



DANIEL 5

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

22 *“But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. 23 And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven...”*

- Daniel 5:22

Daniel Chapter 5 reestablishes prophecy as we shift our focus from Nebuchadnezzar to his grandson, some two decades later, with a stark warning for those who, having seen the faithfulness of God, would rebel against God. Much like our lives, Belshazzar had no excuse not to know of God as Nebuchadnezzar previously made Him known to the kingdom, “29... *any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.*” (Da 3:29) Such a decree would have been written and passed down. Later in the next chapter, we saw a truly humbled Nebuchadnezzar exalting God The Most High. And now, just two generations later, a king, with no reverence for the living God, must be reminded of God’s Sovereignty.

A society with no purpose or conquest gets complacent; complacency leads to indulgence; indulgence to indifference; indifference to irreverence; and irreverence to idolatry and destruction. Thinking highly of itself, Babylon had become complacent. With the medo-Persian empire setting the kingdom under siege, Belshazzar (the king) hosted a party to entertain and distract the nobles from their impending doom. Full of indulgence and irreverence, he defiles the things of God. Using holy items as common things to worship false gods. The Lord wrote on the wall, ‘You have been weighed, you have been measured, and you have been found wanting’ (paraphrase).

Read Daniel 5. How does it compare with Romans 1? If you were on God’s scales, how would you measure up?

Discussion Questions

1. The adage ‘Idol hands are the devil’s playground’ rings true in Daniel 5. How can boredom lead to sin and destruction? How do we keep our hearts, minds, and bodies, ‘on purpose’ for God? (1 Cor 9:24-27)
2. What does ‘indulgence’ mean? Can indulgences be good? How does Indulgence reveal itself in your life?
3. What does it mean to be Indifferent to sin? What about indifference to the things of God?
4. What does it mean to be irreverent before God? How can we ‘Boldly go before the throne’ (Heb 4:16-18) while maintaining an attitude of reverence?
5. When worldly wisdom fails, the queen reminds the king of Daniel’s reputation of ‘having the spirit of the Holy God’ v10 - what have people ‘heard’ about you? How do we safeguard our testimony?