

Handwriting on the Wall

Daniel 5; Prophets and Kings, pp. 522-532

Have you ever seen words scribbled on a wall? It does not look very nice. How would you feel if you saw writing appear on a wall, but could not see who was writing it? That is just what happened at the king's party.

There's going to be a party at the palace!" Word spread rapidly through the city. Belshazzar was the present king of Babylon. He had chosen a day to honor the gods of Babylon with a huge festival.

Everyone was ready for a party. For months Cyrus' army had been winning battles against the Babylonian army. People were worried because the Persian general was camped very near the city of Babylon.

Everyone wanted to enjoy themselves and forget about the fighting.

Belshazzar's party began in the morning and lasted all day. He had dancers and storytellers to entertain his guests. This party was supposed to honor the gods of Babylon. But most people were busy pleasing themselves with wine, food, and entertainment. The true God saw this and was very sad. So many times He had tried to get Belshazzar to change his ways. But Belshazzar did not listen.

As Belshazzar grew more and more drunk, his wickedness became greater. He called for the sacred vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem. He and his guests filled them with wine and made offerings to their gods.

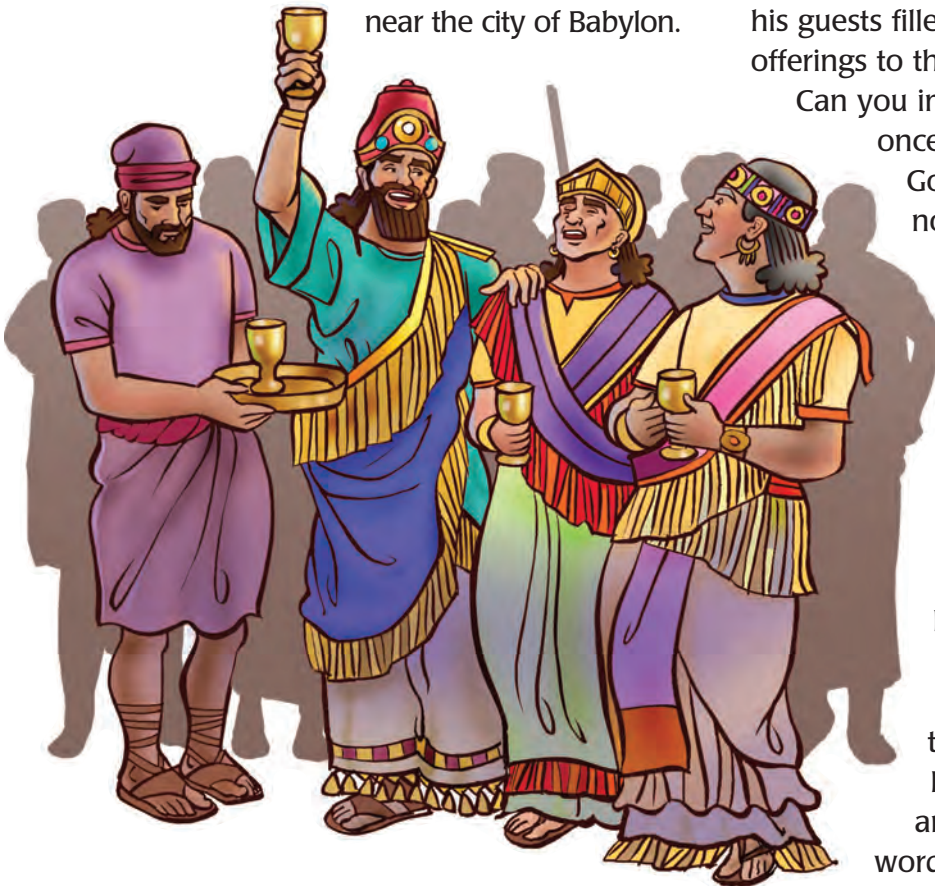
Can you imagine that? Those vessels had once held incense and sacred oils in God's temple. Those vessels were now filled with wine and used to worship idols!

Suddenly there was a stir. Along one wall of the palace a mysterious hand began to write—a hand that wasn't connected to a body.

Belshazzar stared with horror.

"MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN," he read. What did it mean? He had to find out.

He called for his magicians and astrologers. He called for the priests who served the gods Belshazzar had honored. "If anyone can tell me what these words mean, I will give him a gold



The Message

I serve God when I help others understand His Word.

chain. And I will make him the third highest ruler in Babylon," he said.

But none of his wise men could interpret the words. Belshazzar trembled! He became even more afraid.

Finally, his mother remembered Daniel. "Send for Daniel," she said. "He interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. Maybe he can help now." So Daniel was brought before the king and shown the mysterious writing.

Daniel's words were respectful as he told the king the bad news. "You have been too proud," he told Belshazzar. "You insulted God, so He sent this message to you."

Daniel interpreted the message. "MENE means that God will soon end your reign. TEKEL means that God has judged you and found you guilty of horrible sins. PARSIN means that the Persians will conquer Babylon."

Even as Belshazzar put a gold chain around Daniel's neck and promoted him to third highest in Babylon, God's words came true. The Persian army commanded by Cyrus sneaked into the city and conquered it. Belshazzar died that night.

Would you be able to tell the leader of your country that God was angry with him?

Memory Verse

"But the Lord said to me, 'Do not say, "I am only a child." You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you' " (Jeremiah 1:7, NIV).

Sometimes serving God doesn't make people happy with us. God will make us strong—strong enough to take His message to anyone who needs to hear it. Will you be God's messenger and tell others about Him?



S A B B A T H

DO Ask your family to go for a walk with you. Share some good news with people you meet. Give them a tract or a Bible correspondence school card.

READ Teach your memory verse to your family. (Use motions.) Then read your lesson together.

PRAY Ask God to help you always to speak the right words.

M O N D A Y

DO During family worship read and discuss Daniel 5:5-9. Ask each family member to draw around their hand, write an encouraging message from God on it, and cut it out. Glue the hands on paper to make a "good news" poster. Who has the largest hand? the smallest? Sing a song about hands. Then thank God that you can learn to read and write.

T U E S D A Y

READ Read and discuss Daniel 5:10-17 during family worship. What messages had Daniel delivered to King Nebuchadnezzar? Why did Daniel say he didn't want any gifts?

DO Use lemon juice and a cotton swab to write a good news message for your family. Show them how to use a lamp to read it.

SHARE Share a good news message about Jesus with someone today. Ask God for courage to share His words with others.

W E D N E S D A Y

READ During family worship read and discuss Daniel 5:18-24. Who sent the hand to write on the wall? Why?

MAKE Make a print of your hand in clay or play dough. Keep it to remind you to use your hands to serve God.

SHARE Write a good news message and give or send it to someone today.

T H U R S D A Y

READ Read and discuss Daniel 5:25-31 with your family. What was God's three-part message to Belshazzar? What does "weighed in the balances and found wanting" mean?

THINK Are all God's messages bad news?

DO As a family, find and write an encouraging Bible message. Add a note and send it to someone you know.



F R I D A Y

READ

Before worship draw a picture of Belshazzar's face as he saw the hand writing on the wall. During family worship, read Daniel 5:5-9 again.

ASK

Show your picture to your family. Ask each person to tell about a time they were really afraid. Then read Psalm 56:3, 4 together.

SING

Sing praise songs together. Then thank God for always being with you.

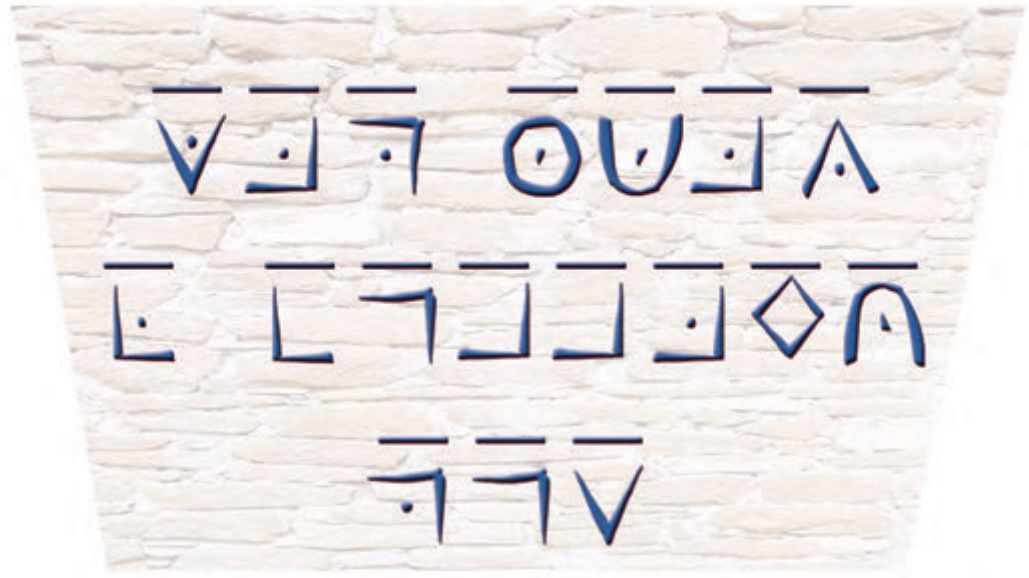
Usually Babylonians respected holy things from other countries, but when they were drunk they used the cups from the temple.



Handwriting on the Wall

PUZZLE

Directions: Use the letter grid to decode the following message from God found in Jeremiah 1:7.



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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | C | D | H | I | M | N | O | S | T | U | W | Y |
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