

## SERMON OUTLINE

In Daniel 5:1-31 witness the fall of a king in 6 acts.

- I. The king hosts a feast.
  - A. Full of wine & women (vs. 1, 2b, 3b).
  - B. Full of blasphemy (vs. 2-3).
  - C. Full of idolatry (v. 4).
- II. God writes on the wall.
  - A. Words written by mysterious fingers (v. 5).
  - B. Words that undo the king (v. 6).
  - C. Words that cannot be interpreted (vs. 7-9).
- III. The queen intervenes with the first history lesson (vs. 10-12).
- IV. The king questions Daniel (vs. 13-16).
- V. Daniel answers with the second history lesson (vs. 17-21).
- VI. The king is judged.
  - A. The charges are levied (vs. 22-23).
  - B. The verdict is handed down (vs. 24-28).
  - C. The execution is carried out (vs. 29-31).

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, December 10, 2017

Passage: Daniel 5:1-31

Memory Passage: Daniel 5:25-28

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Dan. 5:1-31.** Belshazzar was co-regent with his father, Nabonidus (reigned 556-539 B.C.). This banquet most likely took place on October 11, 539 B.C., the night before Babylon fell.
- (b) Extravagant banquets were normal during Babylonian and Persian times, but why would the king host a banquet on this night given the Persians were camped just outside the city walls and his father, Nabonidus, just 2 days before had been defeated by the Persians in a battle at Sippar, 50 miles to the north?
- (c) Why does Belshazzar order the vessels taken from the temple by Nebuchadnezzar to be brought in and used?
- (d) Nebuchadnezzar is referred to several times as Belshazzar's father (vs. 2, 11, 13, 18, cf. 22), but he was not his biological father. What does this description and its repetition tell us about these two kings?

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Dan. 5:1-31.** What events (vs. 2-3) caused God to act "immediately" (v. 4)?
- (b) What should the faithful reader of Daniel expect of the Chaldeans when they are summoned by the king?
- (c) The king is left with no help, and his alarm increases (compare v. 6 with v. 9). What might he be thinking at this point?
- (d) The "queen" is most likely the Queen Mother, Belshazzar's mother/Nabonidus' wife. She tells him to call Daniel, but considering what she says about Nebuchadnezzar & Daniel, what else is she telling/teaching her son?

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Dan. 5:1-31.** What does the king think of Daniel (vs. 13-17)? Why does this surprise us, and what does it reveal about the king (and don't miss the irony here: a captive Jew who serves the God the king mocked is the king's only chance!)?
- (b) Why does Daniel refuse the rewards of the king? How might it be significant that he refuses them before he translates?
- (c) What is the point of Daniel recounting in such detail God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 17-21)?
- (d) Explain why Belshazzar is guilty (vs. 22-23).

### DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Dan. 5:1-31.** The message from God (the hand was sent "from his presence") was easily read by the Chaldeans as weights (MENE = mina; TEKEL = shekel [1/60<sup>th</sup> of a mina]; PARSIN = half [of either a mina or a shekel]), but they could not provide the king with their interpretation. Daniel, however, as God's messenger, translated the words with different vowel pointing so the words become passive participles and bring the judgment from God through the pun of words that mean weights as well as: Numbered, Numbered, Weighed, Divided.
- (b) By what standard was Belshazzar measured and in what ways was he found wanting?
- (c) Why does Daniel now accept the rewards from the king?
- (d) Why was Belshazzar's judgment carried out so swiftly? Why did God deal so differently with Nebuchadnezzar?

### DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Daniel 5:1-31.** How are Belshazzar's acts of idolatry different from Nebuchadnezzar's? In what ways do you take God's good gifts (God commanded the temple vessels be made and used for worship of Himself) and profane them? What false gods command your attention to the point of idolatry (v. 4)? Evaluate your answer in light of Luke 12:13-21 and Dan. 5.
- (b) What truths do you already know (v. 22; cf. John 14:26) that you are in the habit of ignoring? How does God's response to Belshazzar give you pause?
- (c) In what ways are you routinely "weighed and found wanting," and what hope do you have for avoiding judgment?

DATE: December 10, 2017

PASSAGE: Daniel 5:1-31

*Weighed and Found Wanting*