

DANIEL 5
THE FALL OF BABYLON

1. Icebreaker

Example: When do you find it the hardest to speak truth into difficult situations?

2. Opening Prayer

Ask if someone wants to volunteer before leading the prayer

3. Tell the Story

Non-obligatory outline to help prepare for the “storying” of the scripture reviewed during LG

There is a gap of 20 years between the preceding chapter and this one. King Nebuchadnezzar died and was replaced by a succession of men who were removed by their enemies. His grandson, Belshazzar, was co-ruler with another man when the events in this chapter took place. Cyrus, the King of the Persians and nephew of Darius (King of the Medes), was besieging Babylon. Belshazzar felt safe within the city's walls, because Babylon was extremely well-fortified and supplied with enough food and water to with stand many years of siege.

v.1 Belshazzar probably held this feast to show the lords he was confident that Babylon wouldn't fall to the enemy outside its gates.

v.2-4 Belshazzar defiled the consecrated vessels his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple in Jerusalem. He used the vessels as wine goblets.

v.6 Isaiah 45:1.

v.10 This queen was probably the mother of Belshazzar.

v.11-13 Daniel was now about 88 years old. He apparently had been retired for some time and wasn't known in Belshazzar's court. The queen-mother spoke highly of Daniel and his wisdom. He had managed to lead a pure and godly life in the pagan court of Babylon.

v.18-22 Daniel was a faithful prophet, for he preached to Belshazzar before he gave the interpretation of the writing on the wall. Since Belshazzar knew the story of Nebuchadnezzar's pride, insanity, and conversion, he was guilty of willful defiance of God.

v.23 Belshazzar's worship and love had been lavished on material things that were inanimate, and he ignored the God who sustained his life. God is our life-support system.

v.30 Darius diverted the river Euphrates when the soldiers of Babylon were drunk. The drunken soldiers had neglected to bolt the gates, so Darius and his men were able to get into the city, despite all its elaborate fortifications (Isaiah 44:28-45, Jeremiah 50:38). The fall of Babylon foreshadows the fall of the great commercial center also called Babylon in Revelation 18. It appears that Babylon will be rebuilt by greedy men who love materialism as much as Belshazzar did.

4. Read the Story (Daniel 5)

Read out loud as a group, 4-5 verses per person, let everyone know they can opt out if they want to

5. Breaking it Down

Questions to be used (as appropriate based upon meeting dynamics) to facilitate discussion and understanding

5.1 What is the setting leading to the hand writing on the wall? (1---4)

- A drunken, idolatrous feast using gold vessels from the house of God in Jerusalem

5.2 What reaction did the king have to the hand writing on the wall? (6)

- Countenance changed, troubled thoughts, hip joints loosened, knees knocking

5.3 Who was unable to tell the king the interpretation of the writing? (7---8)

- His wise men (astrologers, Chaldeans, soothsayers)

5.4 Who counseled the king to call for Daniel to interpret the writing? (10---12)

- The queen (likely the queen mother, daughter of Nebuchadnezzar)

5.5 Before interpreting the writing, what did Daniel tell King Belshazzar? (17---24)

- The king could keep his reward (gifts) for himself

- He had not learned from what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar

- He had failed to humble himself before God, and did not glorify Him

5.6 What was the inscription written on the wall, and the interpretation? (24---28)

- Mene (to number): God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it

- Tekel (to weigh): You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting

- Upharsin (to divide): Your kingdom has been divided, given to the Medes and Persians

5.7 What happened that very night? (30---31)

- King Belshazzar was slain

- Darius the Mede received the kingdom

6. Application

Sample questions (as appropriate) to tie to life application

1) What does this passage teach us about God?

2) What does this passage teach us about mankind?

3) What is a command to obey in this passage? What has God revealed in your life that needs changing? What truth can be applied to your life about the gospel?

Personal Reflection/Application

1. When Daniel was brought in before the king to interpret the handwriting, he was ready to respond. What do you think are some characteristics or practices of Daniel that allowed him to be prepared? What steps can we take to be prepared to stand for truth or to defend the God we serve?
2. Belshazzar seemed to be blind to the sin in his life (vv.22-23). What are some potential blind spots in your life that might break fellowship with God? Or what are some examples in your past of these blind spots? Who do you have in your life that can show you blind spots and can speak truth into your life?
3. Daniel lived in Babylon for an estimated 70 years. Although he was in a pagan culture, he never departed from the truth of who God is. The testimony of scripture is that he was faithful to God. As you look back over the years of your walk with Christ, what made the difference in times when you were faithful to God and what was absent in the times when you were unfaithful to God?
4. Even after knowing what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar, and after being confronted about his pride, Belshazzar still does not give up his sin. Is there anything in your life that needs repentance?

7. Prayer Requests

*Have a designated person to capture and share (as appropriate) within the LifeGroup.
What happens in LifeGroup, Stays in LifeGroup*

8. Closing & Prayer

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2. Opening Prayer

Consider volunteering for prayer.

3. Tell the Story

Consider volunteering to Read the Story at your next meeting.

4. Read the Story (Daniel 5)

Read out loud as a group, 4-5 verses per person, let everyone know they can opt out if they want to

5. Breaking it Down

Review the scripture through question, discussion.

5.1 What is the setting leading to the hand writing on the wall? (1---4)

5.2 What reaction did the king have to the hand writing on the wall? (6)

5.3 Who was unable to tell the king the interpretation of the writing? (7---8)

5.4 Who counseled the king to call for Daniel to interpret the writing? (10---12)

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1) What does this passage teach us about God?

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Have a designated person to capture and share (as appropriate) within the LifeGroup. What happens in LifeGroup, Stays in LifeGroup

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Don't forget – when are you meeting next? Who is facilitating? Who is Telling the Story?