

9 Lesson

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 or understand what was being written? That is just what happened at a king's party.

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

Everyone was ready for a party. For months Cyrus's 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 may have had dancers and storytellers to entertain his guests. This party was supposed to honor the idols of Babylon. But most people were busy pleasing themselves with wine, food, and entertainment. Belshazzar did not want to follow God. He wanted to do what he wanted. He did not honor God. He was not humble. This must have made God sad. God would have been happy if Belshazzar had changed, but Belshazzar wanted his own way.

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 were once used for worship in God's temple. They were dedicated to God. Now they were 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.

This frightened Belshazzar. The Bible says, "His legs became weak and his knees were knocking." What did it mean? He had to find out.

He called for his magicians and



The Message

I serve God when I help others understand His Word.

astrologers. He called for the priests who served the idols Belshazzar had honored. "If anyone can tell me what these words mean, I will give him a gold 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 your grandfather 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 then read the message, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN."

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. UPHARSIN 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

Memory Verse

"But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, "I am too young." You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you' "

(Jeremiah 1:7, NIV).

by Cyrus sneaked into the city and conquered it. Belshazzar died that night.

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. Or you could give the card and balloon from Sabbath School to someone now.

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.

S U N D A Y

READ Read and discuss Daniel 5:1-4 for family worship. What special trays and glasses are used in your church? When? Why?

DO Cover a paper cup with foil. Write your memory verse on paper, including the reference, and cut the words apart. Put them in the cup and shake it. Then spill the words and try to put them in the right order. Do this every day this week.

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.

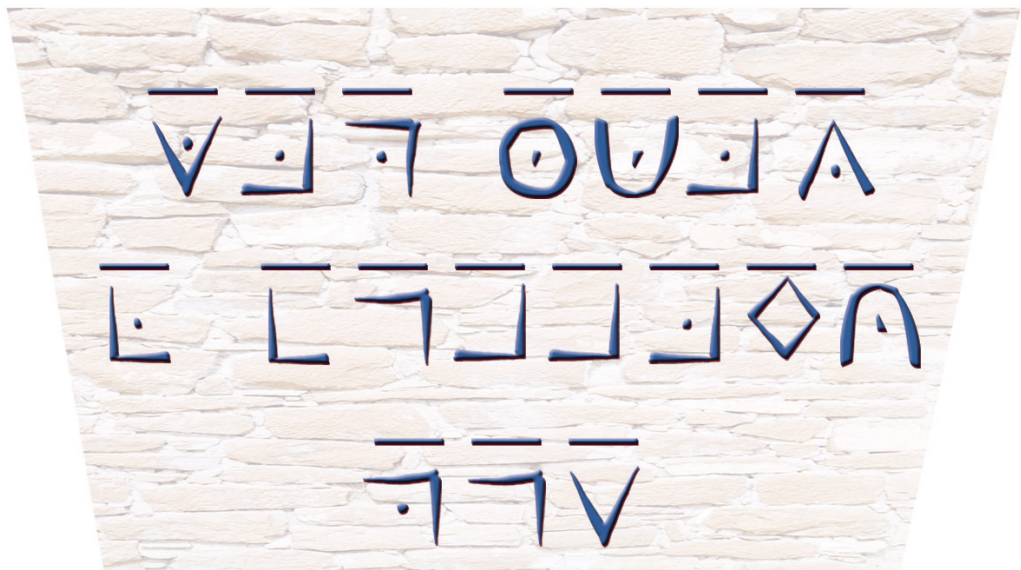
Usually Babylonians respected holy things from other countries, but when they were drunk, they used the cups from the temple.



Handwriting on the Wall

PUZZLE

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



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