

## Small Group Guide: Daniel Chapter 5

### The Fall of Babylon and the Faithfulness of God



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#### OPENING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Begin your time together by thanking God for His sovereignty, His faithfulness across generations, and His Word that proves true every time.

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#### ICEBREAKER (10 minutes)

**Question:** Have you ever been extremely confident about something, only to be proven wrong? What did that experience teach you about humility?

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#### SERMON RECAP (5 minutes)

Daniel chapter 5 records the final night of the Babylonian empire. King Belshazzar threw a party to show his confidence that Babylon was impenetrable, even desecrating the temple vessels from Jerusalem. A supernatural hand appeared and wrote on the wall. Daniel was called in to interpret the writing: "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" (measured, weighed, and divided). That very night, the Persians conquered Babylon, exactly as Daniel predicted.

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **God's Word proves true every time** - Even when skeptics doubted Belshazzar's existence for 1,800 years, archaeology eventually confirmed the biblical record.
2. **Pride comes before the fall** - Belshazzar's arrogance and false sense of security led to his downfall.
3. **God humbles the proud** - Just as Nebuchadnezzar was humbled, so was his grandson Belshazzar.
4. **Daniel remained faithful across generations** - His integrity and service to God continued regardless of who was in power.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Understanding the Text (15 minutes)

1. Why was Belshazzar so confident that Babylon wouldn't fall? What made him feel "impenetrable"?
2. What was significant about Belshazzar using the temple vessels from Jerusalem? Why did this particularly anger God?
3. Daniel refused the king's rewards initially, saying "let your gifts be for yourself." Why do you think Daniel responded this way? What does this reveal about his character?

### Historical Reliability (10 minutes)

4. How does the discovery of the Nabonidus Cylinder in 1854 strengthen your confidence in Scripture?
5. The sermon mentioned that "there's never been an archaeological discovery that has discredited Scripture." How does this fact impact your faith, especially when facing doubts or skepticism from others?
6. Why is the detail about being "third ruler in the kingdom" significant in proving Daniel's historical accuracy?

### Pride and Humility (15 minutes)

7. The sermon said, "Pride is something we all ought to wash away." Where do you see pride showing up in your own life? (Consider areas like: self-sufficiency, refusal to ask for help, comparing yourself to others, resistance to correction)
8. Belshazzar knew what happened to Nebuchadnezzar (his grandfather), yet he didn't humble himself. Why do we often fail to learn from the mistakes of others, even when we know better?
9. Read Proverbs 16:18 - "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Can you share an example from your life or someone you know where this proved true?

### **Daniel's Faithfulness (15 minutes)**

10. Daniel had been faithful for over 60 years in a foreign land, serving multiple kings. What enabled him to maintain his integrity for so long?
11. Daniel consistently gave God the credit rather than taking it for himself. How can we cultivate that same attitude in our accomplishments and successes?
12. Daniel was willing to speak truth to power, even when it was uncomfortable. When have you had to do this? What made it difficult?

### **God's Sovereignty (10 minutes)**

13. The sermon emphasized that "human thought does not compare to God's thought." How does this chapter demonstrate God's sovereignty over nations and rulers?
14. The fall of Babylon marked a transition toward the Israelites' eventual return to Jerusalem. How does seeing God's long-term plan unfold encourage you in seasons when God seems silent or distant?

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### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION (15 minutes)**

#### **Personal Reflection:**

Take 2-3 minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- Where am I trusting in my own strength rather than God's?
- What "temple vessels" in my life am I misusing or taking for granted?
- How can I be more like Daniel in my workplace, home, or community?

#### **Group Sharing:**

Have each person share one specific area where they need to:

1. **Humble themselves** before God
2. **Trust God's sovereignty** even when circumstances seem impossible
3. **Remain faithful** like Daniel, regardless of who's in authority around them

**This Week's Challenge:**

Choose one of the following:

**Option 1 - The Humility Check:** Each day this week, identify one area where you're trusting in your own strength or wisdom rather than God's. Confess it and consciously surrender it to Him.

**Option 2 - The Daniel Commitment:** Identify one situation where you need to "speak truth to power" or maintain integrity despite pressure. Pray for courage and follow through this week.

**Option 3 - The Gratitude Practice:** When you experience any success or accomplishment this week, immediately pause and give God credit—either in prayer or by telling someone else how God enabled you.

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**PRAYER TIME (10 minutes)**

**Prayer Focus:**

- Pray for humility to recognize our dependence on God
- Ask God to help us trust His sovereignty, even when circumstances seem impossible
- Pray for faithfulness like Daniel's, regardless of who's in authority over us
- Thank God that His Word is always proven true

**Prayer Method:** Go around the circle and have each person pray a one-sentence prayer in one of these categories:

- Confession of pride
- Trust in God's sovereignty
- Request for faithfulness

Close with a group leader praying for the entire group.

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### **CLOSING THOUGHT**

"We will never ascend to God's throne outside of being clothed in Christ's righteousness because of our own humility before God. We must be humbled."

The same God who humbled Nebuchadnezzar, who brought down Belshazzar, and who faithfully preserved Daniel is the same God at work in your life today. Trust Him. Humble yourself before Him. And watch Him prove faithful once again.

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### **PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK**

Read Daniel chapter 6 (Daniel in the lion's den) and come prepared to discuss how Daniel's faithfulness continued under Persian rule.

## 5-Day Devotional: Humility Before the Throne



### Day 1: When Pride Meets Providence

**Reading:** Daniel 5:1-12

**Devotional:** Belshazzar's fatal mistake was assuming his fortress made him untouchable. He threw a party while enemies approached, desecrating holy vessels in arrogant celebration. How often do we build our own fortresses—careers, relationships, achievements—believing they make us secure apart from God? True security comes not from what we've built, but from whom we trust. The supernatural hand writing on the wall reminds us that God sees everything, even behind our strongest walls. Today, examine what you're trusting in besides God. Are you throwing your own celebration of self-sufficiency while spiritual danger approaches? Humble yourself before God writes His judgment on your wall.

## **Day 2: The Witness Who Remains Faithful**

**Reading:** Daniel 5:13-17; Proverbs 22:1

**Devotional:** Daniel's reputation outlasted kings and kingdoms because he consistently honored God above earthly rewards. When offered wealth and position, Daniel essentially said, "Keep it—I'll tell you the truth anyway." His integrity wasn't for sale. In our world of compromise and convenience, Daniel challenges us to build a reputation that points to God, not ourselves. What legacy are you creating? Will people remember your faithfulness to God or your pursuit of advancement? Daniel had served faithfully for over sixty years, through multiple administrations, never compromising. His influence came from character, not calculation. Ask God to help you value His approval over human applause, building a testimony that endures beyond your lifetime.

## **Day 3: Learning From Others' Mistakes**

**Reading:** Daniel 5:18-23; Psalm 78:1-8

**Devotional:** Daniel confronted Belshazzar with powerful words: "You knew all this, but you have not humbled your heart." Belshazzar had watched Nebuchadnezzar's pride lead to humiliation and restoration, yet learned nothing. How tragic to witness God's work in others' lives and remain unchanged. God gives us examples—both positive and negative—throughout Scripture and in our communities. We watch people experience consequences of sin or blessings of obedience. The question is: are we paying attention? Today, reflect on spiritual lessons you've observed in others' lives. What has God been teaching you through their experiences? Don't wait for your own "handwriting on the wall" moment. Humble yourself now while there's still time.

#### **Day 4: Measured, Weighed, and Found Wanting**

**Reading:** Daniel 5:24-31; 2 Corinthians 5:10

**Devotional:** "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin"—measured, weighed, divided. God's assessment of Belshazzar's life came swiftly and finally. That very night, judgment fell. This sobering reality awaits us all: our lives are being measured against God's standard, our actions weighed in His balances. The question isn't whether we'll be evaluated, but whether we'll be found sufficient. Apart from Christ's righteousness, we all fall short. But here's the beautiful truth: Jesus was weighed in our place and found perfect. When we trust Him, His righteousness becomes ours. Have you accepted God's provision for your inadequacy? Don't rely on your own goodness—it will never measure up. Trust in Christ alone.

#### **Day 5: The Kingdom That Cannot Fall**

**Reading:** Daniel 2:31-45; Hebrews 12:25-29

**Devotional:** Babylon fell exactly as Daniel predicted decades earlier. The "impenetrable" city was conquered in a single night. Every earthly kingdom—no matter how powerful—eventually crumbles. But Daniel's prophecy pointed to something greater: a kingdom established by God that will never be destroyed. That kingdom came through Jesus Christ. While Belshazzar's kingdom ended in one night of judgment, Christ's kingdom is eternal and unshakeable. Where are you investing your life? In kingdoms of gold, silver, and bronze that will pass away, or in God's eternal kingdom? The Persians thought they'd won by conquering Babylon, but they too would fall. Only God's kingdom endures. Align your priorities with what lasts forever.