

LESSON 11

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Belshazzar

In 562 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar died after reigning for forty-three years. Nabonidus, his son, reigned after him from 556-539 BC. In 553 BC, in the third year of Nabonidus' reign, he entrusted his kingship to his firstborn, Belshazzar, who co-reigned with his father. Belshazzar means "Bel has protected the king." Nabonidus and Belshazzar were the last kings of Babylon before it was conquered by the Medes and Persians.

At the time of our story, Belshazzar was inside Babylon, protected by its fortified walls. Babylon's enemies surrounded Babylon. Belshazzar certainly knew about this, but he wasn't afraid. He was confident that no one could penetrate the large and tall walls of Babylon. He kept the gates to the city closed. He had everything the people needed to survive inside the city walls. They had a river that ran through the city so there was plenty of water to drink.

The river that brought water into the city came from outside the walls. The enemy soldiers dug a trench and drained the river water into a lake so the river no longer fed water to the city. With the water no longer coming through the river into the walled city, the enemy entered the walls of Babylon through the dry riverbed and conquered the kingdom.

Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Upharsin

The writing on the wall was written in Aramaic, which the Babylonians understood (Dan 2:4). However, even though the words could be read, their meaning was not understood. Mene can mean "numbered" or "mina" (a unit of money). Tekel can mean "weighed" or "shekel." Peres, the singular form of upharsin, can mean "divided," "half a mina," or "half a shekel."

Daniel 4:28-37

These verses in the Book of Daniel were not included in previous lessons. Daniel made reference to how God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to become like a wild animal because of his pride. God had previously revealed to Nebuchadnezzar through a dream that he would be driven from society if he continued in his sinful ways (Dan 4:1-27). He had twelve months to change but there was no repentance and thus the dream was fulfilled. Daniel was alluding to the fact that Belshazzar already had an example to learn from and yet, his heart was unyielding, and he still chose to dishonor God.

BIBLE TEXT

Daniel 5

BIBLE TRUTH

God will punish those who are disobedient and disrespectful to His commandments.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To understand that our life's purpose is to glorify, respect, and honor God.
2. To know that pride is sin.
3. To understand that our accomplishments come from God.

MEMORY VERSE

"He who humbles himself will be exalted."

(Matthew 23:12b)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord, You are the only God. You have created all things for us to enjoy and have supplied us with our daily needs. Lord, we often forget that You give us all things. We think that we have all these things because we are smart or because we have worked hard to get them. In truth, we cannot do anything without You. All good things come from You. Help us to remove the pride from our hearts. Fill our hearts with humility, respect, and obedience. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for everything. Hallelujah! Amen.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Many students do not think much about taking care of the church property. It is important for the students to understand that the church property belongs to God. When asked, "What is the church property?" the students would normally say, "The church building." If asked, "How should we take care of the church?" the students might reply, "Keep the church clean and neat." Help the students understand that in addition to keeping the church clean, we must show respect to the church by not running or playing in the chapel, and by not making excessive noise. We must respect God's house as a holy and sacred place used for worship. "My house shall be called a house of prayer" (Mt 21:13).

In addition to the church building, the items in the church also belong to God. For example, the tithe offered belongs to God. Judas Iscariot abused his power and committed sin when he took money from the treasury. In

the end, he was punished. Also, the Bibles, hymn books, and computers in the church belong to God and should be used only to serve God. Belshazzar showed disrespect to God when he drank from the golden vessels during his feast. Therefore, God ended his reign and gave the kingdom to other countries. Similarly, students should be reminded that the stationery and office supplies, such as the pens, pencils, paper, markers, and scissors, are the property of the church and should not be taken home for personal use.

Most importantly, your students should be reminded that their bodies belong to God. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says that our bodies are the temples of God. They need to keep it sacred and holy. Discuss how they can keep their body holy and sacred on a daily basis. Encourage them to remember that everything that has been dedicated to God should be respected and treated with care.

VOCABULARY

- vessel:** a container for holding something (e.g., cask, bottle, kettle, cup or bowl)
- interpret:** to explain or tell the meaning of
- conquer:** to gain or acquire by force
- Medes:** an ancient Iranian people who lived in the northwestern portions of present-day Iran
- Persia:** ancient name for the present-day country of Iran
- respect:** high or special regard

REVIEW

During last week's lesson, we learned how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego remained faithful even under difficult times. King Nebuchadnezzar made a giant golden image and then he made a decree throughout the city of Babylon. What was that decree? (When the music played, he wanted the people to bow down and worship the golden image.) When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego heard the music, did they worship the idol like the people around them? (No, they did not, because they only worshipped the one true God.) Their disobedience made King Nebuchadnezzar very angry. He ordered to have them thrown into the fiery furnace. When the three friends were thrown into the furnace, what amazing miracle did King Nebuchadnezzar see? (The king noticed that the fire did not harm the three friends.) God had sent an Angel to save them and instead of three persons, there were four persons walking around inside the furnace. What did King Nebuchadnezzar do after witnessing this event? (He praised God and ordered the rest of the people not to speak against God. He then promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to be high officials in Babylon.) That lesson teaches us that we should not do anything that displeases God, even when someone as powerful as a king orders us to do it. Also, we need to be faithful to God regardless of the situation. If we are faithful to Him, He will rescue us.

Today, we are going to learn about a king called Belshazzar and the terrible incident that happened to him.

BIBLE STORY

Belshazzar Disrespects God

After King Nebuchadnezzar died, his grandson Belshazzar became king. [Ask the students to repeat his name after you.] King Belshazzar did not believe in the one true God. Instead, he believed in many gods and worshipped their idols. One night, King Belshazzar held a great feast. He invited one thousand officials and his many wives and concubines. His guests ate rich foods and drank much wine. While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to his servants to bring out the drinking vessels that had been taken from the temple in Jerusalem. These were the vessels that his grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar, had brought home when he attacked Jerusalem. The vessels were made of gold and were sanctified to be used for serving the Lord in the temple. But King Belshazzar and his guests drank wine from them like they were common vessels. While they drank, they praised the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

Do you think God was happy with Belshazzar's behavior? No, Belshazzar's behavior was offensive and disrespectful toward God. He was using holy items used to worship and praise God as items to praise false gods and idols. This act was a very serious sin in God's sight.

As King Belshazzar and his guests were enjoying themselves, he suddenly saw a very strange sight. He saw a human hand appear out of nowhere. It wasn't attached to a body; it was just a hand. It began to write on the wall of the royal banquet hall.

How would you feel if you saw that? Can you quickly draw a picture of how your face would look if you were King Belshazzar? [Give your students some paper and time to draw.] Exactly, you would be very frightened. King Belshazzar was terrified! His face turned very white, and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way.

The Writing on the Wall

As Belshazzar stared in horror, the hand wrote this message on the wall: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

What do you think these words meant? I would like you to turn to your neighbor and discuss what you think these words might have meant. [Allow students to share their thoughts.] I think the confusion we are experiencing right now was exactly what Belshazzar and his guests were feeling at that moment.

King Belshazzar then quickly called for all his officials, astrologers, and magicians to come see him. He said, "If anyone can tell me the meaning of these words, I will give him royal clothes to wear and he will be the third highest ruler in my whole kingdom." Belshazzar's wise men went over to the wall and studied the writing. They looked at the words, then at each other, and scratched their heads.

One by one, they looked at the writing on the wall, but they could not read it or figure out what it meant. Now,

the king became more terrified than before.

Daniel Is Summoned

When the queen heard about the problem, she came before the king and said, "O King, live forever! Don't be alarmed! There is a man in your kingdom that has the Spirit of the Holy God. He has knowledge and understanding, and he can interpret dreams and solve difficult problems. In the days of your grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar made him chief of all the magicians, sorcerers and wise men. You should call for this Daniel to help you with this problem."

So Daniel was brought before the king and the king said to him, "So you are the Daniel whom King Nebuchadnezzar brought from Judah? I heard that you have God's Spirit in you. I have called my magicians, sorcerers, and wise men to tell me the meaning of this writing on the wall, but they don't know what it means. If you can tell me the meaning of the writing on the wall, I will put a gold chain around your neck, give you a purple robe to wear, and I will make you the third most powerful man in all of Babylon."

Daniel said, "You can keep your gold chain and your purple robe. But I will tell you what the writing on the wall means."

The Interpretation

"O king, the Most High God made King Nebuchadnezzar, your grandfather, a great and mighty king. All the people in the world feared him because his power was so great. He could do and take whatever he pleased.

"But he became proud. He started to think, 'How great and wonderful I am! I built this kingdom all by myself.' And so the Most High God took away your grandfather's power, and he made him live like an animal. Then, he finally understood that God is King over all things, and that it is He who gives power to whomever He wants.

"But you, King Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself even though you knew all this. You have become proud, and you have gone against God. You have taken the holy vessels and drank wine from them. You have bowed before statues of gold and silver, bronze and iron, and wood and stone. These statues cannot see nor can they hear. They can do nothing for you at all. But you wouldn't even be able to take a breath without God, and yet you do not praise or honor Him.

"So the almighty God has sent you this message: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

"And this is what it means: MENE means that God has counted out the number of days that you will live and they are over. TEKEL means that God has tested you, and you have not passed the test. PERES mean your kingdom will be divided and given to another kingdom called the Medes and the Persians."

Babylon Is Invaded

When King Belshazzar heard this interpretation, he immediately rewarded Daniel by giving him royal clothes to wear and a gold chain to place around his neck. It was even proclaimed that Daniel was the third in command of the kingdom.

However, that very same night, the Medes and Persians attacked Babylon and killed King Belshazzar. Everything that God had spoken through Daniel came true. The kingdom of Babylon had been conquered and a new king ruled the kingdom.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING**Multiple Choice/True or False****1. How was King Belshazzar disrespectful to God?**

- He had a huge party where he drank wine and ate rich food.
- He ate food that was offered to idols.
- He drank wine from the vessels that had been taken from the temple and he worshipped idols.*

2. Daniel was able to interpret the writing because _____.

- He was a very smart man
- He worshipped God and God gave him the wisdom*
- The magicians and wise men all helped him

3. When the king saw the hand and the writing on the wall, _____.

- He became so scared that his face turned pale and his knees knocked together*
- He was very happy and danced with joy
- He continued to eat and drink

4. Everyone knew what the words meant, but they were afraid to tell the king. False.**5. The words meant that the king's days were over and that his son would be the next king. False.****6. Only God has the power to make a person a king. True.****7. God no longer wanted Belshazzar to be king because he had become proud and he did not fear God. True.****MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE**

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"He who humbles himself will be exalted." (Matthew 23:12b)

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

- C
- A
- B
- False; Daniel was able to interpret it because God gave him the wisdom and knowledge.
- False; the words meant that his days were over and his kingdom would be divided.
- True
- MENE: God has numbered your days and they are over. (Dan 5:26)
TEKEL: God has tested you and you have not passed the test. (Dan 5:27)
UPHARSIN: Your kingdom will be given to another kingdom called Medes and Persia. (Dan 5:28)
- a, c, d, g, h
- We must acknowledge and thank God for all that He has given us. We have to constantly check to see if we have pride in our hearts, and pray and ask God to give us a humble and obedient heart.

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

1. To understand that our life's purpose is to glorify, respect, and honor God.

Students, have you ever thought about why we graduate from schools—elementary, middle, high school, college, and graduate school—but never from church? As a student, we know that our purpose of going to school is to gain knowledge so that we can make a living and contribute to the society in the future. Schooling is indeed very important for us! But how about church? Why is going to church so important? What is our purpose for going to church? [Let students discuss and share their answers.]

As Christians, we never “graduate” from church because learning the word of God is a lifelong lesson. We need the word of God in our lives. We need God’s wisdom every day to make decisions that are pleasing in His eyes. There is no end to the knowledge of God, and His wisdom will continue to be applicable to us every day. So, what exactly does the Bible teach us, and why?

The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The first part in verse 16 is easy to understand. We come to church to learn Scripture because it teaches us to be righteous—that is, to be right and good in God’s eyes. It gives us information on how to be holy. But verse 17 goes even deeper than that. It tells us that the purpose for us to learn Scripture is to be complete and ready for good works. In other words, once we have learned from the Bible about what God wants us to do, God expects us to be ready to take action. He wants us to act upon His word!

Finally, the Bible reveals the purpose for us and for all Christians to do good works. Let’s turn to Matthew 5:16 and please read aloud with me. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” God wants every single person in this world to be saved. He loves us all! As His children, God has entrusted a very important duty to each and every one of us—to let others see God’s love in us. By doing good works according to the Bible, we’re glorifying God’s name. Other people can see that we’re different from people who don’t have God in them. We want to help these people recognize God and His glory. We want the world to know how much better this world can be if we all treat people the way God wants us to. We want others to know that, even though we live in a world of wickedness, they can find true peace and joy through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is called glorifying God—to shine the light of Jesus! Our life’s ultimate purpose is not to go to school, find a dream job, and then become a millionaire. While we can pursue our dreams, our ultimate goal, above all things, is to glorify God, and respect and honor Him. This responsibility never ends. This is why you see members in their old age sitting in the chapel every Saturday, still doing the same thing we do—learning God’s words and acting upon them, and glorifying God through good works!

2. To understand that our accomplishments come from God.

In order for us to glorify God, there has to be good in us that people can see. It may be a good virtue, a good deed, or a good accomplishment. We also know that God has promised us salvation if we do all these good things that God wants us to do. Furthermore, the Bible clearly explains to us, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph 2:8-9). All of these good virtues, deeds, and accomplishments aren’t from us. Rather, God gave us the ability to accomplish these things. It is a gift of God. He wants us to receive this gift and glorify Him. This is why the Bible tells us not to boast. Boasting means talking with pride. The Bible teaches us to humble ourselves. Have you ever thought about why? Why isn’t it a good thing for us to tell people how good we are, especially when it is the truth? The answer is easy. It is because everything we have comes from God. Yes, maybe you put a lot of effort into accomplishing something, and of course, you can feel good about yourself. It is not wrong for other people to feel very proud of you, either. Rather, it is when our pride becomes so great that we forget about the grace of God, and that He has given us everything we need to accomplish what we want. The verse we just read continues, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). God has already prepared everything we are going to accomplish. We are His workmanship, meaning that we will achieve accomplishments that He already planned for us to achieve. Let me share a testimony with you!

This was an exciting time for Anne. She was applying for college! After some extensive research, she found out that the subject she wanted to study was only available at a few universities throughout the whole world! Compared to other common subjects, Anne's choices were few. The next thing she found out was that, out of all these colleges, there was only one that was close to a church! All the others were in areas that were far from or that didn't have a church. Anne started to get nervous. She only had one choice! Not only so, Anne knew that that school was a very famous school. They only accepted highly gifted students. The worst news for her was that this school required an on-site interview, which meant that Anne had to fly to the other side of the world in order to have a slim chance of getting into that school. At that point, Anne just wanted to give up. She thought to herself, "I cannot go to a school where there is no church around. But this school is just impossible to enter. I guess I'll never get to study what I want." However, Anne didn't give up right away. She submitted an application to that school and started praying very hard for God's will. A few weeks later, Anne received a confirmation letter that the school wanted her to fly there for an interview. She didn't want to miss the opportunity, so she finally made up her mind and decided to go to the interview. Before Anne left, she prayed to God for His will. She knew that her own ability could not get herself into that school, but God could! She did her best and just waited for God's answer.

A month later, Anne was officially accepted into her dream school. Even her teacher couldn't believe it. Anne knew that it wasn't her accomplishment, but God's answer to her prayer. It was God's will for her to go to a school close to a church while studying what she really wanted. Every time her friends and family congratulated her on the acceptance, Anne always gave thanks and praise to God because she knew very well that her accomplishment wasn't from her, but from God!

3. To know that pride is sin.

What does it mean to "have pride"? Pride is hidden in our hearts. Though it cannot be seen, people with pride have certain attitudes and behaviors:

- They may think that that they are special and better than others.
- They may become upset or jealous of those who are better than them.
- They think that they are very smart and can handle things on their own.
- They feel like they don't need God.
- They like things done their own way, and they don't like to listen to others.
- They have a tendency to look down on others.
- They show a lack of respect and obedience towards God or men.

Did King Belshazzar display such attitudes and behaviors? [Allow students to answer.]

Instructions: Read and look at the various scenarios and write down whether the action/words in the scenarios were prideful or humble.



1. Jimmy came running home from school. He got an "A+" on today's quiz. He showed this to Mom and said, "Thanks Mom for helping me study last night."

Was Jimmy proud or humble? _____



2. Tammy looked around at the other girls in her classroom. None of them had as nice a dress as she did. She couldn't wait for someone to notice, so she told everyone how pretty her dress was.

Was Tammy proud or humble? _____



3. Carl's parents were wealthy. They were able to buy whatever toy or game he wanted. Whenever Carl saw his friends, he would share his games with them.

Was Carl proud or humble? _____



4. Liz was an excellent student, had many friends, won many art competitions, and played the violin for the orchestra. She didn't believe that she needed Jesus. She believed that she had accomplished all her achievements through her own abilities.

Was Liz proud or humble? _____



5. As James entered his friend's house, he noticed how old and dirty everything looked. He laughed and said, "Yikes, your house is really old. Our furniture looks much nicer than yours."

Was James proud or humble? _____



6. Helen was crying because her teacher did not pick her story to read in front of the class. She felt that her story was much better than Justin's.

Was Helen proud or humble? _____



7. Jack and Katy were playing with a friend's toy and accidentally broke it. Jack blamed Katy and said that it was all her fault. Katy said sorry for breaking the toy, even though it wasn't entirely her fault. She promised to save up money to replace the broken toy.

Was Katy proud or humble? _____



8. The teacher reminded everyone to go wash their hands before eating lunch. David didn't move. Instead, he stood there with his hands in his pockets. "I don't need to wash them," he said to his teacher. The teacher reminded him again. "You can't make me!" said David.

Was David proud or humble? _____

Let's read what the Bible records about pride. [Have students read from 1 Peter 5:5 and Isaiah 2:17.]

God hates pride. Pride is a sin because it leads us away from God and prevents us from growing closer to Him. Lucifer was a glorious heavenly being, but he became proud. He wanted to be great and exalted like God. This displeased God greatly. As a result, God cast him out of heaven.

If we are proud and think that we are better than others, God will make us lowly and we will not be blessed.

To avoid being proud, we must acknowledge and thank God for all that He has given us. We have to constantly check to see if we have pride in our hearts, and pray and ask God to give us a humble and obedient heart. When we do this, God will bless us.

ACTIVITY

I Obey

Objective: To remind the students to obey God by reading a Bible verse.

Instructions: Find all the words that are hidden in the word search puzzle. They may be horizontal, vertical, diagonal or backwards. Then, use the remaining letters to form a Bible verse that teaches us about obeying God.

Words: Daniel finger hand honor humble
king respect vessels wall

R	H	U	M	B	L	E	W
E	E	W	H	W	F	I	L
S	L	L	A	A	I	I	S
P	T	L	E	N	N	A	N
E	L	K	I	N	G	D	D
C	V	E	S	S	E	L	S
T	H	O	N	O	R	O	B
E	Y	L	E	I	N	A	D

" _____ "

E1 Year 2 Book 3 Lesson 11—The Writing on the Wall

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: God will punish those who are disobedient and disrespectful to His commandments.

Lesson Objectives: 1. To understand that our life's purpose is to glorify, respect, and honor God.
 2. To know that pride is sin.
 3. To understand that our accomplishments come from God.

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Matthew 23:12b)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

Multiple Choice

1. _____ : How was King Belshazzar disrespectful to God?
 - a. He trusted in his wise men rather than in God.
 - b. He ate food that was offered to idols.
 - c. He drank wine from the cups that had been taken from the temple and he worshipped idols.

2. _____ : When the king saw the hand and the writing on the wall, _____.
 - a. He became so scared that his face turned pale and his knees knocked together
 - b. He was very happy and danced with joy
 - c. He continued to eat and drink

3. _____ : The writing on the wall read, " _____."
 - a. Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani
 - b. Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin
 - c. Talitha cumi, Talitha cumi

True or False

4. Daniel was able to interpret the writing because the magicians and wise men helped him. _____
5. The words meant that the king's days were over and that his son would be the next king. _____
6. Only God has the power to make a person a king. _____

Matching

7. Draw a line to the correct meaning of each MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. Turn to the Bible verse to help you.

MENE (Daniel 5:26)

God has tested you and you have not passed the test.

TEKEL (Daniel 5:27)

Your kingdom will be given to another kingdom called Medes and Persia.

UPHARSIN (Daniel 5:28)

God has numbered your days and they are over.

8. Circle the things that a proud person would say.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. My drawing is better than yours. | b. Thank You, God, for giving me wisdom. |
| c. I'm pretty. | d. Why should I listen? |
| e. If that's how you like it, then let's do that! | f. Mom says we have to pick up our toys. |
| g. That's so easy and you can't do it? | h. I want it NOW! |
| i. Thank You, God, for everything! | |

9. What can you do to remove pride from your heart?
