

Daniel 5:1-9  
SA230108

**“The Writing is on the Wall”**

1. Back when our oldest daughter was little, Tracy went into her room only to discover that she had been writing on the wall with a crayon.
  - **Upon** finding this discovery Tracy confronted her and said, “Honey, you can’t write on the wall; that is wrong and it is called graffiti”.
  - **And** as she realized that judgement was on the way she replied, “Well, God did!”
2. That was true, but that was God and HE is allowed!
  - **And** that’s exactly what we will see God do today with Belteshazzar.
3. What is the setting?
  - **The** year is 539 BC., 20 years after Nebuchadnezzar’s death.
  - **Nebuchadnezzar’s** son Nabonidus has taken the throne but was gone on a military campaign so his son Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson, was ruling until Nabonidus returned.

4. There was another military campaign going on as well. The Medo/Persian armies had teamed up to attack Babylon and were currently outside their very walls.
  - **And** if you remember, this was exactly what Daniel said would happen in his vision. This would be the downfall of Babylon.
5. However, rather than take God's Word seriously, Belshazzar felt confident in the city's fortifications and military and decided to throw a drunken party.
  - **If** you remember, the walls of the city were 350 feet tall, 80 feet wide. The city also had a moat and then a 2<sup>nd</sup> wall to breach after that.
  - Belshazzar and his subjects felt there was no way they were in danger of defeat.
6. In addition, they were said to have had 20 years' worth of food stored, and the Euphrates River literally ran through the middle of the city which means they had an endless supply of water.
  - **And** this false sense of security in their own strength and power will lead to their fall.
7. You see, it doesn't matter how high our walls are or how much food and water we have, if God is bringing judgement, there will be no escape.

- **The** only escape from God's judgement is to to repent and turn to God.
- **If** not, no amount of planning will stop it from coming.

8. And this is my fear for our nation.

9. **Because** we have been so blessed by God and now have such riches and such a strong military, we think we can simply live in sin and ignore God with no consequences. But that is simply not the case.

- **Unless** we repent, our nation will fall just as Babylon did.

10. You see, Babylon had no fear of God because they trusted in themselves.

- **And** I fear we are now in the same place in America.

11. We, like the Babylonians, have lost the fear of God.

- **And** now the day of reckoning for Babylon has arrived.

**v.1** 1. This is basically a massive drinking party for the rulers of Babylon.

- **Like** a Washington Congress and Senate party on the taxpayers' dime.

2. Explain 1000 and room size.

**v.4** 1. We now see Belshazzar make a VERY foolish and evil decision here by taking the vessels from the Temple in Jerusalem which his “father” took. These items had been set apart for the worship of God and they used them as party glasses.

- **Don’t** let the term “father” stumble you – Explain.

2. We as believers can automatically see why this is so fearful and foolish, and even in that day, the pagans respected other gods just in case they might incur revenge.

- **So** what caused him to make such a foolish decision?

3. Notice it says he made this decision “when he tasted the wine.”

- **And** this is often when foolish decisions are made.

3. Why?

- **Because** wine and similar drink fogs our thinking and causes us to do many things we often regret afterwards.

4. And herein lies a warning to us as believers.

- **While** it is not a sin to have a glass of wine, as Christians, we should think long and hard before doing so. There are a number of reasons why.

- **First**, if we take “one” sip too many and are drunk, we are now in sin before God.
- **Second**, it can either stumble those who are struggling with alcohol abuse or LEAD others to try it and end up abusing it.
- **Third**, it can quickly lead to sexual immorality as inhibitions are removed, which is no doubt why the women were invited to this feast (which was not the norm in this day).
- **And** fourth, it can cause us to make foolish choices and decisions that we will regret for the rest of our lives.
- **Which** is what we see here with Belteshazzar.

5. This was open mockery and blasphemy toward the God of Israel.

- **It** is one thing to lack a fear of God; it is another to openly mock and blaspheme Him.

6. Notice lastly, they were using the vessels from the Temple to praise their false gods of gold and silver (gods of wealth), gods of bronze and iron (representing their military strength), and gods of wood and stone (materials they made their homes with).

- **And** isn't this exactly what we are doing in America today?

7. Praising our wealth, military might, and beautiful homes.

- **And** these things can easily become our "gods" of worship as well.

**v.5** 1. There are several interesting things to note here.

- **First**, notice it was near a lampstand or a well-lit area, so it could be clearly seen.

2. So too, when God warns us by His Word, He doesn't do it quietly. He does it clearly and openly so that we have no excuse.

- **The** majority of homes in America have at least one Bible in them.
- **Our** problem is we often refuse to read and listen.

3. Second, notice he saw it as a "man's hand" which was clearly the "hand of God."

- **The** same finger that wrote the 10 commandments in stone and the same finger of Jesus that wrote in the dirt of the Temple is now writing the judgment of God against Belteshazzar on that plaster wall.

4. It says he only saw a "small part" of God, and only a small part of His "hand."

- **Why** is this significant?
  - **Because** there is so much **MORE** of God to know and see, but unless you know Him as Lord, you will never get to see it.
5. We who are saved will never see or face God's judgement.
- **But** for those who don't know God and are living in sin, **ALL** they will ever see is God's judgement.
6. This is why the unbeliever often says the God of the Bible is a God of judgement.
- **They** have not come to the cross to know His love and forgiveness.
7. Which is only "one small portion," simply a "finger" of God.
- **When** the vast majority of God is love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness.
  - **But** you have to come to the cross and receive His forgiveness in order to see it.

**v.6** 1. At this point Belshazzar is struck with guilt, conviction, and fear as He saw the finger of God write out his judgement.

- **He** didn't yet know for sure what it was, but I think he knew he was in trouble.

2. And I think most unbelievers are like that today when they hear the Bible.

- **They** know they are guilty before God and sense one day they will face judgement, but they simply don't want to think about it.
- **At** some point, however, it is unavoidable.

3. And this hit Belteshazzar so hard the joints of his hips were loosed and his knees knocked together.

- **Although** drunk, there was a sudden soberness and fear that caused an immediate reaction.
- **When** the writing is on the wall for all to see that is always the reaction.

4. I saw this happen Monday night with the replays of Monday night football. This young player collapsed with a heart attack on the field during the game and everyone got serious.

- **Thankfully**, he is recovering, and it appears will live, but if you saw the soberness, fear, and reaction of the other players, you get an idea of what we are looking at here.
- **The** fear on their faces and terror in their eyes came immediately after they saw the writing on the wall: no matter how young we are or how athletic, death can still happen at any moment. And we will all stand before God.

5. And this can put an immediate level of soberness and fear in any heart as it sinks in.

- **And** this is what was happening with Belteshazzar.

**v.8** 1. Notice he “cried aloud.”

- **No** doubt at this point he shouts for the room to be silent and frantically asks if anyone can read the writing.

2. When no one can, he calls in all the wise men of Babylon.

- **And** he is so fearful, he offers to make them the 3<sup>rd</sup> ruler in the kingdom if they can.

3. Why 3<sup>rd</sup> ruler?

- **Because** if you remember he was only the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ruler behind his father Nabonidus so that was the highest reward he could offer.

4. He does what most unbelievers do when a crisis hits their life.

- **They** call out to the “counselors of the world.”

5. Rather than cry out to God, the only one who to can give true answers, they cry out to the world for help.

- **And** no real help will ever be found there.

6. Worldly counsel can only help in the natural world.

- **But** it can never help or reach the supernatural.

**v.9** 1. As his fear grows, his countenance changes for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time and he is in total panic mode.

- **And** this is when someone gives him the counsel that he needs to look to the God of the Bible.
- **And** that is where we will take up next week!

2. As we finish today, I just want to ask each of us here: are WE ready to stand before God and answer for our lives should we suddenly be faced with the “writing on the wall?”

- **For** those of us who know the Lord, we have no fear because even though we are guilty before God, all of our guilt and sin has been paid for on the cross of Christ.
- **But** if you have not confessed your sin, you still have a day of judgment waiting.

3. Why not deal with it today and give your life to Jesus?

- **That** will not only take away any fear you have of death in this life, but it will prepare you for when you stand before the Lord and give an account of your life.