



Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, had been a very great and very proud king. But after God had to teach him a very humble lesson, he gave honor and glory to God all the rest of his days. King Nebuchadnezzar learned in a hard way that man, with his proud ways, does not govern this universe; God does.

This lesson is about King Belshazzar, a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar. He was a wicked king. He worshiped idols such as Nebuchadnezzar worshiped: idols of gold, silver, bronze, wood, and stone; idols made by the hands of men.

King Belshazzar had a lot of pride too. In his pride, Belshazzar felt very safe from his enemies. In his palace in the city of Babylon, Belshazzar felt so secure that he once hosted a large banquet in honor to a thousand of his lords and their ladies, while his enemies besieged the city outside. There were a lot more people there than just the thousand lords and their ladies. There were a few thousand people there. Belshazzar's wives and concubines were there, with many other people.

Food and wine were so plentiful that everyone was in a happy, festive mood. Since they all felt very safe, they were acting very carelessly. They were drinking, laughing, singing, and praising their false gods. They thought they were having a grand time, with nothing to fear! King Belshazzar and his guests drank so much wine that soon they were very drunk.

Belshazzar was so drunk that he did a very daring thing. He commanded that the sacred gold and silver

# Church of God Sunday School

## THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

Daniel 5

vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from the temple in Jerusalem be brought in. He wanted them so that he and his guests could drink from them while they praised their false gods and blasphemed the God of Heaven!

The sacred vessels were brought in. Wine was poured into them. Belshazzar and his guests were laughing and blaspheming the Holy God as they drank from the precious vessels!

Suddenly—even while he might have been raising his cup to his lips—Belshazzar saw something upon one of the palace walls: the fingers of a man's hand, writing! King Belshazzar's carefree mood was all gone! He was really scared! He was shaking in fear. In fact, his knees were knocking together! Everyone was waiting to see what King Belshazzar would do.

King Belshazzar called for his astrologers, his soothsayers, and his wise men. He said to them, "Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

All the wise men and the astrologers looked at the writing. They studied it, but they could not interpret it—not one of them could! King Belshazzar became



extremely troubled in his mind! He was wondering, Can any man be found who can read that writing on the wall?

The old Queen Mother came in. The news of the strange writing on the wall had traveled fast through the palace. Though she was not at the party, she had heard about the writing. She knew that the wise men could not read the writing, and she was not at all surprised. But she knew something that the king needed to hear.

She walked up to him and said, "O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father [ancestor or successor] light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar . . . made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

"Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation."

Though Daniel was an old man then, he was just as wise and just as faithful to his God as he had always been. King Belshazzar sent for him. Everyone was anxiously waiting for him to come.

At last, Daniel came and stood before Belshazzar. Belshazzar asked him: "Art thou that Daniel . . . whom . . . my father [ancestor or successor] brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee . . . .

"And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom."

Daniel listened to King Belshazzar. He knew how great the king considered himself to be. Daniel told King Belshazzar to keep his gifts or give them to

someone else. It mattered not to him. He did not want Belshazzar's favors, but he said he would read the writing on the wall and tell Belshazzar its interpretation.

Daniel reminded King Belshazzar about King Nebuchadnezzar. He told Belshazzar how God had set Nebuchadnezzar as king and how he was so very proud. Then God had to take his mind from him and give him the mind of an animal for seven years. Afterward, Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself and honored God.

Daniel continued: "And thou . . . O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;

"But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone . . . and the God in whose hand thy breath is . . . hast thou not glorified: Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

"And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing:

MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

"TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

"PERES [or UPHARSIN]; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

King Belshazzar might not have liked the interpretation of the message, but he still commanded his servants to bring the scarlet robe for Daniel and to put a chain of gold around his neck. Daniel was made the third ruler in the kingdom.

And that very night Belshazzar's enemies entered into the palace that was supposedly so secure! Belshazzar was killed, and Darius the Mede took control of the kingdom that once Belshazzar had ruled over.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."*

*—Daniel 5:27*  
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# The Writing on the Wall

**KEY**

☀	☹	☺	✍	⏪	€
Y	U	V	W	B	F
◼	▣	Δ	λ	ζ	⊕
H	K	C	P	M	J

Fill in the missing letters using the key above to learn the meaning of the writing

**MENE, MENE:** God \_\_\_at\_\_\_ n\_\_\_ \_\_\_ered th\_\_\_ \_\_\_ingdo\_\_\_,  
 ◼ ◼ ☹ ζ ⏪ ☀ ▣ ζ  
 and \_\_\_inis\_\_\_ed it.  
 € ◼

**TEKEL:** T\_\_\_o\_\_\_ art \_\_\_eig\_\_\_ed in t\_\_\_e \_\_\_alan\_\_\_es, and art  
 ◼ ☹ ✍ ◼ ◼ ⏪ Δ  
 \_\_\_o\_\_\_nd \_\_\_anting.  
 € ☹ ✍

**UPHARSIN:** T\_\_\_y \_\_\_ingdo\_\_\_ is di\_\_\_ided, and gi\_\_\_en to t\_\_\_e  
 ◼ ▣ ζ ☹ ☹ ◼  
 \_\_\_edes and \_\_\_ersians.  
 ζ λ



## The Handwriting Appears on the Wall