

## THE HAND THAT WROTE ON THE WALL Daniel 5:1-16

Intro: Historically this chapter takes place 23 years after the events recorded in Chapter four.

The great king Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C. His son Evil Merodach succeeded him and reigned two years. Evil Merodach was murdered by his brother-in-law Neriglissar in 560 B.C. who ruled for 4 years. After the death of Neriglissar, his son Labashi-Marduk then about nine years of age, ruled a few months and was beaten to death in a conspiracy. The conspirators appointed a co-conspirator, Nabonidus, son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar who ruled for 17 years. Nabonidus ruled the Babylonian Empire, but Belshazzar, his son, ruled Babylon as co-regent. Until recently, with the discovery of the Nabonidus Chronicles verifying the existence of Belshazzar as king of Babylon, the liberals attacked the fifth chapter of Daniel because there was no confirmation that Belshazzar was king of Babylon.

Try to imagine the thoughts of the king as he saw the fingers of a man's hand writing on the wall. In verse 5, the scripture has a mysterious sound as we read: "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall in the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." The light of the candlestick gave illumination with a shadowy presence.

This is not the only time that God had written a message with His finger or revealed a message as being hand writing. When the dust became lice and the magicians of Pharaoh could not duplicate this and having seen what God had already done, they declared: "This is the finger of God..." The Bible says in Exodus 31:18: "And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." In the New Testament, Luke 11:20 speaks of Christ casting out demons by the finger of God. There are many events in history that can be attributed to the work of the finger of God.

### I. VS. 1, AN UNFORGETTABLE FEAST

- A. Food and drinks were in abundance. It was a festive time. Folks dressed in their finery and showed off their jewelry. The scent of perfume floated about the magnificent banquet hall.
- B. Music was playing. People were dancing. You can be sure that there were people getting drunk. We need to be reminded from time to time what the Bible says about drunkenness.
  - 1. Drunkenness cause contention (Prov. 23:29-35).

2. Intoxication is like a poisonous snake (Prov. 23:32).
3. Liquor leads to immoral behavior (Prov. 23:33).

## II. VSS. 2-4, A FOOLISH KING

- A. Vs. 2-3, Belshazzar did a very foolish thing while he was under the influence of wine; he ordered that the gold and silver vessels that his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar (there is no word for grandfather in the language) be brought. And what did they do with these sacred vessels? They drank wine out of them; they committed sacrilege.
1. They made fun of God, they mocked Him.
  2. Dr. Jerry Vines says: "The Lord's day is a thing of the past. It began as 'the Holy Sabbath,' then it was simply 'Sunday'. First it was 'the Lord's day,' now it is just 'the weekend,' just another day. The Lord expects us to dedicate at least one day to go to His house and to study His Word." (77)
  3. Babylon was about to fall. The city was thought to be unassailable; yet, a sudden fall was coming within hours. Could it be that America is about to fall? Psalm 9:17 says: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."
- B. Vs. 4, These people were not looking to Jehovah. They, "praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone" as they drank from the sacred vessels. This is not what King Nebuchadnezzar had wanted, but his words had long been forgotten and or ignored (3:29).
1. Today the words of the King of Kings are being ignored. Jesus said: "If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Are folks keeping His commandments concerning morals and integrity?
  2. Many people ignore God until they get into trouble and need help. They do not pray unless they have a problem. They miss use His name, His Word, and His gifts. They abuse their bodies which are to be holy temples. To the child of God the Bible says: "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost that is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

- III. Vss. 5-9, THE FINGER OF GOD AND THE FEAR OF BELSHAZZAR
- A. Vs. 5, Suddenly out of thin air a hand appears, illuminated by the light from the light of the candlestick and begins to write on the wall.
1. Things got quiet. The music ceased; the drinks stopped flowing; and the dancing was over for the night. All eyes were on the handwriting on the wall. The hand was writing a message for Bleshazzar on the wall. This was not an hallucination for “the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.” When the hand was gone, the writing remained on the wall.
  2. King Belshazzar had crossed the line; he had profaned that which is holy; and God was about to judge him. Just minutes earlier, the king had openly challenged Jehovah God by drinking and making toasts from the sacred Temple vessels. Now, God would deal with the challenger.
- B. Vs. 6, The king did not know what the writing said, but the fact that he had seen the hand that wrote it, and was there was enough to sober him up. What will it take to sober you up, to get you to the place where you will listen to Jehovah God? For Belshazzar, time was nearly up. He would be dead by this time tomorrow. I do not know how much time you have left, so I want to beg you to get right with God. Quit playing games, playing church, get right! (James 4:14)
1. The Bible says that the king was shaken to the very depth of his physical being. His knees were knocking, “and his thoughts troubled him.”
  2. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit would trouble America and get her on her knees before He brings her to her knees.
- C. Vs.7-8, The hand writing caused the king to cry out. Some say it was more like a shriek. Belshazzar did what the worldly do; he called upon those who had not been able to help him before; he called for the same old crowd that had been of no help to his grandfather Nebuchhadnezzar.
1. When troubles come, most folks turn to the world for help when what they need is spiritual guidance.
  2. The world cannot help you with the spiritual needs of life because spiritual things must be revealed by God (1 Cor. 2:14).
- D. Vs. 9, The king was greatly troubled. Why? Because, on top of

his own fear, the wise men he trusted could not help. Many today are trusting in the wise men of the world. The Bible says that “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness” (1 Cor. 3:19). Their cunning and false wisdom could not give spiritual help. Dr. Jerry Vines says: “This world does not have the answer for human problems.” (79)

1. The king’s whole facial expression was one of astonishment.
2. Even with all of his power and wealth, the king was helpless in this situation. Warren Wiersbe says: “Once again, the Lord had exposed the ignorance of the world and the futility of human power to discover and explain the mind and will of God.” (Vol. 274)

#### IV. Vss. 10-12, FAITHFUL DANIEL’S REPUTATION

A. Vs. 10, The Queen Mother is summoned to the banquet hall by the king.

1. She says to the king: “O king, live forever...” Little did she know that this very night his soul would be required of him. One day our souls will be required, and the words of the scripture will be very real: “This night thy soul is required of thee.”
2. She tried to cheer him up but I believe he knew deep down within that he was in big trouble. “Be sure your sins will find you out” was getting ready to be very real to this godless heathen.

B. Vs. 11-12, “There is a man in the kingdom...” This man, Daniel, is now eighty years old. It is so good that he he had not ruined his testimony and thrown his life achievements away. From the time he was a young man, he had served the true and living God. He was not hot then cold; he was steady.

1. Nebuchadnezzar’s wife, the Queen Mother, remembered how much Daniel had meant to her husband, and how he had been a testimony to him.
2. She knows the reputation of this great man of God and rehearses it to the king.
  - a. One of the things she says about him is that he is good at, “dissolving of doubts” (vs. 12). “Knots” is what the word “doubts” means here. He could help

folks when they were all knotted up by giving the wisdom from God. We face many knotty problems today, and the only real hope is from the knowledge given to us through the written and preached Word of God.

- b. The king and the worldly crowd around him had no time for Daniel until the Handwriting appeared on the Wall put them in a knotty situation. Friend, live right and do right and the time will come when those who ignore you will come to you needing spiritual help.

V. Vss13-16, A FUTILE OFFER

- A. The offer, verse 16, that the king makes to Daniel is futile in that it is not going to help the king get out of the trouble he is in.
- B. Vs. 13, Daniel, although he was probably still on the list of those to be invited to state banquets, was not initially at the shin-dig. Daniel did what many today do not do, he separated himself from the drinking and carousing crowd.
  - 1. Yes, Daniel was the Daniel that had been “brought out of Jewery.” Daniel had been raised right and had not forgotten his upbringing. The law of God was hidden in his heart when he was young (Psalm 119:11, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”)
  - 2. In the New Testament, we read of Timothy who was trained from a youth by his mother and grandmother in the word of God (2 Timothy 1:5).
- C. Vs. 14, Even this worldly king had heard of the faithful witness of God’s man. Will you be a witness for Jesus?
  - 1. We are to let our light shine so that others will see that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.
  - 2. “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost” (2 Cor. 4:3).
- D. Vs. 15, Spiritual discernment comes from God (1 Cor. 1:14).
- E. Vs. 16, The king could not offer to Daniel the second highest place in the kingdom because that was the spot he held. His father Nabonidus was first in command. Friends, Daniel was not one who cared about glitz and glamor of the world so he cared not about the offer of the king. Let us seek first the kingdom of God, and let Him add to us as He pleases.

Conclusion: May the Lord grant to us a witness such as Daniel had.

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