

Hand Writing - cont.

ment and destruction of ungodly men (Matthew 25:46; Romans 2:3,8-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Peter 3:7).

There are lessons here in Daniel 5 that are for us to learn today. Just like Belshazzar, our days our numbered by God's word (Psalm 90:12). We will live so long, then we must die and face God in judgement. Are you ready for that day to come?

Just like Belshazzar, our thoughts and actions are weighed in the balances of God's word (1 Samuel 2:3; Proverbs 16:2; 21:2; 24:12; Isaiah 40:12,15). God knows all our thoughts and actions and he will hold us accountable for all.

Just like Belshazzar, our soul is divided by God's word (Heb. 4:12-13). God's word addresses all our thoughts and intents. None can escape him.

Friend, how will you be found when you meet the Lord in judgment? The expression we use today - "the handwriting on the wall" - is taken from this story in Daniel 5. It means a person sees the truth of what is about to happen in his life. We would do well to see our own "hand writing on the wall" and make our life right with God before it is too late. - *Chris Reeves*

- Thought of the Week -

When a person gets the opportunity to travel to other parts of the world, he or she is reminded very quickly how blessed we really are here in America. We have so much more than many people around the world have — more conveniences, technology, basic necessities, etc. It is a reminder that I need to be more grateful and more content with what I have. This week I will be more thankful to God in prayer, I will complain less about what I have (or do not have), and I will be more content.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

The Night A Hand Wrote on the Wall

In the Old Testament book of Daniel and in Chapter 5, we read about a party that was taking place at night and a mysterious hand wrote a message on a wall. Let's take a look at this very interesting story and see what we can learn for our admonition today.

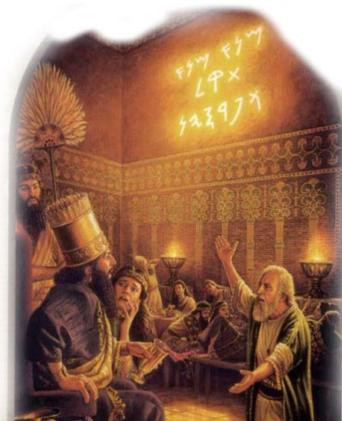
In the book of Daniel, Daniel and his friends are taken captive to Babylon (2 Kings 24:1). Here, Daniel served under five Babylonian kings, Nebuchadnezzar (608-562 B.C.; Daniel 1-4), Amel-Marduk (562-560 B.C.; 2 K. 25:27-30), Neriglissar (560-556 B.C.; Jer. 39:3,13). Labashi-Marduk (556 B.C.), and Nabonidus / Belshazzar (556-539 B.C.; Daniel 5). It was during the reign of this last king, Belshazzar, that this story takes place.

What happened on the fateful night of October 13, 539 B.C.? What happened was that Belshazzar saw the "handwriting on the wall" and was greatly troubled. Soon, Daniel would tell him what this writing meant.

A Night of Dissipation (v. 1)

On the night that Belshazzar saw the "handwriting on the wall", he and others had filled their lives with debauchery rather than with sober-

-mindedness. They were partying and they were not thinking about the Medes and Persians who were about to invade their city. This happens today. People are so frivolous and careless that they don't think soberly about living properly or about Jesus' second coming (Matthew 24:38-39; Luke 12:19-20; 1 Corinthians 15:32-34).



A Night of Desecration (vv. 2-4)

On the night that Belshazzar saw the "handwriting on the wall", he and others had filled their lives with irreverence rather than with glorifying and fearing the Most High God. Today, people do the same and they will not worship God with reverence and awe (Hebrews 12:28-29).

A Night of Dread and Despair (vv. 5-9)

The partying and dissipation of Belshaz-

zar and the others soon turned to dread. He and the others feared and got serious when they saw the handwriting. People today would do well to get serious and do the same (Matthew 5:4; Galatians 4:16; James 4:9-10).

A Night of Declaration (v. 10-28)

Belshazzar was told by God that his pride was wrong and that he would soon be judged for it. God still declares today through his Son Jesus that we will not escape the judgment of God (Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-3).

A Night of Disregard and Deception (v. 29)

The partying of the Babylonians continued through the night until their city was destroyed by the Medes and Persians. It is unfortunate that many will do the same today. They will continue on as usual without change until they are destroyed (Psalm 76:5; Acts 24:25; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3).

A Night of Divine Destruction (v. 30)

At the end of this night, the great empire of Babylon was brought down in judgment by the Medes and Persians. One day, there will be a day of judg-