

Daniel

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we've got Daniel chapter 5. We are going to try, as much as lies within me, to reserve comment on most of this. Of course, it's pretty much self-explanatory, but we'll get to the meat of the matter a little later.

And we do want to remind you that there is a common expression that just about everybody is familiar with, but probably most don't have any idea where it originated.

And that is the expression, he saw the writing on the wall, which means that you have a good idea of what's coming. And the source for that quote is here in Daniel chapter 5.

And it has to do with King Belshazzar, who is going to see the writing on the wall. And it is, many, many, tekell ufarsim. And that means you're in big trouble, buddy.

Your days are numbered, and you are not going to survive this thing. So let's get into Daniel chapter 5 and see how this develops. The setting is an extended royal feast and drinking party, the likes of which usually went on for many days, sometimes even extending into a couple of weeks.

[1 : 1 3] They would just pull out all of the stops. Everybody would get so intoxicated they couldn't hardly make it to the bathroom to up-check, and then come back and drink some more. But that's the kind of party that this was.

And it is a party for the nobles. Well, let's start reading. Belshazzar, the king, held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles. This is bringing in just about everybody who's anybody.

And he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand. When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar, his father, had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, in order that the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.

This is a debauched kind of celebration. These vessels that they are talking about were those that originally belonged to the Jewish people, and they were confiscated by Nebuchadnezzar and his troops when they took over Jerusalem.

And they carried them all the way back to Babylon, where they are going to be put on display as trophies, as the booty of war.

[2 : 3 0] And it's the old idea that to the victor belongs the spoils, and these are part of the spoils. So they probably had them displayed in cases as bragging points for the exalted ability of the Chaldeans, the Babylonians, that their god was bigger than the god of the Israelites, and this proves it.

So they are going to bring out these trophies and use them. And we are told that they drank the wine, praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

And let me just inject here, this once again is a stunning example of how the human mind is skewed, warped in its thinking, that is unable to process information and reach logical, realistic conclusions.

And when you don't have the reasoning capacity that is needed, you will subject yourself to the kind of nonsense that allows you to praise the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

How stupid is that? But that's the kind of stupidity that mankind is capable of when he ignores the revelation that God has given.

[3 : 54] Roger, do you have a comment, a question? Chapter 4 left with Nebuchadnezzar, and then all of a sudden here's the son. Do you know the ages, the difference between the father and the son?

To the best of my knowledge, that is not revealed. We don't know how old Nebuchadnezzar was when he died, but he obviously is off the scene between chapters 4 and 5, and his son, Belshazzar, is on the throne.

And the question that needs to be asked here is, how much did the son benefit from the experience of the father? And the answer is, not much.

So we'll see that as it develops. But he was aware of him. He'd heard about him. Oh yeah. He heard about him. To his family, he heard about him. Oh yeah. That I know from other sources that he knew, but you're right about him not paying much attention to it.

And as this party is going on, and everybody is drinking and laughing and telling their stories and slapping each other on the back and all the rest, and you've got to remember, this is a large gathering.

[5 : 03] This is a huge, huge banquet hall that would accommodate a thousand people. And they've got servants running around, pouring wine and bringing in food, and everybody's just yucking it up and laughing and having a great time.

Some of them are sober. Some of them are drunk. And all of a sudden, on the wall, there is the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing.

And obviously, the only people that saw that initially would be the people who were fairly close to it. And as somebody sees this finger starting to write on the wall, they do a double take and they elbow the person next to it.

What is that? And the next thing you know, the buzz goes through the whole crowd, and everybody knows that something really unusual is up.

And they look at this and they see this finger writing on the wall. And I'll tell you, that probably sobered up some of them very quickly. Either that or they didn't know if they were hallucinating or imagining.

[6 : 11] Began writing opposite the lampstand. And that is obviously so it can be seen next to the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace.

And the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. And the king's face grew pale. His thoughts alarmed him.

His hip joints went slack. His knees began knocking together. And the king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans, the diviners.

This is the usual bevy of phonies that Nebuchadnezzar had already dismissed earlier. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me will be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom.

We don't know how sober he was when he said that, how serious he was, but this is an unusual thing that is developing. And all the king's wise men came in.

[7 : 15] They could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed. His face grew even paler and his nobles were perplexed.

The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles. The queen spoke and said, O king, live forever. That was the traditional kind of greeting. When you came into the presence of a Babylonian authority or the Babylonian king, O king, live forever.

Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale. There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. And in the days of your father, Nebuchadnezzar, illumination, insight, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him.

And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans, and diviners. This was because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge, and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas, and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar.

Let Daniel now be summoned, and he will declare the interpretation. So, you see the difference between Belshazzar and the Belshazzar that is Daniel here.

[8 : 39] His name is changed to that, and there's a similarity between his name and the king's name, but that's the extent of it. And Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke and said, Are you that Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah?

I've heard about you, that a spirit of the gods is in you. See, here's this polytheistic thing again, the plurality of gods, which is what they were all into.

And that illumination, insight, and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you. And just now, the wise men and the conjurers were brought in before me, that they might read this inscription and make its interpretation known to me.

But they could not declare the interpretation of the message. I personally have heard about you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems.

Now, if you were able, I could just see old Daniel standing there and saying to himself, Well, here we go again. And these guys are all a bunch of slow learners, you know. And it's obvious that this younger king has not benefited from the experience of his father at all.

[9 : 50] So you were able to make known, and Daniel answered and said, and I love his response, Keep your gifts for yourself. All that is, is an indication that Daniel was not intrigued, infatuated, or moved by the trinkets and the baubles of this world.

That stuff meant absolutely nothing to him. And yet, this is the area in which the common person places all their value. It's the gold. It's the silver.

It's the this. And Daniel says, Ah, forget all that stuff. Just keep it. Keep your gifts. Keep your gifts. Give your rewards to someone else. But I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him.

O king, most high God, granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory, and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar, your father. Now, we don't know how old Belshazzar was when his father experienced these things.

He may have been very young. We just are not given an exact time frame here as to the age difference between father and son. So we don't know to what extent he knew about his father's situation personally.

[11 : 09] But it was such a traumatic and significant thing that happened to Nebuchadnezzar. It had to have been well known to everybody. And we know that he was isolated for seven years while it took that long for him to regain his sanity and experience the chastisement that God had for him.

So we read that all the peoples, nations, men of every language feared and trembled before him. Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler of the world at that time.

Whomever he wished, he spared alive. Whomever he wished, he elevated. And whomever he wished, he humbled. But when his heart was lifted up, his spirit became so proud that he became arrogantly.

He was deposed from his royal throne. His glory was taken away from him. He was also driven away from mankind. There had to be a lot of people there who listened to what Daniel was saying.

And they're probably saying, yeah, I remember that. I remember that. I remember old Neb and what he went through and all the rest of it. So, it's not too hard to read a little bit between the lines here in the white spaces.

[12 : 30] And some of these had to have been familiar with it. He was given grass to eat like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that he sets over it whomever he wishes.

Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart even though you knew all this.

Now, we don't know whether he knew it firsthand or whether it was related to him by those who experienced it and lived there at that time because we don't know about the age difference here.

But this is a really daring thing that Daniel is expressing. We know that there can be a price to pay when you speak truth to power and the power does not want to hear what you have to say.

That can be very, very costly. And it costs a number of the prophets their life. Remember when John the Baptist went before Herod and said it is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.

[13 : 48] It cost him his head. What he spoke was true. What he spoke needed to be said. But it was not well received by the one who was in the position of power.

Nonetheless, that did not deter John the Baptist from speaking the truth. Nor did it deter Christ from speaking the truth. Well, we can see that going on today.

Our president, only he's not putting their heads off, he's firing them. They're not saying what he wants to hear them say, he fires them. And look how many people he's fired.

Yeah, well. So, you know, he doesn't have them. He can't quite kill them, but he can fire them. And he's doing that because they're not saying what he wants to say and hear what he wants to hear. Call it palace intrigue or whatever.

There's a lot of politicking. A lot of, you know, the greatest and most significant thing that is involved here, it always comes down to this, is egos.

[14 : 51] Egos. Personal human pride. And we are up to our eyeballs in personal human pride. It's all around us.

And Nebuchadnezzar had it. And look what it took. Look what it took to break that man. Seven years. Living and functioning like an animal.

And you would have thought that his son, whether he was old enough to experience what his dad was going through, or whether he was too young and just told about it later, he could have, you would think, could have told himself, man, I don't want to be a slow learner.

I want to learn from the experience of my father and what he went through to come to the knowledge of the true God. I want to know that true God also.

But apparently that was never his concern. And here he is worshiping the gods of gold and silver and stone and all the rest of it. So someone has said that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

[16 : 01] And that's exactly what seems to be taking place here. Daniel says clearly there that he knew well. Well, he, yeah. Even though you knew all this.

And the only thing is, like I said, we don't know whether he knew firsthand and experienced it or whether he was told it. And it had to have been big news.

I'm assuming that everybody in the whole realm knew it. And they knew when his sanity came back and he was restored to his throne, they knew that too. You have not humbled your heart even though you knew all this.

And fellas, if there is anything that is a bigger liability to humanity more than human pride, I just don't know what it is.

The Scriptures make it so clear that God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.

[17:07] And I want you to note that passage about humbling ourselves that Peter expresses in the New Testament, it does not mean that we are to pray and ask God to make us humble.

That's nonsense. Do you know whose responsibility humility is? It's yours. It's mine. It is praying amiss if you pray and ask God to make you humble.

The text says, Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and He will exalt you into... You do the humbling and God will do the exalting.

The exalting is the reward that comes from humbling. How do you humble yourself? Simply this. You prefer others ahead of yourself.

That is not natural. That is not natural. What is natural is to prefer yourself ahead of everyone else.

[18:18] That's the major consequence of the fall is self-centeredness. And self-centeredness we come by naturally humility we come by supernaturally.

And that's the big difference. But here again is God working partnering with the human being and He calls us to humility. And fellas, let me say this as clearly as I can because I don't think anything could be clear.

And that is this. When you take on an air of humility of humbleness all you are doing is responding to the truth of the situation.

Truth be told you've got nothing to be proud about. Now I don't want to make I don't want to create a misunderstanding here in saying something like there is nothing of which you should be proud.

there is a sense in which pride is important. There is a sense in which pride is a curse. Let's see if we can make a distinction between the two.

[19:33] Anybody want to take a crack at that? My, it got awfully quiet.

Roger? Yeah. Well, when I finish a project and do it the way it should have been done I'm kind of proud of that that I did it right. Okay.

Okay. I appreciate that. That is part of a distinction that we're talking about. There is a legitimate sense of satisfaction that comes from the completion of a responsibility or a job.

And yet even though that sense of satisfaction may be something that lifts your spirit your senses there is a there is a legitimate sense of achievement that is to be appreciated and sought and I'll tell you there are a lot of people who really don't know anything about that because virtually everything is given to them handed to them on a platter.

There was no output of energy labor sacrifice toil everything was just handed to them and if ever you want to produce a generation of total self-centeredness just keep doling out the goodies to them and don't expect anything from them and return.

[21 : 12] I remember a story back in the days when the bag of score he had four horsemen they were very high they were the greatest thing in the world he took out the entire offensive line and put in a bunch of young kids in there and they couldn't get back to the line of scrimmage so that was pride and falls quickly yeah yeah yeah Dan I had an experience I had a client from the insurance business and he was a trumpet player and he was actually from Cedarville to make a long story short he was the lead trumpet player at the stand camp this guy is really good and he says if I can help your son play a trumpet let me know now he could have said I don't want to fool with you know but here he was one of the best there is saying hey if I can help you well the greatest example of course of humility is that of our Lord and it is really spelled out in bold relief in Philippians chapter 2 about Christ and the exalted position that he left that he thought it not something that needed to be clung to held on to refused to give up and that was the position that he had with his father but he sacrificed that he left that behind came down to earth took upon himself the form of a human being made in the form of a servant humbled himself to death even the death of the cross that is the great kenosis it is down down down down and our

Lord becomes the premier example of what true humility is and when a person when a person is designated or described as a humble individual believe me he is nothing more than someone who has come to understand the truth about himself and that is buster you are not such hot stuff you are not the cock of the walk you are not what you would like to think you are you are just one among many and you get your sense of significance not from being somebody important or being special your sense of significance comes from the fact that you are created in the image and likeness of God and your value is related to him not what you have done did I see another hand or comment yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah

John yeah yeah yeah well yeah a typical expression today a lot of people is hey if I don't blow my own horn who will you know and that becomes their basis yeah now the second thing I was this guy on WC the other day talking about depression and the reason a lot of people have depression is they have low self-esteem and what's the difference between being humble and having low self-esteem or having high self-esteem and not have pride yeah well that's a good question okay Scott I thought along the same line and like you're talking about a campfire when you're out on a fall evening the right amount of campfire will draw people into it you know what the amount is everybody does but if the fire gets too big if you get too much pride too much self-esteem now you're repulsing people away now they're moving back and it doesn't even have to be anything said it's just people would see it and read it okay okay thank you

Joe it goes far if you feel good about yourself like if you're a music player and you've accomplished music player or you're an athlete and you succeed now if you feel good about yourself you know I think God wants you to do that yeah yeah yeah good good illustration whether the the self-esteem thing has kind of inundated the country and there is a legitimate sense in which a healthy self-esteem is necessary otherwise you're continually depressed beating up on yourself you're no good you can't do this you don't amount to anything blah blah blah this kind of thing where you're always down negative on yourself rather than realize that that you are a child of

God and your self-esteem and value is inherent but it's connected to him and when you understand that and Robert McGee has written an excellent book on that called Search for Significance very good book I would recommend it Don I think Neil Armstrong is a pretty good example of that today you're right he could have lived on that thing and he all away from it yeah yeah Neil Armstrong I think was an excellent example of what it takes to be a humble individual and again when someone comes into a sphere of humility humility and they are behaving with humility that is nothing more than someone who has come to understand what is really true about themselves about the world and everybody else and that's and somebody who is proud and lifted up just does not understand himself or the world that he's in and that self-centeredness is a natural consequence of the fall and it's been passed on from generation to generation so we'll look at the interpretation of this next week but I do appreciate you being here and enjoy your breakfast and the day ahead