



STANDING STRONG IN TRYING TIMES

The Book of Daniel

The Handwriting On the Wall

Key idea:

God brought mighty Babylon and her arrogant king to a swift end as He had promised, and this is a warning to all who arrogantly trust in themselves rather than Christ.

Key text:

Daniel 5

Key points:

1. Chapter 5 describes the events of October 12, 539 BC, the night Babylon fell to the Medo-Persian empire.
2. Belshazzar holds a huge banquet during which he commits blasphemy by using the temple articles taken from Jerusalem to drink wine and to worship idols.
3. During the banquet, a hand writes a message on the wall which none of the wise men of Babylon can decipher for the king, so the Queen mother recommends calling Daniel to read and interpret the message.
4. Daniel rebukes Belshazzar, reminding him of what happened to Nebuchadnezzar, and telling Belshazzar that he knew this but refused to humble himself and set himself against God.
5. Daniel interpreted the message to mean that Belshazzar's rule has been numbered and is at an end, that he has been weighted by God and found wanting, and that the kingdom of Babylon would be handed over to the Medes and Persians.
6. All of this happened that very night, as Belshazzar was killed and the Medo-Persian empire replaced Babylon.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. Why does the book of Daniel skip from Nebuchadnezzar to Belshazzar, not even mentioning the four kings before Belshazzar, including his father the true king?

3. What links can I see between chapters 4 and 5 of Daniel?
4. In what ways is Belshazzar presented as the opposite of Nebuchadnezzar? What does God want me to learn from these two men?
5. Belshazzar certainly knew that the Persian army was surrounding Babylon. Why would he hold such a huge banquet under these circumstances? How might this be related to Jesus' statement "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man." (Matthew 24:37–39)?
6. How could Daniel know that Cyrus was about to conquer Babylon? How had God already given this information to Daniel?
7. How does this story serve to give me confidence in the Word of God?
8. How would this story serve to encourage the people of God suffering under evil rulers in this world? How can it encourage me in the land of my exile today?
9. In what ways does the message of days being numbered, and being weighed and judged by God apply to all humans? How does this point me to Christ?
10. Who will I call or see to encourage this week?

For Further Study:

[The Humility of the Wise](#) (November 19, 2006)

[God's Sovereignty Over Human History](#) (July 5, 2009)

[In the Valley of Decision: Where Is Your Trust](#) (June 7, 2009)

[Hezekiah's Faith: Assyria Falling](#) (October 18, 2009)

[The Question of the Bible](#) (April 8, 2018)

[Ecclesiastes - The Conclusion of Wisdom](#) (January 21, 2007)

[Preparing for the Judgment](#) (September 23, 2007)

Preview of next week: New Boss, Same As the Old Boss (Daniel 6)