

Lesson 94: The Writing on the Wall

Scripture: Daniel 5

Memory verse: "But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways." Daniel 5:23.

Many years after God restored Nebuchadnezzar to power, Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's son became king. One day, he gave a great feast for one-thousands of his friends. While Belshazzar was drinking the wine with his friends, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver cups that his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. While they drank from them, they praised their idols made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

Suddenly, they saw the fingers of a human hand writing on the plaster wall of the king's palace, near the lampstand. The king himself saw the hand as it wrote, and his face turned pale with fright. His knees knocked together in fear and his legs gave way beneath him.

The king shouted for the wise men of Babylon to be assembled, and he told them, "Whoever can read this writing and tell me what it means will be become famous, and I will make him third highest ruler in the kingdom!"

But when all the king's wise men had come in, none of them could read the writing or tell him what it meant. So, the king and his nobles became even more afraid.

But when the queen mother heard what was happening, she hurried to the banquet hall. She said to Belshazzar, "There is a man in your kingdom who is filled with divine knowledge and understanding; he can interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve difficult problems. Your father Nebuchadnezzar trusted him completely. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means."

So, the king sent for Daniel. He promised Daniel great gifts if he could explain the writing.

Daniel answered the king, "Keep your gifts or give them to someone else, but I will tell you what the writing means. The Most-High God gave sovereignty, majesty, glory, and honor to your father, Nebuchadnezzar. But when his heart and mind were puffed up with pride, he was brought down from his royal throne and stripped of his glory until he learned that the Most-High God rules over the kingdoms of the world and appoints anyone he desires to rule over them."

"You are his successor, O Belshazzar, and you knew all this, **yet you have not humbled yourself**. For you have proudly defied the Lord of heaven and have had these cups from his Temple brought before you. You and your friends have been drinking wine from them while praising gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone—**gods that neither see nor hear nor know anything at all**. But you have not honored the God who gives you the breath of life and controls your destiny! So, God has sent this hand to write this message."

"This is the message that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN. This is what these words mean:

Mene means 'numbered'—God has numbered the days of your reign and has brought it to an end.

Tekel means 'weighed'—you have been weighed on the balances and have not measured up.

Parsin means 'divided'—your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was given gifts and proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom. Later that very night Belshazzar, the Babylonian king, was killed. Darius the Mede took over the kingdom at the age of sixty-two.