

DANIEL
CHAPTER

5

DAY | ONE

- I. Please read the chapter twice, before starting the study guide.
I'd like to start with just a bit of a history lesson.

Daniel 1-4 took place under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C. He had ruled Babylon for 43 years.

From 562- 556 B.C., Babylon was ruled by Evil-Merodach, then by a couple of other minor kings. Now, in Daniel 5, Babylon is under the rule of Belshazzar, the co-regent along with Nabonidus. Commentaries tell us that Nabonidus was busy traveling and lining up trade with other nations, leaving Belshazzar to rule the nation.
2. Belshazzar's name means, "Bel protects the King." Bel is a title signifying "lord" or "master" applied to various gods in the Mesopotamian religion.

After reading this chapter, how would you say these heathen gods are doing protecting the King?
What is the truth about the gods Belshazzar is trusting in?
3. Placing our trust in anything other than God is idolatry.
Ask yourself these questions:
Who is guiding and leading me?

Where do I turn when I need help?

When I am hurting or afraid, to whom do I go?

Where do I seek comfort when I am stressed or discouraged?

If we say we trust God, where should we turn first for help?

Read Hebrews 4:16
What is the answer for all those who have placed their trust in Christ?
4. The chapter opens with King Belshazzar hosting a banquet.
How was this banquet described?
5. Read Daniel 5:1-3
Who had been invited to this banquet?
6. The text describes much wine being consumed by the host and his guests.
Have you ever attended a wedding or party where the focus seemed to be how much drinking could be done, as quickly as possible?

If so, did people start making better decisions or worse ones?
7. I love the book of Proverbs. There is so much wisdom in its thirty-one chapters. Proverbs speaks on many issues of life; we would do well to read a chapter a day like a vitamin for our soul. Let's look at four small sections, pertaining to this type of drinking and partying.
Read the verses listed below and write the truth you find in your own words.

Proverbs 20:1

Proverbs 23:20-21

Proverbs 23:31-32

Proverbs 31:4-5
8. As we said, too much wine will not help anyone make better choices.
What terribly foolish decision did Belshazzar make, while drinking at this party?
9. These golden goblets had been taken from God's house by Nebuchadnezzar. We never know where our bad decisions may lead one of our descendants. Had Nebuchadnezzar never taken them, Belshazzar would not have committed such a terrible sin.
Why do you suppose God judged this Gentile king so quickly and harshly?

10. God had declared these items sacred and holy. What does it mean for something to be holy?
11. From the verses below, identify some of the things God has set apart as holy?
 Genesis 2:3
 Exodus 20:7
 Leviticus 27:30
 I Peter 2:9
12. It was not bad enough these men and women used holy articles, in such an irreverent way. Read Daniel 5:4 again. What else were they guilty of doing in their drunken stupor?
13. What happened next, stopping everyone in their tracks?
 Read verse 5.
14. No more singing, no more dancing and no more joking around. Everyone sobered up very quickly. How did the king respond to the writing on the banquet wall?
15. Specifically, for whom did the king call?
 What did he promise anyone who could tell him the meaning of this writing?
16. I can only imagine how horrifying this must have been, to see a hand come out of nowhere and begin writing on the wall. The judgment of God is serious. Sadly, this King had not considered the possible ramifications of his actions before it was too late. Let's look at the warnings given in Proverbs. These are not the only warnings; they are simply three.
 Proverbs 1:10

 Proverbs 13:15

 Proverbs 22:3?
17. The King called his wise men to read the writing on the wall. Even with this amazing offer of position and possessions the king promised was anyone able to help ?

 It is interesting to note: Nabonidus, the true king of Babylon, spent very little time actually ruling. He chose to travel his kingdom reopening trade routes and building temples to his heathen gods. He left his son Belshazzar to rule and reign. Does knowing this help you understand Belshazzar's promised reward?
18. Daniel 5:10, tells us the Queen arrived. This was probably King Nebuchadnezzar's wife or perhaps Belshazzar's mother. Either way, it was not one of the King's wives, because verses 2 and 3 told us they _____.
 Thank goodness someone remembers a true prophet who lives in the land. What event does she remind the king about?
19. Do you believe King Belshazzar had heard about this event in Babylonian history?
 What was the problem?
20. It has been said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."
 How do you respond when someone reminds you of a past event, in order to encourage you to do right?

21. We would do well to listen to stories of others and learn from them. What sin do we see Belshazzar repeating that had been a problem for his predecessor, King Nebuchadnezzar?

What lessons have you learned from family or friends which have saved you experiencing difficulties or disaster?

Do you share lessons you have learned with those you influence?

We once bought a home before finalizing the sale of our previous home. We thought, this is such a good deal it must be God. Sadly, the offer to buy our first home fell through and we owned two homes for two years with a for sale sign on both. My kids have heard this story many, many times. They have learned from our foolish and presumptuous mistake.

22. When Daniel is brought into the room, it seems as though the King is unfamiliar with him. Can you imagine, such an important person in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and yet, just a few years later, the King had to ask, "Are you Daniel?"
Read Daniel 5:14-16, what did the king say he had heard about Daniel?

23. Daniel is unphased by the King's offer of rewards. This is not the first time he has been offered gifts for the ministry God has called him to do. What did Daniel tell the king?

24. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with being paid for one's services. Daniel was a man of simple needs and, obviously, they were being met. What area of God's work are you faithfully caring out, unreimbursed by man? Are there areas of service you carry out as an act of obedience and love for God?

25. Daniel chooses to give the king, and all in attendance, a history lesson. What details did he remind them about? What did Daniel say was King Nebuchadnezzar's sin, verse 20?

Look again at verse 21:

What was the turning point for King Nebuchadnezzar?

Why do you suppose Daniel reminded Belshazzar of Nebuchadnezzar's point of repentance?

Daniel reminds King Belshazzar of the words of his predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar. What did King Nebuchadnezzar declare about God?

26. Back to King Belshazzar. He knew all these things about his predecessor and yet, he deliberately allowed his heart and mind to be filled with pride.

Fill in the blanks. Daniel 5:22-23 "But you, Belshazzar, his son, _____ yourself, though you knew all this. Instead, you have _____ yourself up _____ the Lord of heaven. . . ."

27. What was the last straw?

One more time, exactly what had the King done, bringing God's judgment on him and his kingdom?

28. Take a few minutes to stop and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you about any areas of pride or arrogance. Remember, whatever he shows you, you are just a prayer away from a clear conscience before God. Read Isaiah 59:1-2. How does sin affect our relationship with God?

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29. What are the three words written by the hand of God on the wall in Belshazzar's banquet hall? Write the words and their meaning.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
30. This was really bad news. The King gave Daniel the things he promised. I'm sure it was nice to have the beautiful new robe and gold chain but, being third in the kingdom would be short lived. What happened that night that would change everything?
31. History records, that on that very night, the Persian army was camped just about a mile away from the great walls of Babylon. They diverted the Euphrates River and waited. The river ran right under the walls of that great city. See the diagram on the Biblical Reference page. Eventually what do you think happened?
32. King Belshazzar was unprepared. He had given no thought to what he would do when he faced his final day. We all realize that our life will come to an end one day, no one lives forever. Since we do not know when that day will be or what we will be doing when the end comes, what should we do today?
33. Read Luke 23:40-43
The thief hanging on a cross, beside Jesus, had not time or ability to do anything but seek the mercy of God and it was sufficient for salvation. Jesus said, "Today you will be with me in paradise."
Have you repented of your sin and asked God to forgive you?
- You may not be an arrogant and prideful person like Belshazzar but how much sin does it take to make one a sinner?
- Read Isaiah 59:1-2 again, what does our sin do to us?
- Jesus paid for all the sins of all mankind on the cross. Read Ephesians 2:8-9
Just think, your sin has been paid for, all you need to do now is accept that payment on your behalf. This is God's gift to you.
34. In Luke 12, Jesus called a man foolish. He had a bumper crop but no place to store it, all his barns were filled to the brim. The scripture says he tore down his barns and built new ones, bigger and better.
- Sadly, the scripture tells us "This very _____ your _____ will be demanded of you.
Then _____ will get what you have _____ for yourself." Luke 12:20 (NIV)
35. Read Luke 12:21
What is the word of warning?
36. When our time on earth is at an end everything we have acquired will be left behind. What are some things we can do now to properly prepare for this day?
37. Matthew 6:19-21 is part of Jesus' sermon on the mount. What type of treasure do you believe Jesus is referring to in these verses?
38. Have you ever thought about what you will take with you to heaven?

Look at Matthew 6:21

Why did Jesus say this is something important to consider now, while we are living?

39. What is the truth about financial wealth gained in this life? What will happen to it when you die?

Read Luke 16:13

Finances are not the true issue. The issue is lordship. What we serve the most is the master we love.

40. One day, Jesus was asked, “Master, what is the greatest commandment?”

Jesus told the man to love God and love others. As we live our life each day, we will have many opportunities to do this.

What are some ways you plan to love God and love others today?

Jot down some ideas and share them in your discussion group.

41. Daniel had been offered great gifts and power to speak on God’s behalf. Daniel was a man who, from a very early age, practiced loving and serving God to the best of his ability, regardless of his circumstances. Integrity was a core-value of Daniel.

What are 3-5 core-values, which have been with you throughout your adult life?

We have placed a list on the Biblical reference pages to help with this question.

If you have never taken time to consider your core-values, let me explain. We all have certain values we live by; certain things we consider of utmost importance, they are our personal priorities. You can easily find lists of possible core-values online that will help you narrow this down. Knowing what we value the most will enable us to better navigate the decisions we make each day.

42. How do your core values influence the decisions you make each day?

43. Are you pleased with the direction of your life, or would you like to see some changes?

44. If you would like to see a few changes, that is the Holy Spirit speaking to you. Take a few minutes to jot these changes down and then talk to your loving heavenly Father about them.

45. Belshazzar did not consider anything past the moment he was enjoying. This left him in a terrible place when things came to an abrupt stop. We need to have a teachable spirit.

What do you believe is the lesson to be learn from Belshazzar?

46. Daniel showed integrity by consistently loving and worshiping God. I can honestly say that my life changed dramatically when I began having a consistent daily time with God.

How is your relationship with God?

Do you have a time, each day, that is your “time with God”?

When we love someone, one of the best ways to show it is the amount of time we give them.

Looking at your next 24 hours, what part of your day is set aside for the lover of your soul?

What will that set aside time look like?

Prayer is talking to God.

Reading his word is listening to God.

Meditating on God’s word is allowing God’s word to transform us.

Planning our day is serving God.

47. Which of God’s divine attributes did you see in Daniel 5?

Our purpose in studying God’s word is to get to know him more.

Take a few minutes to think about His attributes and character qualities you saw in this chapter.

NOTES