



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A Leader Sees the Handwriting on the Wall (Daniel 5)

FEBRUARY 7, 2024

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*This lesson is about the need for us to see the big picture. Some call it the 30,000-foot view or visualizing the forest while lost among the trees. **Have you seen a person, especially a leader who had become so callous and unable to see the truth that they were beyond redemption? Have you seen judgement come upon a person who would not heed warning signs?***

INTRODUCTION

Daniel was among those relocated when Babylon conquered Israel and all surrounding nations. God greatly blessed his sixty years of service as counsellor to the king. Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C.

The ruling family went through an assassination, a revolution, and loss in a conspiracy. A little-known relative named Nabonidus took the throne and installed his son, Belshazzar, as co-regent.

During those twenty years the empire of the Medes and Persians was expanding greatly under King Darius and Cyrus the Great. They invaded Babylon.

Daniel chronicled the events inside the castle, in the fortified capital city of Babylon. The leaders of Babylon were having a banquet while the Persian army had the city under siege. **What does this twenty-year saga reveal about leadership and life in the world?**

THE KING'S IDOLATROUS FEAST

Daniel 5:1-2 Belshazzar the king held a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. While Belshazzar was drinking the wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem. The king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. (NIV)

This drunken event is an interesting response to the feelings of doom from being surrounded by the army of an enemy. The city was heavily fortified, had years of food stored, and a river running under their walls. **What actions have you or other leaders taken in a crisis which seemed hopeless?**

JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED

Daniel 5:4-6 As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold, and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone. Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale, and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way. (NIV)

God got the attention of the king. Belshazzar called upon his advisers to interpret the message. Notice the drama Daniel communicates in his report. He also repeats the three reports of the wise men's failure to read God's message. **How many sins can you identify in the King's actions reported in these paragraphs?**

THE QUEEN MOTHER REMINDS THEM OF DANIEL

Daniel 5:11 There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father, he was found to have insight, intelligence, and wisdom like that of the gods. (NIV)

The queen tells of the high position Daniel earned in service to King Belshazzar's grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel is brought in and offered the position as third ruler for his interpretation of the message. He declined any reward as he revealed God's message. **Can you share a loss due to missed wisdom?**

GOD'S MESSAGE TO KING BELSHAZZAR

Daniel 5:25-28 "This is the interpretation: 'MENĒ'—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. 'TEKĒL'—you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. 'PERĒS'—your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians." (NASB)

That very night King Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Mede seized the kingdom. **What might Belshazzar have missed during his grandfather's leadership?**

A PRAYER

Almighty God, thank You for sending Jesus to pay the judgment for my sins. Help me to gain the wisdom of Daniel that I may hear Your counsel. I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen!