

The Book of Daniel

God's Prophet and Statesman

V. The *Termination* of the Babylonian Kingdom (5:1-31)

A. The *Desecration* of the Temple Vessels (5:1-4)

Belshazzar the king held a **great feast** for a thousand of his nobles, and he was **drinking wine** in the presence of the thousand.

²When **Belshazzar** tasted the **wine**, he gave orders to bring the **gold** and **silver vessels** which **Nebuchadnezzar** his *father* had **taken out** of the temple which was in **Jerusalem**, so that the **king** and his **nobles**, his **wives** and his **concubines** might **drink** from **them**.

³Then they brought the **gold vessels** that had been **taken out** of the **temple**, the house of God which was in **Jerusalem**; and the **king** and his **nobles**, his **wives** and his **concubines** **drank** from **them**.

⁴They **drank** the **wine** and **praised** the **gods** of **gold** and **silver**, of **bronze**, **iron**, **wood** and **stone**.

B. The *Daunting Appearance* of a Man's Hand (5:5-6)

⁵Suddenly the **fingers** of a **man's hand** emerged and began **writing** opposite the **lampstand** on the plaster of the **wall** of the king's palace, and the **king** saw the **back** of the hand that did the **writing**.

⁶Then the **king's face** grew **pale** and his **thoughts** **alarmed him**, and his **hip joints** went **slack** and his **knees** began **knocking together**.

C. The *Desperation* of the King (5:7-9)

⁷The **king** called aloud to **bring in** the **conjurers**, the **Chaldeans** and "**Any man** who can **read** this **inscription** and **explain** its **interpretation** to me shall be **clothed** with **purple** and *have* a necklace of **gold** around his neck, and have **authority** as **third ruler** in the **kingdom**."

⁸Then **all** the **king's wise men** came in, but they **could not** **read** the **inscription** or **make known** its **interpretation** to the **king**.

⁹Then **King Belshazzar** was **greatly alarmed**, his **face** grew *even paler*, and his **nobles** were **perplexed**.

D. The *Demand* to see Daniel (5:10-16)

¹⁰ The **queen** entered the banquet hall because of **the words** of the **king** and his **nobles**; the **queen** spoke and said,

“O king, live forever! Do **not** let your thoughts **alarm you** or your face be **pale**.

¹¹ There is **a man** in your **kingdom** in whom is a **spirit** of the **holy gods**; and in the **days** of your **father**, **illumination**, **insight** and **wisdom** like the **wisdom** of the **gods** were **found in him**.

And **King Nebuchadnezzar**, your **father**, your **father** the **king**, **appointed him chief** of the **magicians**, **conjurers**, **Chaldeans** and **diviners**.

¹² *This was* because an **extraordinary spirit**, **knowledge** and **insight**, **interpretation** of **dreams**, **explanation** of **enigmas** and **solving** of **difficult problems** were **found** in this **Daniel**, whom the **king** named **Belteshazzar**.

Let **Daniel** now **be summoned** and **he** will **declare** the **interpretation**.”

¹³ Then **Daniel** was **brought in** before the **king**.

The **king** spoke and said to **Daniel**,

“Are you that **Daniel** who is one of the **exiles** from **Judah**, whom **my father** the **king** **brought** from **Judah**?

¹⁴ Now I have heard about **you** that a **spirit** of the **gods** is **in you**, and that **illumination**, **insight** and **extraordinary wisdom** have been found **in you**.

¹⁵ Just now the **wise men** and the **conjurers** were brought in before me... but they **could not** declare the **interpretation** of the **message**...

Now if you are **able** to read the **inscription** and make its **interpretation known to me**, you will be clothed with **purple** and wear a necklace of **gold** around your neck, and you will have **authority** as the **third ruler** in the **kingdom**.”

E. The **Denouncement** of the **King** (5:17-24)

¹⁷ Then **Daniel** answered and said before the **king**,

“**Keep your gifts** for yourself or **give your rewards** to someone else; however, **I will** read the **inscription** to the **king** and make the **interpretation known** to him.

¹⁸ **O king**, the **Most High God** **granted** **sovereignty**, **grandeur**, **glory** and **majesty** to **Nebuchadnezzar** your **father**.

¹⁹ **Because** of the **grandeur** which **He** **bestowed** on him, all the **peoples**, **nations** and **men** of every language **feared** and **trembled** before him;..

²⁰ **But** when his **heart** was **lifted up** and his **spirit** became **so proud** that he behaved **arrogantly**, he was **deposed** from his **royal throne** and **his glory** was **taken away** from him.

²¹ **He** was also **driven away** from mankind, and his **heart** was made like *that of* **beasts**, and his **dwelling place** was with the **wild donkeys**. He was given **grass** to eat like cattle, and his **body** was **drenched** with the **dew** of heaven

until **he recognized** that the **Most High God** is **ruler** over the realm of mankind and *that He sets over it* whomever **He** wishes.

²² Yet **you**, his son, **Belshazzar**, have **not humbled** your heart, even though **you knew** all this, ²³ but **you** have **exalted yourself against** the **Lord of heaven**; and they have brought the **vessels** of **His house** before **you**, and **you** and **your nobles**, your **wives** and your **concubines** have been **drinking wine from them**;

and **you** have **praised** the **gods of silver** and **gold**, of **bronze**, **iron**, **wood** and **stone**, which do **not see**, **hear** or **understand**.

But the **God** in whose **hand** are **your life-breath** and all **your ways**, you have **not glorified**. ²⁴ Then the **hand** was **sent from Him** and this **inscription** was **written out**.

F. The **Dire Interpretation** (5:25-29)

²⁵ “Now this is the **inscription** that was **written out**:
‘**MENĒ, MENĒ, TEKĒL, UPHARSIN.**’

²⁶ This is the **interpretation** of the **message**:

‘**MENĒ**’—**God** has **numbered** your **kingdom** and put an **end** to it.

²⁷ ‘**TEKĒL**’—**you** have been **weighed** on the **scales** and found **deficient**.

²⁸ ‘**PERĒS**’—**your kingdom** has been **divided** and **given over** to the **Medes** and **Persians**.”

²⁹ Then **Belshazzar** gave **orders**, and they **clothed Daniel** with **purple** and *put* a necklace of **gold** around his neck, and issued a **proclamation** concerning him that he *now* had **authority** as the **third ruler** in the **kingdom**.

G. The **Demise** of the **Kingdom** (5:30-31)

³⁰ That **same night** **Belshazzar** the **Chaldean king** was **slain**.

³¹ So **Darius the Mede** received the **kingdom** at about the age of **sixty-two**.

Discussion—**When** do we know as a **Nation**, if the “***Handwriting*** is on the **Wall**?”

1. When, like ***Babylon***, *we* have a **culture** characterized by increasing **decadence**, and when *we* as a **nation** begin to **desecrate** **God’s “holy vessels,”** and **things of God**.

Belshazzar the king held a **great feast** for a **thousand** of his **nobles**, and he was **drinking wine** in the presence of the **thousand**.

When **Belshazzar** tasted the **wine**, he gave orders...

Then they brought the **gold vessels** that had been taken out of the **temple**, the **house of God** which was in **Jerusalem**; and the **king** and his **nobles**, his **wives** and his concubines **drank from them**. (5:1-2a, 3)

The **earth** is also **polluted** by its **inhabitants**, for they **transgressed laws**,

violated statutes, *broke* the everlasting covenant.
Therefore, a **curse devours the earth**, and those who live in it are **held guilty**.
Therefore, the **inhabitants of the earth are *burned***,
and ***few men* are left.** (Isaiah 24:5-6)

2. When, like *Babylon*, we embrace **idolatry** in all its **forms**
and **practices**—the “**handwriting** may be on the **wall**.”

They **drank the wine** and **praised the gods of gold and silver**,
of **bronze, iron, wood and stone.** (5:4)

For the **wrath of God is *revealed* from heaven against all ungodliness
and unrighteousness of men who **suppress the truth in unrighteousness**,..**

Professing to be **wise**, they became **fools**, and exchanged
the **glory of the incorruptible God for an image**...

and **worshipped** and **served** the **creature** rather than
the **Creator**, who is **blessed forever**...(Romans 1:18, 22-23a, 25b)

3. When, like *Babylon*, we **exalt** ourselves ***against* the Lord of heaven**,
the “**handwriting** may be on the **wall**.”

...but **you (Belshazzar)** have **exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven**;..
and **you** have **praised** the **gods of *silver* and *gold***,..
which do **not** see, hear or understand.

But the **God** in whose hand are ***your life-breath* and *your ways***,
you have **not glorified**. (5:23)

4. When, like the *king of Babylon*, our **leaders** and “**wise men**” do
not **learn from God’s past judgments upon sin**— the “**handwriting**
may be on the **wall**.”

He (Nebuchadnezzar your father) was also **driven away from mankind**,
and his **heart** was made like *that of beasts*, and his **dwelling place**
was with the **wild donkeys**... **until he recognized** that the
Most High God is **ruler** over the realm of **mankind**
and ***that he sets over it* whomever He wishes.”**

“Yet you, **his son, Belshazzar**, have **not humbled your heart**,
even though **you knew all this**, but you have **exalted yourself**
over the Lord of heaven; (5:21-22)

Closing Comments

