**Daniel 5**

***SUNDAY NIGHT STUDY****[[1]](#footnote-1)*

1. **Daniel 5:1-31** – The Fall of Babylon
2. The royal family of Babylon – A Quick Background
3. From the end of chapter 4 until the beginning of chapter 5, you will notice that Babylon has a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ king – Belshazzar. Belshazzar was the Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson. Let’s consider a quick history:
4. Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, ruled the emerging Neo-Babylonian Empire from 626 to 605 BC. Nebuchadnezzar served as his military generaland chief administrator.
5. Nebuchadnezzar became king after his father’s death in 605 BC. He was the mastermind of Babylon’s greatest conquests and rise to world\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He ruled from 605 to 562 BC.
6. After Nebuchadnezzar’s death, his son Amel-Marduk ruled Babylon. His rule from 562 to 560 BC was short-lived. He was a weakand immoral ruler. Neriglisar, one of Nebuchadnezzar’s sons-in-law, is said to have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and replaced him.
7. Neriglisar ruled Babylon for four years, from 560 to 556 BC. He is said to have died of naturalcauses.
8. After Neriglisar, his son, Labashi-Marduk, ruled Babylon for about nine months. He was deemed too youngto rule and was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
9. After the death of Labashi-Marduk, Nabonidus, another of Nebuchadnezzar’s sons-in-law, rose to power. He “technically” ruled from 556 BC until Babylon’s fall in 539 BC.
10. Although Nabonidus was the supreme king, because of his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ interests outside the city of Babylon, he allowed his son Belshazzar to rule as kingin his place. Daniel 5:1
11. Nebuchadnezzar had only been gone \_\_\_\_\_\_ years, and yet a string of weakrulers had followed in his absence.
12. At this time, Daniel had either \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from public life or been removed from office. He had been in captivityin Babylon for nearly 66 years.



1. **Daniel 5:1** – The final day of the Babylonian empirestarted with a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Daniel 5:1 - For centuries, criticsof the Bible used the lack of extra-biblical historical information concerning Belshazzar to declare the Bible as inaccurate.
3. Their claim that the book of Daniel gave false information was finally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when archaeologists found a clay tablet left by King Nabonidus on which he mentioned his son Belshazzar by name.
4. This verse introduces to us what was happening on the lastday of the Babylonian empire.
5. According to historians, King Cyrus of Persia had been encamped outside the city with his armies for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ months. But apparently, Belshazzar was not worriedsince the city was considered impenetrable and was said to have housed provisions that could sustain a 23-year siege.
6. Remember the city was surround by 25-foot-thick walls, and the walls had 260 towers each spaced 160 feet apart. By all ancient standards, this city was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!
7. Due to the presence of Cyrus’ military, Babylonian rulers from the entire kingdom had sought refuge in Babylon, where they felt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_enough to assemble for a colossal, drinking party.
8. **Daniel 5:2-9** – The message on the wall
9. Daniel 5:2 –We do not know why Belshazzar decided to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ these Jewish templeobjects.
10. Belshazzar, had he known his history, should have known not to blaspheme God or desecrate His temple vessels. For him to have singled out these vessels and ordered them brought out after nearly 70 years in storage was unquestionably intentional.
11. In Daniel 4:37, Nebuchadnezzar had said “all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing” and “No one can restrain His hand” and “those who walk in pride He is able to put down.” – Belshazzar would have been \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ during this time!
12. In Daniel 3:29, Nebuchadnezzar had decreed that no one should ever offendthe God of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. – Surely, Belshazzar had also heard this story as well!
13. It was no trivial matter for Belshazzar to desecrate these vessels that had been set apartfor worshipping the *King of heaven*. There was something prideful and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ about his decision to do this.
14. Daniel 5:3-4 –Belshazzar could have defied any other god without suffering, but to have defied the Creatorof the universe, the God of Israel would bring \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ consequences – At the very time they drank from the vessels, they also praised their falsegods.
15. Belshazzar was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_with destruction. With his enemy encamped nearby, he threw a party, got drunk, and committed sacrilege against God almighty. The idols they were praising as they drank had no voice, no life or no ability to rescue him.
16. God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_people to make their own decisions, even though He knows their sinful actions will ultimately bring them calamity. People can make their choices, but they cannot choose their consequences! Proverbs 1:30-32
17. Daniel 5:5 –God took up Belshazzar’s direct/indirect challenge to His authority and His nameand He interrupted the party.
18. The word phrase “same hour” emphasized that as soonas God was defied through the blasphemous desecration of the temple vessels, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ appeared. It was sudden and immediate!
19. Daniel 5:6-9 – The king’s overall response was one of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and bewilderment because he himself had observed with his own eyesthe back of the hand that wrote on the plaster of the wall. We are not told how large or small the hand was, but it was clearly viewable from where Belshazzar sat. He responded a couple of ways:
	* 1. Daniel 5:6 – “The king’s countenance changed” – It was no longer a party atmosphere full of mirth and drinking games - Belshazzar was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		2. “His thoughts troubled him” – He probably began to think, ‘Oh, no! What have I done?’ Although Belshazzar did not know what the message meant, he probably knew whohe had offended, and he went through his mental \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!
		3. “The joints of his hips were loosened, and his knees knocked against each other” – Belshazzar was literally shaking in his boots.
20. The armies of the Persians brought the king little fear, but a disembodied man’s handsobered him instantly.
	* 1. Daniel 5:7-8 –The king “cried aloud” to bring in the wise men of Babylon – Unfortunately, the writing on the wall was a total mystery to these “wise men.” They had been \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to help in the past with Nebuchadnezzar’s divine dreams, and once again they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to interpret God’s written message.
			+ 1. In typical Babylonian royalty fashion, Belshazzar offers great \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and promotion to anyone who could interpretthe inscription.
				2. Unfortunately for the king, none of his wise men could interpret the writing. God had once again stumped these minions of Satan. When no one could read the writing or explainthe message, all merriment ceased.
21. Daniel 5:9 –As the different groups clustered to discuss the meaning, and one by one failed to offer any explanation, the king’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_intensified.
	1. This crisis illustrated the inability of these practitioners of the dark arts to give any answers.
	2. The book of Daniel records crisis after crisis in which God's servants relied on God’s faithfulness to answer life’s perplexities. Daniel would again be promoted to a place of authority for something that God did \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_him.
22. **Daniel 5:10-12** – The Queen’s wise advice
23. Daniel 5:10-11 –The way this verse describes the sequence of events, it appears that quite possibly the queen was **NOT** at this drunken feast, but she was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ enough to hear of her husband’s dilemma and she came in to calm the situation and give advice.
	1. It is virtually impossible to know the actual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of this queen. Some speculate she was Belshazzar’s mother (a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar) or grandmother (a wife of Nebuchadnezzar). Either way Daniel referred to her as queenin this passage.
	2. Whoever she was, the queen knewBabylon’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and she knew exactly the right \_\_\_\_\_\_ to turn to in the kingdom who would be able to interpret the dream.
24. This man, of course, was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and she reminded the king how Daniel had interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams and how he had been made chief over all the wise men in Babylon.
25. Just as Nebuchadnezzar had done, she referred to Daniel in a way \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_people could understand, saying he had *a spirit of the holy gods*. She was still “setting him apart” in some way as having something unique about him, but her polytheism bled through.
26. Daniel 5:12 – After a lengthy discourseon Daniel’s qualifications, the queen \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Belshazzar to summon him.
27. It is interesting that she used Daniel’s Hebrew name, not his Babylonian name. She may have believed in God like King Nebuchadnezzar did.
28. **Daniel 5:13-16** – The king summons Daniel and makes an offer to him
29. Daniel 5:13-14 – Belshazzar knew more about Daniel than he cared to admit. This information about Daniel being a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_deportee did not come from the queen.
	* 1. The fact that Belshazzar had never personally met Daniel (“I have heard of you” – v14) highlights the probability that Daniel was no longer in a placeof \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Babylon.
		2. Notice how Belshazzar mentions Daniel’s ethnic status and captivity and ***NOT*** his long life of service to the Babylonian administration (he mentions “Judah” twice in verse 13).
30. He may have been trying to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Daniel or exert his power/authority by reminding everyone in earshot that Daniel had been brought as a captivefrom Judah.
31. Despite his terror from the handwriting on the wall, Belshazzar took the opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Daniel proclaiming that he was *one of the exiles* from Judah, when he could have praised his years of faithful civic service.
	* 1. The king recounted the queen’s wordsdescribing Daniel’s unparalleled wisdom, but once again expressing it in true pagan style (“spirit of the gods”).
32. Daniel 5:15 – This verse is just ONE MORE reminder of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of humanwisdom for the most powerful man in the most powerful empire of the world to see up close and personal.
33. Daniel 5:16 –Again, God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a situation, even as He is about to remove the kingdom of Babylon, to declare and remind everyone that “the Most High rules in the kingdom of men.”
	* 1. It sounds like Belshazzar had *personally* heardof Daniel before this meeting – whether that was because of the queen’s description or if he knew before, we do not know for sure.
		2. Either way, he did not call for him until \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the queensuggested he do so.
		3. The king now makes a promise of wealth and promotion for Daniel if he can read the writing and interpret it for him.
34. He offered Daniel the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ reward he had offered the other wise men, including being named the third highest rulerin the kingdom of Babylon.
35. The fact that he offered Daniel to be the *third ruler in the kingdom* is strong proof that Belshazzar was actually \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in command, under his absentimperial father.
36. A quick “fast-forward” comment: Although this may have seemed like an insignificant promotion based upon the interpretation of the dream, it was not uncommon for Persian kings to allow conquered leaders to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_in positions of authority. This may account for why Daniel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ became prominent in the Persian government.
37. **Daniel 5:17-24** – Daniel’s direct, clear, and stinging rebuke of King Belshazzar
38. Daniel 5:17 –Daniel bluntly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_any compensation. He would not let economic benefits motivate or cloud his interpretation of the message. He was older, and clearly these things were not motivators for him.
	1. Notice that Daniel does **NOT** say, “God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ give me the reading and/or interpretation of this dream” this time – we will see later WHY that might be the case (Daniel 2:27-28).
39. Daniel 5:18-21 –Daniel now provides a brief and quick history lesson regarding the Babylonian Kingdom from Yahweh’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – probably a perspective that Belshazzar had heard but had not resonated with him.
	1. As the first order of business, Daniel clarifiedthe fact that God, ***NOT*** man, had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ king Nebuchadnezzar his splendor and royal authority (Jeremiah 25:5-7).
	2. Because of this divine appointment, Daniel reminded Belshazzar why people all over the known world trembled and feared before Nebuchadnezzar and those in his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (including Belshazzar).
	3. The reason Nebuchadnezzar killed those he wanted to kill and spared those he wanted to spare and honored those he wanted to honor and disgraced those he wanted to humble was because God gavehim this amazing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and power.
	4. All of this being true and having been revealed to Nebuchadnezzar and the entire kingdom (including his family), these facts should have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ him. However, his divinely given success made him prouder. As a result…
40. When Nebuchadnezzar claimed personal authorship for his God-given magnificence, God profoundly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_him.
41. Daniel reminded Belshazzar that God humbled Nebuchadnezzar. The memoryof seeing his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ eating grass like an animal may have been etched into Belshazzar’s soul.
42. Daniel focused on Nebuchadnezzar’s pride. It was his pridethat led to God’s abasement of Nebuchadnezzar. This same \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was leading Belshazzar to an untimely death.
43. It was only when Nebuchadnezzar humbly recognized the truth after seven years, that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men that he was restored to his kingdom.
	1. Unfortunately, Belshazzar was not being offered a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ chance, or an opportunity to learn from his mistakes. Instead he was about to hear that he had already been judged – the timing was right for God to move his plan forward (“the times of the Gentiles”).
44. Daniel 5:22-23 - Lest anyone thinks this judgment was unfair or that Belshazzar should have been given another chance, Daniel makes clear it that Belshazzar \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and knowingly defiedGod.
45. Daniel tells him that he knew all this AND he lifted himself against the Lord of heaven implying deliberate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and arrogance on his part.
46. Daniel proceeded to pronounce a four-part \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_against Belshazzar.
47. ***First*** – You defied almightyGod by “lifting yourself up against the Lord of heaven.” To “lift up” meant to exalt himself higher than Yahweh.
48. ***Second*** - You ledyour people to profane the vessels devoted to the worship of God. Not only did he do it, but he led others to directly defy and profane God through these acts. The fact that he had to get them out of storage to do this indicates serious intentionality on his part.
49. ***Third*** - You foolishly worshiped lifeless images. Due to the revelation he had, he was not excused for continuing to pursue the idolatry of his culture and upbringing.
50. ***Fourth*** - You have not given gloryto the God who gave you your life and breath.
51. Daniel 5:24 – In case Belshazzar was still not connecting the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for WHY the dismembered hand appeared with the writing on the wall, Daniel tells him directly – The final \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and catalystbehind the message on the wall was the misuse of the temple vessels.
	* 1. Was there a big difference between the pride of Nebuchadnezzar and the pride of Belshazzar? It seems that the difference between the two men’s pride was that Belshazzar \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ challenged God, whereas Nebuchadnezzar did not directlychallenge Him. Thus, God met Belshazzar’s challenge head on.
		2. Notice that in some way, Daniel is still instructing everyone around by giving this rebuke, because only after he is done, he is now ready to interpret the handwriting on the wall.
52. **Daniel 5:25-31** – Daniel interpreted the message on the wall
53. Daniel 5:25 –Written in Aramaic, the literal translation is “Numbered, numbered, weighed, and divided.” Even though written in the language of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, these Aramaic wordswere not understood by the wise men of Babylon. They could not understand their significance.
54. This is “potentially” very fascinating because the message was written in a language that everyone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and ***YET*** no one could read it, except Daniel.
55. This is potentially WHY Daniel did ***NOT*** need divinely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ understanding – he simply read it, defined the words, and made the application based upon what God had already \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Jeremiah, through Nebuchadnezzar’s statue dream in chapter 2, and the fact that the Medo-Persian army was camped outside the city.
56. Daniel 5:26-28 –Daniel gives the meaning of the words one by one.
57. Daniel 5:26 – *MENE* means “to number.” The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was on and the timer was almost up.
58. Because the word number *MENE* was repeated twice, this may have emphasized the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the judgment poised to fall on this seemingly invincible kingdom.
59. Daniel 5:27 – *TEKEL* means “to weigh.” God evaluated the Babylonian Empire under Belshazzar’s leadership and, using His holystandards, he found it totally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of continued existence.
60. Daniel 5:28 – *UPHARSIN* is the plural form of *PERES*, which means “to divide.” God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Babylonian Empire between the Medes and Persians.
61. Daniel 5:29 –Ironically, Belshazzar rewarded Daniel as he had promised, even though Daniel’s interpretation announced the doomof the empire. Again, this may explain Daniel’s “high position” in the Medo-Persian empire to follow.
62. Daniel 5:30 –This pronounced judgment came \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, as the text tells us that this very night, as Daniel was receiving this promotion, the Persian armywas preparing to conquer the city and execute King Belshazzar.
	1. Herodotus, Xenophon, Berossus, the Babylonian Chronicles, and Cyrus (on the Cyrus Cylinder) all described the fall of Babylon in writings that have remained to the present day. Isaiah and Jeremiah had predicted Babylon’s fall (Isa. 13:17–22; 21:1–10; 47:1–5; Jer. 51:33–58).
	2. The Persians \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the water from the Euphrates River that flowed south through Babylon into an ancient lake located to the north. This allowed them to walk into the city on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and scale the undefended walls that flanked the river.
		1. “Hereupon the Persians who had been left for the purpose at Babylon by the riverside, entered the stream, which had now sunk so as to reach about midway up a man’s thigh, and thus got into the town. Had the Babylonians been appraised of what Cyrus was about, or had they noticed their danger, they would never have allowed the Persians to enter the city but would have destroyed them utterly; for they would have made fast all the street-gates which gave upon the river, and mounting upon the walls along both sides of the stream, would so have caught the enemy as it were in a trap. But, as it was, the Persians came upon them by surprise and took the city. Owing to the vast size of the place, the inhabitants of the central parts (as the residents at Babylon declare), long after the outer portions of the town were taken, knew nothing of what had chanced, but as they were engaged in a festival, continued dancing and reveling until they learnt the capture but too certainly.”
63. Daniel 5:31 –The fall of Babylon meant the rise of Medo-Persia, the arms and chest of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from Daniel 2:32. The head of gold, the most valuable part of the statue, did not last very long.
64. **Considerations from Daniel five**
65. God is sovereign. He is the one who raises up and brings down\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. God is able to bring down even the strongest ruler. Psalm 29:10, 33:16-17; Isaiah 40:15; Jeremiah 10:10; Romans 13:1
66. God keeps His Word and He knows the beginning from the end. His foreknowledge allows Him to predict things \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ even when He does ***NOT*** specifically \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ things to happen. Jeremiah 27:5-7
67. It is often easy to recognize pride in a nation, a leader, a friend or a family member, but to see pride in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is often the most difficult. Proverbs 16:18, John 8:7-11, 1 Corinthians 8:2, 10:12
68. Although mankind tends to be impressed with man’s wealth, wisdom, talents, security and fame - God is not! He is looking for people who will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Him unquestionably. Philippians 3:7; Hebrews 3:19, 11:6
1. A big thank you to DM2 ([www.dm2usa.org](http://www.dm2usa.org)) for many of these notes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)