Euphrates River and entered under the massive walls.

## Key Applications

- History matters — learn from those who came before (Nebuchadnezzar's story).
- Pride and arrogance lead to judgment; humility and repentance lead to life.

- God is merciful and gives warning, but His justice comes in His timing — we do not know if we have 12 months, 12 hours, or less.
- Respond to God’s Word: It brings life to those who listen (John 5:25).
- Stay anchored in the one true God against the cultural drift.

### **Questions for Further Thought & Discussion**

1. In what ways does our culture today mirror Belshazzar’s arrogance and misuse of what belongs to God? Where do you see pride “writing on the wall” in your own life or community?
2. Daniel boldly spoke truth despite the risks and refused the king’s rewards. How can we cultivate that kind of courage and detachment from worldly honors today?
3. The sermon emphasizes that God’s Word holds life for those who listen (John 5:25). Reflect on a time when you heard and responded to God’s voice — how did it anchor you or bring life?