

I. Intro

A. Series Overview: **Dan. 5:1-6**

*<sup>1</sup> King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand. <sup>2</sup> Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. <sup>3</sup> Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. <sup>4</sup> They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. <sup>5</sup> Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. <sup>6</sup> Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. (Dan. 5:1-6)*

B. Recap

1. Book Theme(s)
  - a. The Sovereignty of God
  - b. The Wisdom of God
  - c. The Providence of God
2. The Sovereignty of God extends over the Kingdoms of the World (Ch. 2)
  - a. Nebuchadnezzar's Troubled Dream (**Dan. 2:1-6**)
    - i. Gold – Babylonian (**v.37-38**) (Image)
    - ii. Silver – Mede/Persians (**v. 39a**)
    - iii. Brass – Greek Empire (**v. 39b**)

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iv. Iron and Clay – Roman Empire (**v. 40**)

b. There is a Kingdom coming that will never be destroyed.

c. **Neb: The God of Daniel is the God of gods (v.47)**

*<sup>47</sup> The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.” (Dan. 2:47)*

3. **The Lord Delivered and will Deliver (Ch. 3)**

a. **Prophetic Projection**

b. The Lord is Faithful Even In Fiery Trials

4. **The Tale of Two Sovereigns (Ch. 4)**

a. Nebuchadnezzar’s heart was lifted up. (**Dan. 4:30**)

b. While the word was still in his mouth...

i. “The Kingdom has departed from you”

c. God’s Divine Purpose:

*“...that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.” (Dan. 4:17)*

C. Chapter 5 Background

1. Daniel was a young teenager when he first interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s “*statue dream*” **Chapter 2**.

a. Predicted that the Babylonian Empire would fall to a lesser Kingdom.

2. Daniel doesn’t mention that there are a number of Babylonian kings after Nebuchadnezzar.

a. Evil-Merodach, Neriglisar, Laborosoarchod, Nabonidus.

b. Beshazzar served as a co-regent king with his Father, Nabonidus.

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3. Babylon was under attack by their arch-enemies, the Mede-Persian conglomerate, and much of the empire had already fallen.
    - a. Nabonidus had already been captured/ defeated.
    - b. Only the city of Babylon, with its massive, fortified walls remained.
      - i. Although the picture looked dim, the Babylonian fortress had NEVER been penetrated.
    - c. What do you do in the face of such adversity? (**Dan. 5:1-4**)
      - i. Belshazzar elected to throw a party to honor the gods of Babylon.

## II. Body

### A. The Handwriting's on the Wall (**Dan. 5:5-17**)

*<sup>5</sup>Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. <sup>6</sup>Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. (**Dan. 5:5-6**)*

1. While prideful idolatry was still in the king's heart, judgment was pronounced.
  - a. The fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on a declaration on the wall.
  - b. Wine and intoxicating drink was ruling the night, but a couple of things was now certain:
    - i. Whatever was being written on the wall was an indictment.
    - ii. Their self-indulgent laughter wouldn't last much longer.
  - c. Idolatrous laughter → paralyzing fear.

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2. As in **Ch. 2 & 4**, the King immediately placed his trust in all of the wise men of Babylon.

*<sup>7</sup> The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king declared to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."<sup>8</sup> Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation.<sup>9</sup> Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and his color changed, and his lords were perplexed. (Dan. 5:7-9)*

- a. "Wise men's" wisdom could not comprehend the wisdom of God.
  - b. Called the Hebrew captive, Daniel, to speak into the King's life.
3. As in **Ch. 2 & 4**, Daniel was called in (only after the wisdom of Babylon was made into a mockery).

*<sup>13</sup> Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, "You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah."<sup>14</sup> I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.<sup>15</sup> Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter.<sup>16</sup> But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." (Dan. 5:13-16)*

#### **B. Human Pride Won't Prevail (Dan. 5:18-28)**

*<sup>18</sup> O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty.<sup>19</sup> And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled.<sup>20</sup> But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him.<sup>21</sup> He was driven from among the*

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*children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. (Dan. 5:18-21)*

1. The glory of your predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar, came from the Glorious God. **(v. 18)**
  - a. God raises up some and pulls down others.
  - b. God does it according to His own infinite wisdom and providence.
2. Nebuchadnezzar's delegated greatness was so excessive that He seemed to rule over all. **(v. 19)**
  - a. Until his heart was lifted up... **(v. 20)**
  - b. Glory was taken.
    - i. Driven from men.
  - c. Ultimately, Neb learned that the Most High rules over the Rulers of the earth.
3. Belshazzar also lifted up his heart against the Lord.
  - a. Profaned the vessels that were in the House of the Lord.
4. The Writing Interpretation

<sup>24</sup> *"Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed.*

<sup>25</sup> *And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. <sup>26</sup> This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; <sup>27</sup> TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; <sup>28</sup> PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."* **(Dan. 5:24-28)**

- a. Handwriting Interpretation
  - i. **Mene, Mene**: *Numbered*
  - ii. **Tekel**: *Weighed*

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- iii. **Upharsin or Parsin**: *Divided (given over to the Medes and Persians).*

**C. The Day that humbles the Pridedeful, Exalts the Captive (Dan. 5:29-6:3)**

- 1. That very night 2 things happened:
  - a. Belshazzar was slain, putting an end to the Babylonian Empire.

*<sup>30</sup> That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. <sup>31</sup> And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old. (Dan. 5:30-31)*

- b. Daniel, was exalted to be the 3<sup>rd</sup> ruler in the Kingdom.
    - i. The Babylonian Kingdom was dismantled and the Mede-Persian empire was established.
    - ii. Darius, the Mede-Persian king, set up a new government with 120 governors.

*<sup>1</sup> It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; <sup>2</sup> and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. <sup>3</sup> Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. (Dan. 6:1-3)*

- iii. Over those 120 governors, were three presidents.
    - iv. Daniel was one of the 3 who supervised all the 120.

**III. Conclusion**

- A. Babylon (in many ways) is a type and shadow of a wicked and unbelieving world (across generations).

- 1. Babylon, in the Bible, is an image that represents humanity's corporate rebellion against God.

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2. Like the Babylon of 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., the modern World has rejected the rule of God, and attempted to substitute man in its place.

B. 6<sup>th</sup> Century Babylon's Lessons for the Modern World

1. **The Handwriting's on the Wall (Dan. 5:5-6)**

- a. The end of the story has already been written.
  - i. **Mene, Mene**: *Numbered*
  - ii. **Tekel**: *Weighed*
  - iii. **Upharsin or Parsin**: *Divided (given over to the Medes and Persians).*

2. **Human Pride Won't Prevail (Dan. 5:18-28)**

- a. This modern age is similar to Belshazzar in Babylon (in that it has much to be proud of).
- b. That day (in Daniel 5), Belshazzar was eating and drinking, partying and doing what he wanted to do.

3. **The Day that Humbles the Prideful King, Exalts the Captive Servant (Dan. 5:29-6:3)**

- a. That fierce day that destroyed Babylon, elevated Daniel to share in the rule of the new Kingdom and ultimately freed Jewish captives (Mede-Persia).
- b. The Day of the Lord means destruction for the rebellious kings of this world, but exaltation for those who trust in Him.