

119

GROUP STUDY GUIDE

The Exiled Prophet, Part 6: Writing on the Wall (Daniel 5)

TEACHING SUMMARY

Belshazzar holds a great feast and brings out vessels taken from God's temple in Jerusalem. His guests drink from them while praising idols. The teaching presents this act as deliberate dishonor toward the God who had already humbled Nebuchadnezzar.

A hand appears and writes on the palace wall, terrifying the king. His wise men cannot explain the message. The queen recommends Daniel, recalling the understanding and wisdom he demonstrated during Nebuchadnezzar's reign.

The teaching discusses Belshazzar's position as a ruler under his father Nabonidus. This background explains why he offers the interpreter third place in the kingdom. Daniel declines interest in the rewards but agrees to make the message known.

Before interpreting, Daniel reminds Belshazzar that Nebuchadnezzar's authority came from God and that pride brought him low. Belshazzar knew this history yet failed to humble himself. He praised powerless idols instead of honoring the God who held his breath and ways.

The words announce accounting, insufficiency, and division. The teaching explores the imagery of Babylon's debt being due, Belshazzar failing the weighing, and his kingdom passing to the Medes and Persians. That very night the judgment arrives and Belshazzar dies.

The application contrasts Belshazzar's sudden end with Nebuchadnezzar's time for correction. God is patient, but no one is guaranteed another day. The teaching urges immediate repentance and obedience rather than delaying a response to God's authority and grace.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Belshazzar dishonors God by using the temple vessels at his feast.
- The guests praise idols while drinking from the sacred vessels.
- A hand writes a message the wise men cannot explain.
- The queen recalls Daniel's wisdom and recommends him.
- Belshazzar's subordinate kingship explains the offered third position.
- Daniel gives the interpretation without making rewards his goal.
- Belshazzar is accountable for ignoring Nebuchadnezzar's humbling.
- The words portray reckoning, weighing, and division of the kingdom.
- Babylon falls and Belshazzar dies that very night.
- The teaching calls for repentance today because tomorrow is not guaranteed.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. The king holding the feast is _____.
2. The vessels had been taken from the temple in _____.
3. A human _____ appears and writes on the wall.
4. The _____ recommends calling Daniel.
5. The kingdom is given to the Medes and _____.
6. Belshazzar dies that same _____.

Challenging

1. The teaching names Belshazzar's father and senior ruler as _____.
2. The highest position Belshazzar can offer Daniel is _____ ruler.
3. The writing's word for counting or assigning is _____.
4. The word associated with weighing is _____.
5. Parsin is the plural of _____, meaning to divide or separate.
6. The teaching explains that shalem can mean to _____ a debt or recompense damages.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does the teaching treat the misuse of the temple vessels as especially serious?
2. How does the historical background explain the reward Belshazzar offers?
3. Why does Daniel recount Nebuchadnezzar's experience before interpreting the writing?
4. How do the images of counting, weighing, and dividing communicate judgment?
5. What contrast does the teaching draw between the opportunities given to the two kings?
6. How does the call to respond today challenge postponing repentance or obedience?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Belshazzar
2. Jerusalem
3. hand
4. queen
5. Persians
6. night

Challenging

1. Nabonidus
2. third
3. mene
4. tekem
5. peres
6. repay