

Daniel: Faith in the Fire

Daniel 5

November 5, 2023

It's only been a week since we last looked at Daniel's story, but a lot of years have actually transpired. Daniel was by now in his eighties, but still vigorous. Enjoy your reflections on Daniel 5, remembering that you don't have to answer every question – you're not being graded!

Pastor Eric

Group Sharing:

Who is the oldest person you've known? Who was/is the most impressive elderly person you've known?

Begin by reading Daniel 5. From the way the story ends, we have a rough accounting of when this event happened. For months now, Babylon had been under a major siege by the forces of Persia. What in the world do you think Belshazzar is thinking having a huge feast? Can you imagine what the king might be thinking that would prompt him to call out the treasures from Jerusalem's temple to serve as their wine goblets?

Describe what you imagine is happening when you read verses 5 & 6. Even though the "queen's" view of Daniel is lofty, how does Belshazzar treat him? How would you synthesize Daniel's indictment of the king (in other words, what does Daniel say he was guilty of)?

What are the four words on the wall, how does Daniel translate them, and what are the three specific messages they convey? How does the king respond? What's the difference between Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 and Belshazzar here? (You may want to compare the different ways chapters 4 and 5 end).

*God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains:
it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.*

CS Lewis
The Problem of Pain

In what way(s) do you think Lewis is correct in the above statement? Sometimes the pain and struggle we're in is our own fault, sometimes we've contributed to it (like Belshazzar contributes to the crisis he's in). What is the required response if that's the case? Think about the fire you may be in, be it a grass fire or an inferno. Is there any way in which you stoked the fire? In what way(s) would God have you respond?

What enabled Daniel to be so plain-spoken before the king? Think again about your own "fire" (pain, struggle, challenge). Prayerfully consider if there is a truth you should speak into the fire.

*But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

Lamentations 3.21-23

What is Jeremiah doing in the opening line of Lamentations 3.21? Psychologists call it "self-talk," but here Jeremiah is preaching truth to himself just like the Bible calls us again and again to remember (eg Psalm 77.11). What truth do you need to preach to *yourself* in the middle of the fire?