

Daniel 5

Study Guide

Read Daniel chapter 5 in its entirety, and then reread it answering the following questions.

Remember to incorporate the 3 C's & 5 W's

(Content, Context, Cross-reference)

Who, What, Where, When, Why)

Additionally, as you read, note where God's influence is evident.

Read verses 1-4:

Who is Belshazzar? He was the son of Nabonidus, the king of Babylon. Scholars indicate that Nabonidus married the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. At the time of chapter 5, Nabonidus was leading the army against the Medes and Persians. Therefore Belshazzar stood in his place and served as viceroy or second in command. Essentially, he was acting as king while Nabonidus was away fighting.

Scholars believe that this party took place on October 12, 539BC. Various Greek historians such as Herodotus, Xenophon, share that the Persians were waiting to take over the city. The Babylonian Chronicles (tablets that recorded their history) indicate that Nabonidus fell to the Persians a few days earlier in Sippar, about 50 miles from Babylon.

As faithful as Nebuchadnezzar was towards the end of his life, his faith did not transfer to his family. Why do children of believers choose to walk away from God?

Read verses 5-6: Why do you think God chose to use a riddle to speak to Belshazzar? God simply could have spoken to Belshazzar and shared with him his fate.

Read verses 7-12: Who does Belshazzar call to help explain this dream? He offers a reward of being clothed in purple and gold. What does the color purple and gold signify? He also offers the position of being the 3rd highest ranking official similar to a prime minister. Why does Belshazzar offer such a generous position and high authority?

Read verses 17-28

The meaning of Mene Tekel Parsin

- MENE (men'ē) is an Aramaic noun referring to a weight of 50 shekels (a mina, equal to 1 1/4 pounds). It is from the verb menâh, "to number, to reckon."
- TEKEL (teqēl) is a noun referring to a shekel (2/5 of an ounce). It is from the verb teqāl, "to weigh."
- PARSIN (parsîn) is a noun meaning a half-mina (25 shekels, or about 2/3 of a pound). It is from the verb peras, "to break in two, to divide." The word on the wall was actually Ūparsîn, which means "and Parsin."

Daniel reminds Belshazzar of Nebuchadnezzar's humbling story and taken lessons from it. He then shares that the word Mene means that Belshazzar only has so much time to rule. Tekel means that God has ruled that Belshazzar has been in wanting and the scale is unbalanced. He was to light and could not hold up his side. Parsin comes from the root word Peres which means divide. One can say it refers to Babylon was not in line with God's principles and fallen, and it would be divided and given to the Medes and Persians. Parsin is a play on the word Peres by switching the e's out with a, and coming up with Paras (Persians).

God could have communicated in another way but chose to use a riddle and needed to be translated by Daniel. How is God's character revealed in this part of the story?

Read verses 29-31: One can conclude that the story is brief and swift. Is God fair and vindicated in this story?

Questions:

1. Where do I go to when looking for answers to problems that are beyond my understanding?
2. Are there items in my life that I should treat with more respect and reverence, but inadvertently treat it with apathy?
3. Belshazzar gives Daniel the title and authority, albeit it only lasted for a few hours, perhaps in the hope that it would hold off the change that was about to occur. When you have made a mistake, have you ever reacted rashly to news you did not like? What would you have done differently now that you had

time to think about it?

4. What other lesson(s) can we learn from Belshazzar and God from this story that we did not cover?