

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE #16

“The Handwriting On The Wall”

Introduction

The phrase ‘handwriting on the wall’ is a warning or sign that something unpleasant or unfortunate is going to happen.

Figure of Speech

If you say the writing is on the wall or the handwriting is on the wall, you mean that there are clear signs that a situation is going to become difficult or unpleasant, or that something or someone is going to fail.

Examples

- “When they announced that our company was downsizing, I saw the handwriting on the wall and started looking for a new job”
- “Our company couldn’t read the handwriting on the wall and went bankrupt”

A Biblical Origin

Most people don’t know the term ‘handwriting on the wall’ is from the Bible; it is from the Book of Daniel, where God supernaturally pronounced judgment on a king and his nation.

In St. Louis, MO 1973, the great Billy Graham preached one of his most famous sermons, titled as a question: “Is the Handwriting On the Wall, America?” In the message He compared the sins of Babylon to modern America with a warning:

Billy Graham

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. There is a line drawn among nations and persons beyond which we cannot go without judgment.

In the Book of Daniel, the handwriting on the wall was God’s judgment on the nation of Babylon and the king of Babylon.

God judges nations as well as individual persons in those nations.

God judges nations.

God judges individuals.

The only hope for a nation or for an individual is the Gospel!

I. The Judgment of Babylon

A. Context of the Story: Daniel 5

1. Daniel and his 3 friends have been in Babylon many years; under King Nebuchadnezzar, they passed the 'test at the table' in Chapter 1 and the test of the fiery furnace in Chapter 3.

2. Now Nebuchadnezzar's grandson Belshazzar is on the throne; and the hour of God's judgment upon Babylon has arrived.

3. Belshazzar had just won a great victory and decided to throw the greatest party ever to celebrate.

- The feast would be in the 'hanging gardens of Babylon', one of the 7 wonders of the world in that day
- He invited 1000 of his leaders to this drunken orgy
- To add to his sin, he commanded that the holy golden vessels taken from God's temple at Jerusalem be brought in to drink from

Daniel 5:3-4

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

4. Here we have a picture of the antichrist Babylonian political power structure that reminds me of

- They are having a great time celebrating their recent victory
- They have invited their own '1000' to gather round and drink a toast to their false God of socialism
- And just as Belshazzar profaned the holy vessels of God so these new Babylonians are now profaning things godly people hold dear.

5. But then, at the heights of their celebration, GOD CRASHES THE PARTY!

Daniel 5:5

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.

- a. Notice, 'in the same hour' of their greatest celebration—a disembodied hand appears writing a message on the wall
- b. The mood turns from titillation to terror.

Daniel 5:6

Then the king's face turned pale with fright. His knees knocked together in fear and his legs gave way beneath him.

- c. Here we have the mightiest political leader of the world, in his day, reduced to a quivering mass when the hand of the Lord appears...

Bishop J.B. Lightfoot

That same divine hand that had written the two tables for a law to his people now writes the doom of Babel and Belshazzar upon the wall. God's written word is sufficient to put the proudest boldest sinners into a fright. But here the king saw the part of the hand that wrote, but saw not the person whose hand it was, which made the thing even more frightful.

- 6. The king immediately calls for someone to interpret the words of the wall—his magicians, astrologers and soothsayers—but no one is able to read them.

Daniel 5:10-12 NLT

But when the queen mother heard what was happening, she hurried to the banquet hall. She said to Belshazzar, "Long live the king! Don't be so pale and frightened. 11 There is a man in your kingdom who has within him the spirit of the holy gods. During Nebuchadnezzar's reign, this man was found to have insight, understanding, and wisdom like that of the gods. Your predecessor, the king—your predecessor King Nebuchadnezzar—made him chief over all the magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and fortune-tellers of Babylon. 12 This man Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, has exceptional ability and is filled with divine knowledge and understanding. He can interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means."

7. Bible scholars tell us Daniel was about 90 years old when this occurs; he had been 'retired' from court as the Prime Minister of a previous king; but now he is called out of the closet.

8. The day will come when this world will see the handwriting on the wall but not be able to know what it means-it will take a prophetic Church to explain it.

Steve Harrison

True Christianity places people in strategic positions. True Christians will see things others do not.

a. I experienced this in 2020: I could see the 'handwriting on the wall' for America; I was very sad to see many so-called Christians could not see; like those Jesus addressed in His day...

Jesus in Matthew 16:3

Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.

9. The king saw the writing but couldn't discern its meaning; so he called for the man of God. What followed was...

B. A Prophetic Confrontation With Political Power

Matthew Henry

In God's name, Daniel brings articles of impeachment against Belshazzar. Before he reads him his doom, from the handwriting on the wall, he shows him his crime, that God may be justified when he speaks, and clear when he judges.

1. Daniel begins by reminding this king of how his grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar, had come to humble himself before the true God...

Daniel 5:22

"But you his (grand) son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. 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."

2. The first sin of every Babylonian political system is PRIDE; it does not need God; it is a government that offers salvation by politics.

Matthew 23:12

And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

3. The handwriting is already on the wall for the form of government Americans just elected. A government:

- That takes God out of the classrooms and textbooks
- That blurs the distinction between male and female
- That favors homosexuality and gay marriage

a. The handwriting is on the wall...

Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

4. Then Daniel confronts the king for the sin of idolatry:

Daniel 5:22-24

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

5. Send this sermon to the new President and his antichrist government; the handwriting is on the wall.

C. What Does It Say?

1. Daniel reads the inscription and gives the interpretation.

Daniel 5:25-28

And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of each word. Mene: God has numbered your kingdom and finished it; Tekel: You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; Peres: Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

Interpretation

**Mene, Mene=God has numbered your kingdom and finished it
Tekel-You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting
Upharsin- Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the
Persians**

2. Remember that the Babylonian empire had ruled the world for over 300 years (from roughly 1830 BC to 1531 BC). It's capital city Babylon was the largest city in the world. But it all ended in one night!

Daniel 5:30-31

That very night Belshazzar, the Babylonian king, was killed. And Darius the Mede took over the kingdom at the age of sixty-two.

3. History tells us that the handwriting is on the wall for every government that has ever embraced the politics of Babylon as manifested in modern times by Marxist socialism.

- Communism in Russia-which lasted 74 years (1917-1991)
- Nazism in Germany lasted only 12 years (1933-1945)
- Communism in China has ruled China for 71 years and counting
- The socialists have now seized power in America

4. For how long? Who knows? I tell you God knows! The handwriting is already on the wall for every nation that dishonors God. He has already numbered these kingdoms and finished them! They have been weighed in the balance and found wanting! So what do we do in the meantime?

5. Let us go back to where we started:

Billy Graham

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. There is a line drawn among nations and persons beyond which we cannot go without judgment.

6. We might be tempted to get so consumed with the handwriting on the wall for nations that we forget the handwriting is on the wall for us as well.

1 Peter 4:17-18

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

7. Peter was predicting a time of a fiery trial come upon the people of God; Christians would suffer; God's name blasphemed; His people persecuted. Peter says this is a good time to remember that...

D. Judgment Begins With Us

In his 1973 sermon, "Is the Handwriting on the Wall for America?", Billy Graham reminded us that God not only 'weighs' nations, He 'weighs' each of us personally as well in 4 ways.

GOD WEIGHS US

- 1. By the 10 commandments**
- 2. By the law of love**
- 3. By our works**
- 4. According to our opportunity**

1. By the 10 commandments:

John 14:15

If you love Me, keep my commandments

a. Remember that to break even one commandment in the law is the same as breaking them all.

James 2:10

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

b. Alas! I am weighed in the balance and found wanting!

2. God weighs us by the law of love:

Matthew 22:35-40

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

a. Can I pass this test? Can I say I have loved God like this and my neighbor as myself? Alas! I weighed in the balance and found wanting!

3. God judges us by our works.

Revelation 20:12-13

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

4. Finally, God judges according to our opportunity.

Luke 12:48

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

a. We live in the most Christianized nation on earth; there's a Bible in every home, a church on every corner.

b. How is it we don't realize that God will hold us to a higher standard than those in nations who've never even heard of Jesus?

Matthew 11:21-24

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

c. What makes us think we can openly break God's commandment and not go to hell?

George Whitefield

The sins of the church are far more offensive to God than the sins of the nation.

5. America has more counterfeit Christians than any nation on earth. Some are in for a surprise.

Billy Graham

Listen, there are going to be a lot people that are going to miss heaven that you think are going to be there.

6. Remember we are dealing with a God who knows *everything* about us!

a. Not just what we do; God knows every attitude; every imagination; every habit; every secret!

7. Have we really come to the place where we realize that God will not only judge a sinful nation but that He will also judge us? Do we realize that we are all ‘weighed in the balance and found wanting’?

8. Praise God, that is where the Gospel comes in!

9. The Cross of Christ lets me weigh enough to pass God’s test!

- Jesus kept the 10 commandments
- He kept the law of love-even dying for my sins
- He worked the works of God and did everything required of Him for us to be saved

Billy Graham

I won’t see you at the judgment. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. My judgement fell on Jesus.

10. Can you say the same tonight?

III. Conclusion

A. Review

God judges nations.

But He also judges individuals.

The only hope for a nation or for an individual is the Gospel!

1. The handwriting is already on the wall for these antichrist politicians now running the country. They are already judged. God has numbered their days. He has weighed them in the balance and found them wanting. Their end is coming.

2. But what about us? Can we apply the message to ourselves? To our families? To our friends?

3. The first thing we must do is to make sure our own salvation.

Philippians 2:12

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

a. We are not saved by works! But no one truly saved will be without them; we can be confident of a salvation we work out in fear and trembling, God working in us.

2 Peter 1:10 NLT

So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away.

4. The second thing we must do is to seize this moment to preach the Gospel to nations and persons:

**THE HANDWRITING IS ON THE WALL FOR UNGODLY
GOVERNMENTS AND UNREPENTANT SINNERS**

5. But the Good News is that there is still time to repent of your sins and to believe the Gospel!

Closing Prayer and Communion

Title