



## SAVED TO SERVE

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### DANIEL THE PROPHET - DANIEL 5 THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL, PART 1

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will begin studying Daniel 5. It has striking applications for us today and warns us to consider our ways before our probation closes.
2. What did Belshazzar do in Daniel 5:1? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Read Daniel 5:2. In what way was Belshazzar related to Nebuchadnezzar? 2 Kings 25:22, 27 & Jeremiah 52:31 **Answer: Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. In this context, when the Bible says "father," it simply means forefather or ancestor. See the following scriptures for confirmation: Joshua 24:2-3; John 8:56.**

**"Through the folly and weakness of Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, proud Babylon was soon to fall. Admitted in his youth to a share in kingly authority, Belshazzar gloried in his power and lifted up his heart against the God of heaven. Many had been his opportunities to know the divine will and to understand his responsibility of rendering obedience thereto. He had known of his grandfather's banishment, by the decree of God, from the society of men; and he was familiar with Nebuchadnezzar's conversion and miraculous restoration. But Belshazzar allowed the love of pleasure and self-glorification to efface the lessons that he should never have forgotten. He wasted the opportunities graciously granted him, and neglected to use the means within his reach for becoming more fully acquainted with truth. That which Nebuchadnezzar had finally gained at the cost of untold suffering and humiliation, Belshazzar passed by with indifference." {PK 521.2}**

4. What grave sin did Belshazzar commit next? Daniel 5:3-4  
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5. Why was this sin so grievous in God's sight? Exodus 40:9-10  
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6. **Note:** The primary sin which caused the last blow to Belshazzar's kingdom was desecrating the holy vessels of God. Let us now analyze some of the specific sins that caused Belshazzar and his kingdom to fall.
7. What beverage were the Babylonians drinking, and what effect did it have on them? Daniel 5:1; Proverbs 31:3-5  
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8. What other sin was prevalent at this palace feast? Daniel 5:2; 1 Corinthians 6:18  
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9. By praising the gods of gold, silver, wood, and stone, what sin were the Babylonians committing? Daniel 5:4; Psalm 115:4; 1 Corinthians 6:9  
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10. What was seen next which drove fear into the heart of Belshazzar and those present at the feast? Daniel 5: 5, 6  
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11. In Daniel 5:5, the Bible says that the handwriting was written "over against the candlestick." Why was the handwriting written over the candlestick?
  - a) Luke 8:16  
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  - b) Matthew 5:15 - **Answer: It was written over the candlestick as a rebuke to the Babylonians, showing that Belshazzar had rejected the light of God's truth.**

12. While all of this was happening inside the palace walls, what was happening outside the city walls of Babylon? Daniel 5:31; Jeremiah 50:2, 9-10; 51:56-58. See quotation for more context.
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“While still in the festal hall, surrounded by those whose doom has been sealed, the king is informed by a messenger that “his city is taken” by the enemy against whose devices he had felt so secure; “that the passages are stopped, ... and the men of war are affrighted.” Verses 31, 32. **Even while he and his nobles were drinking from the sacred vessels of Jehovah, and praising their gods of silver and of gold, the Medes and the Persians, having turned the Euphrates out of its channel, were marching into the heart of the unguarded city.** The army of Cyrus now stood under the walls of the palace; the city was filled with the soldiers of the enemy, “as with caterpillars” (verse 14); and their triumphant shouts could be heard above the despairing cries of the astonished revelers.” {PK 530.2}

13. **Note:** Belshazzar was at ease, partying and reveling without a thought in his mind that he would die that night, and his kingdom would fall. Let us now make the present day application for the previous points.
14. The sin which filled the cup of Belshazzar’s iniquity was when he desecrated God’s holy vessels. In a spiritual sense, what do the vessels represent? Acts 9:15; Jeremiah 18:3-6
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15. For emphasis, how old was Belshazzar at this time? See quotation.
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**“Admitted to a share in kingly authority at fifteen years of age, Belshazzar gloried in his power, and lifted up his heart against the God of heaven.** He despised the One who is above all rulers, the General of all the armies of heaven. “Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.” On this occasion there was music and dancing and wine-drinking. The profane orgies of royal mirth were attended by men of genius and education. Decorated women with their enchantments, were among the revelers.” {YI May 19, 1898, par. 4}

16. Like the scene in Daniel 5 and Exodus 32, what same sins are prevalent today, among old and young, which are desecrating their bodily vessels? Exodus 32:6-8, 25; 1 Corinthians 10:5-8; Galatians 5:19, 20
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“Aaron, who had been left in charge of the camp, yielded to their clamors. Instead of exercising faith in God, trusting to divine power to sustain him, he was tempted to believe that if he resisted the demands of the people, they would take his life; and he did as they desired. He collected the golden ornaments, made the molten calf, and fashioned it with a graving tool. Then the leaders of the people declared, “These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” When Aaron saw that the image he had graven pleased the people, he was proud of his workmanship. He built an altar before the idol, “made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.” **They drank and feasted, and gave themselves up to mirth and dancing, which ended in the shameful orgies that marked the heathen worship of false gods.**” {TM 99.3}

**“With reason dethroned through shameless intoxication, and with lower impulses and passions now in the ascendancy, the king himself took the lead in the riotous orgy.** As the feast progressed, he “commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which ... Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of 523 the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.” The king would prove that nothing was too sacred for his hands to handle. “They brought the golden vessels; ... and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.” {PK 523.3}

17. Another sin prevalent today is the wearing of jewelry. How did Daniel respond to Belshazzar’s reward for interpreting the handwriting on the wall? Daniel 5:16-17
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18. **Note:** Daniel’s rebuttal to the king’s gifts, including the jewelry, were for two primary reasons. Firstly, Daniel understood that only God should be praised and honored for the interpretation of the handwriting on the wall. Secondly, Daniel understood that adorning himself with jewelry was not right in God’s sight. Compare the scene at the base of Mount Sinai in Exodus 33:5-6 for confirmation. For an in depth study on jewelry, see the Bible study guide links below.

<https://www.prophesyagain.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Notes/Jewelry-Part-1.pdf>

<https://www.prophesyagain.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Notes/Jewelry-Part-2.pdf>

19. Although Belshazzar was not a Jew, why was he condemned by God for these sins? Daniel 5:18-22 (answer is in verse 22)

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20. **Note:** This condemnation of Belshazzar and his kingdom came because he knew what was right, but willfully did that which was wrong (James 4:17). The life of his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, was an example of the result of willfully harboring sin and pride against God. The same sins are being repeated today in the lives of those who profess to know the truth, and among those who have backslidden from the truth. Many of the young and old are participating in these sins which caused Belshazzar's fall, and if they do not repent, God's "handwriting will be on the wall" for them and their probation will be closed. However, those who are ignorant of these truths are not now being condemned for what they do not know (Acts 17:30). Condemnation comes when we know the truth and reject it (John 3:19). This is why we must exercise patience with those who have not been exposed to truth when doing evangelism.

21. Like Belshazzar, why are many people participating in these sins even though they know better? Compare Matthew 24:42-44 and the note on question 13.

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22. **Note:** Let us now transition and see how, through God, we can practically preserve our earthen vessels (our lives).

23. Read 2 Timothy 2:19. How will God know those who belong to Him?

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24. Read 2 Timothy 2:20, 21. Gold, silver, wood, and vessels of earth are mentioned. Contextually, these materials are used to represent a person's works or life. Based on the following scriptures, which vessels are "sanctified unto honor" and "meet for the master's use?" 1 Corinthians 3:11-14; Malachi 3:3

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25. **Note:** The gold and silver are the vessels that are "sanctified unto honor" because they are the only ones mentioned that can stand the test of God's refining fire. The wood, stone, stubble, and earth represent earthly, fleshly desires which desecrate the soul. However, Jesus desires us to be like the gold and silver that when put through the fire (trials and tests of life), they will be purified, and the reflection of the refiner (Jesus) will be seen in them.

26. When we are being purified by Jesus, what will we flee, and what will we seek after instead? 2 Timothy 2:22

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27. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7. What is the "treasure" that we can have in our earthen vessels or lives? 2 Corinthians 4:6

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28. **Note:** 2 Corinthians 4:6, 7 brings to view a mystery. We just learned in 2 Timothy 2:20, that literal earthen vessels are not sanctified and cannot stand the test of fire. So, in a spiritual sense, how is it that we can have a living knowledge of God abiding in our carnal, earthly vessels or lives? Romans 8:1-10 explains that because Jesus lived a holy life as a human being and overcame sin in human flesh, we also can overcome sin in our lives once we accept Him and allow His Holy Spirit to perform righteousness (right actions) in us.

29. As we close, read Daniel 5:10-12. What did the queen say was found in Daniel?

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30. **Note:** With the previous point in mind, read 2 Corinthians 4:6, 7. Daniel was emanating God's light, His wisdom, and His knowledge. These scriptures are revealing to us that Daniel was an example of an earthen vessel, who allowed God to purify him and use him to share the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the dark kingdom of Babylon. Likewise, God is looking for other willing vessels who will allow God to use them to shed the light and knowledge of the gospel of Jesus in this present dark world. Will YOU unite with Jesus today?