

● That's what the three words meant. What God was saying was that the Kingdom of Babylon was about to come to an end. Its days were numbered and its number was up. The kingdom had been weighed, evaluated, judged by God, and had come up short. It was about to be conquered, defeated and divided. Belshazzar gave Daniel his reward (point to the word "reward" on the chalkboard), but before the night was over (point to the word "fulfillment" on the chalkboard), the Medes and Persians entered the city, killed Belshazzar and took power without a battle. In an instant, the greatest kingdom the world had ever seen was replaced by another.

Making It Personal

Deciding what it means to "honor God"

● Erase the chalkboard. Write across the top of the chalkboard the following words from the end of Daniel 5:23 (NIV), "Honor the God who holds in His hand your life and all your ways."

Wrapping It Up

● There is some of Belshazzar's self-centered, arrogant ostentatious attitude in each of us. We need to set that aside and honor the God who holds our life in His hands.

● Call on someone to lead the class in prayer.

● This is what Belshazzar did not do. His failure to honor God led to disastrous results—the loss of a kingdom and the loss of his life.

● God expects people to honor Him as God. The Ten Commandments that He gave to the Israelites began by dealing with that very issue. Have someone read aloud the giving of the first four of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-11.

● **What are some specific things we can do today to honor God?** Wait for responses. Have someone list them on the chalkboard beneath the Scripture passage. Be sure they suggest some positive things (spend time with God, share Him with others) as well as negative things (not engaging in various ungodly behaviors).

● After several are listed, encourage each person to think of one specific action they will take this week to honor God with their lives.

Teacher's Toolbox

*Getting your class into God's Word
and God's Word into your class*

ExcitingBibleStudy.com

Bible Series

Daniel 5

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HOW TO USE TEACHER'S TOOLBOX: Make a four-page folded teacher's leaflet from the first two sheets by printing two-sided (or by putting the blank sides together). The other two sheets are for duplicating, displaying, distributing, or otherwise using as called for in the lesson plan.



Faith at Home – A specific application of today's Bible passage to family life, to be used for individual reflection, family discussion, or class activity.



Getting Started

Object lesson

● Before class, find or purchase an old looking dish in good condition. You may find something at a garage sale or a second-hand shop. Don't spend much for it, because it won't survive the class session.

● Show the dish and tell the following story. **Suppose I told you that this is a very special dish, a family heirloom, handed down to me from my great-grandmother. My mother was very proud to have it and when she gave it to me she told me the story about how her grandmother had saved pennies for more than a year in order to purchase it from a traveling salesman. It was the finest dish that she owned and every time we see the dish, it reminds our whole family of what a wonderful woman my great-grandmother was. Suppose I told you that I wanted you to have this dish. What would you do with it?** Wait for responses. They may suggest displaying it, using it for special occa-

sions, telling others about your great-grandmother.

- **Suppose I gave you this dish and came to your house a few months later and saw it on your kitchen floor where you were using it to feed your dog. How do you think I would feel?** Wait for responses.
- **Suppose I complained to you about what you were doing with the dish I gave you and you said, “It’s just a dish, and it’s my dish now and I can do anything I want with it.” And then you picked it up off the floor and threw it to the ground.** Drop the dish to the ground, breaking it; don’t be too violent or pieces may actually fly across the room and hurt someone.
- **Even though it is just a dish, if it has special significance, I would expect you to treat it in a special way. Fortunately, this dish is not special to me. I purchased it this week for this demonstration. That’s why I was able to break it without regret. But I imagine that at one time even this dish was very special to someone and I have treated it badly because it meant nothing to me.**
- **Our lesson today begins with the improper use of some dishes—gold goblets that had at one time been used in the worship of God but now were being used in a pagan, drunken party.**

Exploring God's Word

Brief background

- Have someone read aloud the information on Item 1.

Looking for trouble

- Ask learners to “look for trouble” as someone reads aloud Daniel 5:1-4. In other words, they should listen for indications that a disaster could be looming.
- After the passage is read aloud, let volunteers call out the signs of potential trouble they noticed. Be sure they mention these:
 - Belshazzar gave a great banquet while his father was out fending off invaders

- They were drinking wine (Verse 2 begins in Holman Christian Standard Version, “Under the influence of the wine”; in Contemporary English Version, “He got drunk.”)
- The king called for stored treasures to be used for common purposes
- They were worshipping false gods

Looking for contrasts

- **How would you describe Belshazzar’s demeanor in Daniel 5:1-4?** (festive, confident, cocky, arrogant, ostentatious)
- Have someone read aloud Daniel 5:5-6.
- **How is Belshazzar described in these verses?** (pale, frightened,

knees knocked, legs gave way)

- **What caused the change in the king?** (the appearance of the fingers of a human hand writing on the wall)
- **This is the source of a commonly used expression. What do we mean when we say, “I saw the handwriting on the wall?”** (It became apparent to me what was about to happen.)
- **Although Belshazzar did not yet know what the handwriting meant, when it was later interpreted to him, he knew what catastrophe was looming.**

Looking for information

- Give each person a copy of Item 2 which has questions that are answered in Daniel 5:7-24. Ask them to work alone or with one or two other persons to find the answers to the questions.
- Allow ten minutes for study, then lead them to share their findings with the rest of the class. Along the way, share the following information:
 - **Since Belshazzar himself was second in the kingdom after his father Nabonidus, “third highest ruler” was the best reward he could offer.**
 - **The queen was either Belshazzar’s mother or grandmother. She knew Daniel’s abilities first-hand. Apparently in recent years, during Belshazzar’s**

lifetime, Daniel had not been as visible.

- **Daniel was never interested in gaining riches or power. Besides, he knew that Belshazzar’s offer was meaningless in light of what was about to happen.**

Looking for the bottom line

- Call attention to Daniel 5:23. Tell the class that the beginning and ending of that verse reveal the fatal mistake that Belshazzar made: “you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven,” and “you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways” (Dan 5:23, NIV).

Explaining the interpretation

- Across the top of the chalkboard write: “Interpretation, Reward, Fulfillment.”
- Have someone read aloud Daniel 5:25-30. Then write on the chalkboard the words that had been written on the palace wall: Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin.
- Beneath “Mene, Mene” write “numbered.” Beneath “Tekel” write “weighed.” Beneath “Parsin” write “divided.”



Faith at Home

Ask, “What are some ways that we can honor God individually? What are some ways we can honor God as a family?”

Brief Background

The first four chapters of The Book of Daniel take place during the rule of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He was the one who brought Daniel and his friends to Babylon, he was the one who had the dream about the statue, who threw Daniel's friends into the fiery furnace, and who lost his sanity for seven years.

About three decades pass between chapters 4 and 5. As Chapter 5 begins, Daniel is in his early 80s. Nebuchadnezzar has been dead for 22 years, succeeded by a series of short-term kings. Nabonidus, the husband of Nebuchadnezzar's daughter, is now king. But while he is outside the gate trying to ward off the invading Medes and Persians, he has left the palace in the control of his son, Belshazzar.

So, although Daniel 5 calls Belshazzar king, he is really second in command behind his father, Nabonidus. Although Belshazzar is called the son of Nebuchadnezzar, the word used can refer to any descendant, and Belshazzar is actually Nebuchadnezzar's grandson.

Looking for Information

Find the answers to these questions in Daniel 5:7-24.

- Who was asked to interpret the handwriting first?
- What reward did the king offer for interpreting the handwriting?
- Who suggested that the king ask Daniel?
- What did Daniel say about the reward offered?
- What did Daniel remind Belshazzar about his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar?
- What rebuke did Daniel give to Belshazzar?

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