

LESSON 11

GOD WRITES ON THE WALL AT BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

OBJECTIVES

1. To know that God holds nations and rulers accountable for their actions.
2. To remember to pray for our head of state to honor God and follow His ways.

MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority."

(1 Timothy 2:1-2a)

PRAYER

1. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for bringing us into Your presence to worship and learn Your precious word.
2. You are the almighty God who sets up and removes kings and rulers. You make nations great and You destroy them.
3. Help the leaders of the land know You. Help them to govern the country wisely so that they may make decisions that honor You and do what is best for the people.
4. Thank You for giving us a stable and peaceful environment to know You and to tell others about Your marvelous deeds.



Overview

1. **Belshazzar's Feast**
2. **The Interpretation and Judgment**
3. **Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs**—One True God
4. **Life Application**
 - Pray for All Men
 - For You I Am Praying
5. **Activity**—Prayer Cube



Background Knowledge for Teachers

A major theme in the Book of Daniel is God's sovereignty over the course of history and individual destinies. Through visions and dreams revealed to Daniel, God demonstrates that "the kingdom is the LORD's, and He rules over the nations." (Ps 22:28; Is 46:9b, 10; Dan 2:31-45; 7:3-14). "He makes nations great, and He destroys them; He enlarges nations, and guides them" (Job 12:23).

God gives power, riches, and authority to kings and leaders for a purpose. They are not granted these things so that they can indulge in sin and pleasure, but rather so they can be accountable to the people and honor and glorify God.



Reaching Out to Your Students

Our students are growing up in a society and country that values its rights, one of which is the freedom of speech. Your students may have been taught to question and challenge people of authority if they don't agree on something.

Our students need to understand that the authority figures in their lives—whether it be teachers, government officials, church ministers, parents—are people whom God has placed in positions of authority to help, guide, and protect us. This doesn't mean that we will agree with each of their decisions, particularly the ones that go against the Bible. However, the Bible teaches us that we still need to respect and pray for them. By praying for our leaders, the students will realize that God is in ultimate control of the world and its leaders. Praying for leaders also broadens the scope of their prayers; they learn to extend their love and care to the people of the world, as well as to their immediate family and friends.



Opener

5 Minutes

Prepare a sheet of card stock, a magnet (such as a toy magnet or refrigerator magnet), and several iron or steel items (paper clips, nails, etc.).

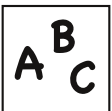
Invite a volunteer to come up to the front. Instruct the volunteer to hold the card stock horizontally, and place one of the items, such as a paper clip, on top of the card stock. Next, give the volunteer the magnet and instruct the volunteer to move the magnet under the card stock to guide the item on the top.

Ask the students what they noticed. The metallic items followed their leader, the magnet.

In this world, we have many leaders. What kind of people are leaders? (Kings, presidents, teachers, parents, etc.)

What makes a good leader? (A person who loves those whom they are guiding and does what is best for them. A person who follows God's teachings and helps others do the same.)

Today, we will learn about Belshazzar, king of Babylon. Although Belshazzar was a powerful and mighty king, he was not a good leader. Rather, his choices and deeds caused his entire empire to be destroyed.



Vocabulary

dominion: supreme authority and power

supplication: an earnest and humble plea

intercession: a plea for God's mercy and blessings made on behalf of another

concubine: a secondary wife, usually lower in rank



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

During the time of Daniel the prophet, one of the greatest kings who ruled was King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The Babylonian empire was full of majesty, glory, and honor. One day, as Nebuchadnezzar was walking in his royal palace, he exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"

Within that very hour, God stripped him of his kingdom and splendor. He was driven from human civilization and lived like a wild animal for seven years. After the appointed time, however, God allowed understanding to return to Nebuchadnezzar, and his kingdom and glory were restored to him. The king eventually realized that he did not build Babylon with his own hands; rather it was God who gave the kingdom to him. Therefore, all glory, honor, and praise should be given to God.

Today our story follows the death of King Nebuchadnezzar. After King Nebuchadnezzar died, the powerful Babylon Empire was given to his grandson Belshazzar, who became king.

Belshazzar was a smart king. He knew that enemies would want to invade his kingdom, so he built walls around his kingdom to protect his people. The walls were about eight stories high and wide enough that even chariots could be ridden around on the tops of these walls. Belshazzar also made a passageway under the wall for a river to flow into the city so that the people could have plenty of water to drink. He also ensured that there was enough food in his kingdom so that they could stay inside the closed walls for a very long time.

Belshazzar was proud of himself. He thought his plan to protect his kingdom from being invaded was foolproof, even though enemies were already outside trying to invade and attack him. Belshazzar was confident that the great Babylon was indestructible.

As his enemies were outside trying to find a way in, King Belshazzar decided to throw a huge banquet.

FOR TEACHERS

Hand out the Bible Discovery worksheet. Ask the students to fill it out as you teach the lesson. The answers are underlined in this section.

Belshazzar's Feast

Let's read Daniel 5:2. Who were Belshazzar's guests? Belshazzar invited one thousand lords, and his many wives

and concubines to the banquet.

As Belshazzar was tasting the wine, what did he command? He gave orders to his servants to bring out the drinking vessels that had been taken from the temple in Jerusalem so that they could drink from them.

These were the vessels that his grandfather King Nebuchadnezzar had brought home when he attacked Jerusalem and captured the people and everything in the temple. The vessels were made of gold and were 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.

What did they do while drinking the wine from the vessels? Let's turn to Daniel 5:4. They praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone.

As King Belshazzar and his guests were feasting merrily, a human hand suddenly appeared from out of nowhere and began to write on the wall of the king's palace. King Belshazzar was petrified! His face turned very white, and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way. Belshazzar quickly called for all his officials, astrologers, and magicians to come and interpret the writing for him.

What was Belshazzar's great reward to the person who could interpret the writing? Let's see in Daniel 5:7.

He would be clothed with purple.
He would have a gold chain around his neck.
He would be the third highest ruler in the whole kingdom.

Even with the offer of such a great reward, none of the wise men could explain the writing. When the queen heard about the king's predicament, she told the king that there was a man in the kingdom called Daniel in whom the Spirit of the holy God dwelled. He had an excellent spirit and had the knowledge and understanding to interpret dreams, solve riddles, and explain enigmas. He had previously interpreted dreams for King Nebuchadnezzar. The king asked for Daniel to come before him.

The Interpretation

When Daniel appeared, the king promised him that if he could read the writing and explain its meaning, he would give the reward to Daniel. But Daniel was not interested in the reward. Instead, he clearly and courageously pointed out the king's sins.

What were God's charges against King Belshazzar? Let's find out by reading Daniel 5:18-25.

Verse 21

Although Belshazzar already knew what had happened to his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, he did not take to heart the lesson that "the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses."

Verses 22-23

God said, "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven."

Verse 23

"They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them.

And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.

Verses 24-25

"Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written. And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." [Write the four words on the board.]

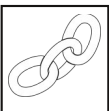
What did the writing mean? Let's flip to Daniel 5:26-28 to find out.

- MENE means "to number." God had numbered the days of Belshazzar's reign and his kingdom was going to come to an end.
- TEKEL means "to weigh." God had weighed Belshazzar on the balances, and he had been found wanting. Belshazzar had been greatly blessed, but he did not repay God's grace. He denied God and worshipped abominable idols.
- UPHARSIN means "to divide." God had divided his kingdom and given it to the Medes and the Persians."

That very night, everything that God had spoken through the prophet Daniel came true. The great and indestructible kingdom of Babylon had been conquered. A new king called Darius the Mede received the kingdom and established the Medes and Persian Empire.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. We can learn that it is important to be humble in God's eyes, and to remember all that He has given to us. We must remember that He is the One who gives and the One who takes away. While we may not commit the sin of drinking from the temple vessels, we may find ourselves crediting all our achievements to our own efforts. Therefore, it is essential to give thanks to and glorify God for all that we have and in all that we do.
2. Answers may vary.
3. Answers may vary.
4. It is important to pray for people in authority so that we can lead a peaceful and stable life. If our government or country is in political or civil unrest, then it may be difficult for us to preach the gospel to others. We should also pray for our head of state so that he or she can make wise decisions that are in accordance with the Bible. Lastly, Paul reminds us to pray for all men, and this includes our leaders, regardless of whether they are good leaders or not.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

One True God

In the story we learned about today, King Belshazzar's entire kingdom was taken away from him because he failed to give the glory to God. He forgot that it had been by God's hand, not his own, that his kingdom had come to be so prosperous and great. God is the one true God, and He has the power to grant great power and wealth, and also the power to take it away if we are not careful.

Today, we must remember that our God is omnipotent, or all-powerful. That means can grant us anything He wishes, and more often than not, He bestows upon us great blessings. All our achievements, talents, and the life that we enjoy all come from the one true God. Only through Him are we able to do all that we can do. We, or our parents, would not be able to achieve all these on our own. Therefore, we must always remember to give all the glory and thanks to the one true God. When we do so, we will glorify Him and show our gratitude for all that He has given us.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

1. **What did the hand write on the wall during the banquet?** Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.
2. **What does each of these words mean?** Mene means "to number," tekem means "to weigh," upharsin means "to divide."
3. **Which sins was Belshazzar guilty of?** He had forgotten that it was God who had put him in his current position as king. He exalted himself instead of humbling himself and glorifying God. He had also taken the holy vessels from the temple and drunk wine from them, while praising other gods.
4. **Which empire took over Babylon?** The empire of Medes and Persia.
5. **Which lesson did Belshazzar not learn from his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar?** He became proud and did not recognize that it was God who gives and takes away kingdoms.
6. **Please complete the verse.** "The Most High rules in the _____ (kingdom of men), and gives it to _____ (whomever he chooses)" (Dan 4:32).
7. **What reward did Belshazzar offer for interpreting the writing?** The person would be clothed with purple, with a gold chain placed around his neck, and be the third highest ruler in the whole kingdom.



Life Application

10 Minutes

1. Pray for All Men

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #1 to the students and go over the introduction together. Then allow the students to match the passages to their description on their own.]

From our story we can see how vital a king's actions are to his country. For though King Belshazzar knew full well that the enemies had already encircled Babylon, he continued to feast and provoke God to anger. His decisions and actions caused the collapse of a whole empire. A country's leader needs to be responsible and accountable to his people and to God.

Apostle Paul understood the importance of praying for our country's leaders and those who are in authority.

Let's turn to 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and read it together. [Give the students time to fill in the blanks on the worksheet.]

What does Paul ask us to do? "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men."

Who are those that we should pray for? We should pray for all men, for kings and all who are in authority.

Who are those in authority? The leaders in our world today, such as the President, school principals, pastors in church, parents, and teachers are people in authority.

It may be somewhat surprising to learn that we have to pray for kings and people in authority. Usually, we may pray only for our friends and family, or people that we know. Let's find out the three reasons apostle Paul gives for praying for kings and those in authority.

- a. To lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

The purpose of praying for kings and those in authority is to allow us to lead a quiet and stable life. This enables us to draw close to God, enjoy freedom of worship, and preach the gospel.

- b. Because it is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.

No matter whether in times of peace or unrest, we need to be constantly praying for our leaders, as this is something that is good and acceptable in God's sight. Leaders make decisions daily that affect everyone, decisions that will help shape the country. Sometimes, leaders may make unwise decisions that cause negative effects for the people—the country may face financial hardships, people may lose their jobs or homes. There are also decisions made that allow people to go against the teachings of the Bible and do what is wicked in God's sight. This will incur God's wrath and punishment. Therefore, we need to ask God to guide our leaders to govern with wisdom, mercy, and truth so that our country will be blessed and prosperous. Praying for our leaders demonstrates our love for the people of the world and will be remembered by God.

c. So that all men can be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

God desires that all people be saved. When we live in times of peace, there will be opportunities for us to preach the gospel. But if a country has civil unrest, war, persecution, then worship would be difficult. Under such circumstances, it would be hard to preach the gospel, since there may be chaos and people may be more concerned about survival than hearing the gospel.

We also need to pray for a leader even if that leader may not be a good one or one that we do not like. In 1 Timothy, Paul reminds us to pray for all men.

In fact, Paul wrote the letter to Timothy at a time when persecution was a growing threat to the believers. Emperor Nero was the current emperor of Rome, and he was a cruel ruler. In AD 64, a great fire broke out that destroyed much of Rome. Emperor Nero shifted the blame to the Christians, even though they were not responsible for the fire. Not only were Christians denied certain privileges in society, some were even butchered, burned, or fed to the lions.

Despite this, Paul reminds the believers that we should not rebel against our leaders but pray for them and their salvation. Praying for the salvation of leaders may change their hearts or bring better leaders into office.

In each of these passages, a person is interceding, or praying for, another person or group of people.

Gen 18:20, 22-23	Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah.
Gen 20:17-18	Abraham prayed for Abimelech, king of Gerar.
Jer 29:4, 7	Jeremiah told the Israelites to pray for Babylon, their captor.
1 Sam 12:19, 23	Samuel never ceased to pray for the Israelites.
Dan 9:16-19	Daniel asked God to forgive the sins of his country and people.
1 Sam 7:8-9	Samuel asked God to deliver his people from the hands of the Philistines.
Neh 1:2-4	Nehemiah prayed for his country and people in times of great shame and suffering.
Exo 8:8-9; 10:16-18	Moses interceded for Pharaoh of Egypt.

* * * * *

2. For You I Am Praying

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #2 to the students.]

A. In each of the categories below, write down some things related to that category for which we can pray. [Have the students write down their own ideas. Some suggestions have been provided.]

Our nation: The President and his government; decision-making that is according to the Bible; a safe and war-free country; soldiers at war; the wounded; etc.

Our school: Our classmates; our teachers and principals; safety in school; wise textbooks and materials that teach us to be good citizens and Christians; etc.

Our people: The salvation of the people of the world; the homeless, the poor, and unemployed; the sick, depressed, and lonely; for people of different races to live in peace; etc.

Our world: Natural disasters, such as floods, wildfires, earthquakes, hurricanes, and those affected by them; protection of our things in our environment, such as plants, animals, birds, and water; etc.

Our church: The health and safety of our pastors and family as they preach the gospel; the church board, teachers, parents, and friends who come to seek the truth; for God to let us know His will; for the church be a light to the world; etc.

B. Thank God for what He has done. Praise Him for all the wonderful things you are enjoying in this country.

God, thank You for... [Allow students to complete.]

C. Pray for the needs and problems in your country.

Lord Jesus, I know that You can do anything. Please... [Allow students to complete.]



Activity

Prayer Cube

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To teach students to learn to pray for their country and leaders.

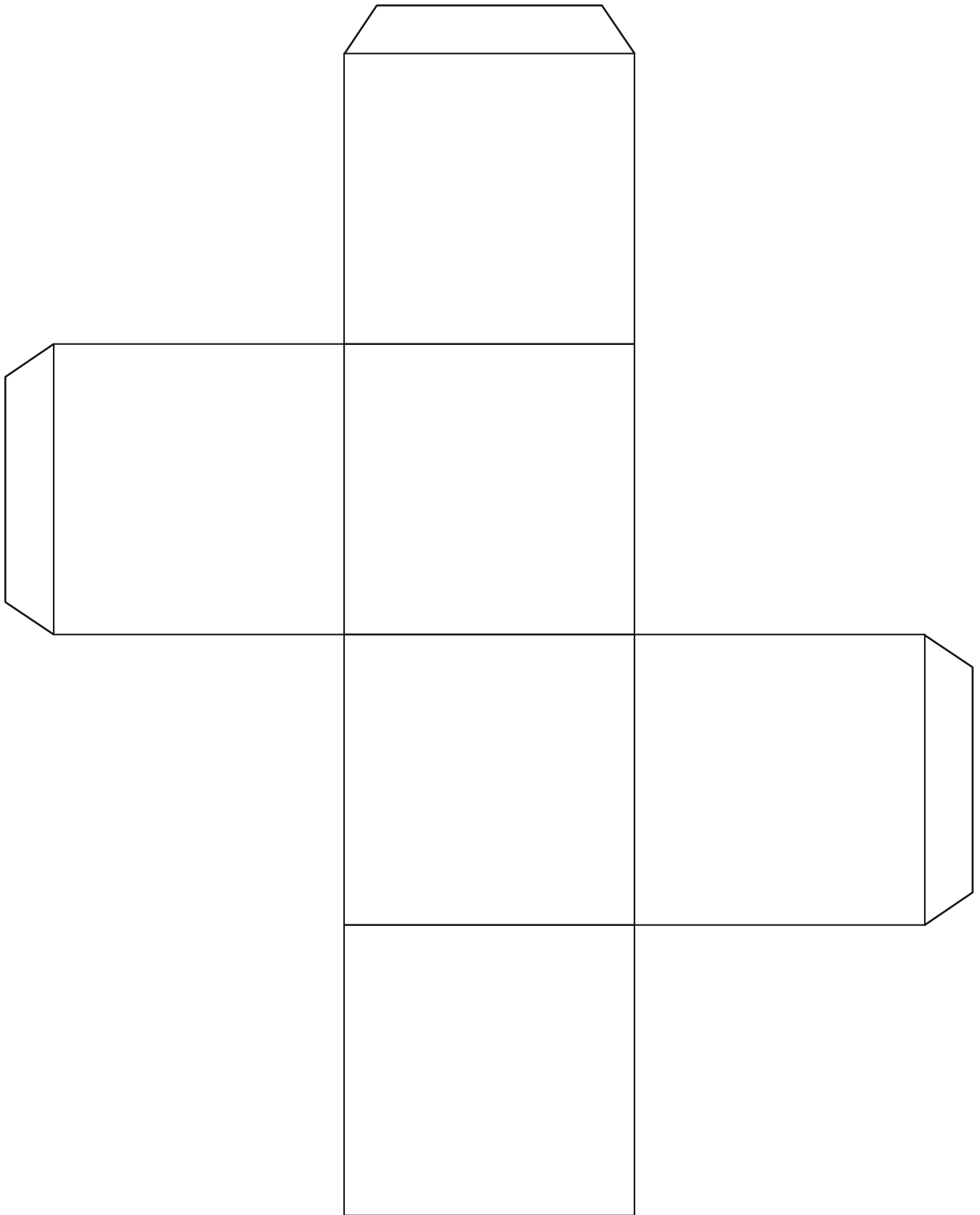
Have students cut out and decorate their own prayer cubes.

Materials

- Cube template, pre-cut
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue/tape
- Markers

Instructions

1. Glue the cube template to a piece of construction paper, and cut it out.
2. On the construction paper side, write or draw pictures of the following, one on each square:
 - Our family
 - Our nation; our people
 - Our earth; natural disasters
 - Preaching the gospel to the world
 - Our school and classmates
 - Our church
3. Firmly creasing the paper along the lines first, fold the paper into a cube and tape or glue it together.
4. Gather in a circle on the floor or around a desk.
5. One student rolls their cube and offers a short prayer for the picture or word that comes up on top. If the "president" comes up on top, the student will offer a prayer for the president.
6. Continue around the circle until everyone has had a turn.
7. Encourage students to use the prayer cube every day to remind them to pray for those that need our prayers.



A. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

Who were Belshazzar's guests?

One thousand _____, and his many _____ and _____.

What was Belshazzar's command?

He gave orders to his servants to bring out the _____ that had been taken from the _____ in _____ so that they could drink from them.



Who did they praise while drinking wine?

They praised the gods of _____ and _____, _____ and _____, _____ and _____.

Belshazzar's Great Reward!

He would be _____ with _____.

He would have a _____ around his neck.

He would be the _____ in the whole kingdom.

B. THE INTERPRETATION AND JUDGMENT

What were God's charges against Belshazzar?

Although Belshazzar already knew what had happened to his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, he did not take to heart the lesson that "the Most High God _____ in the _____ of _____, and _____ over it whomever He _____."

God said, "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not _____ your _____, although you knew all this. And you have _____ up against the Lord of heaven,."

They have brought the _____ of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have _____ from them.

And you have _____ the _____ of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have _____.

WHAT DID
THE WRITING
ON THE WALL
MEAN?

MENE meant that the days of Belshazzar's reign were _____ and that his kingdom was going to come to an end.

TEKEL meant that God had _____ Belshazzar on the balances, and he had been found _____.

UPHARSIN meant that his kingdom would be _____ and _____ to the _____ and the _____."

PRAY FOR ALL MEN

**PRAY
FOR
ALL MEN**

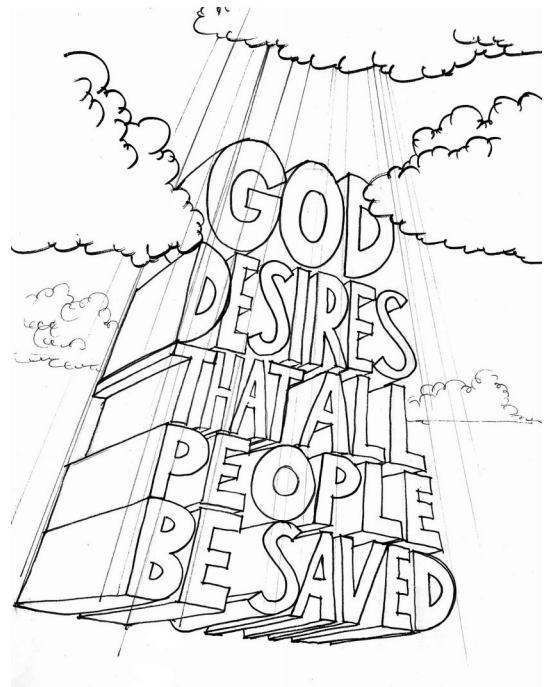


A. Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4, and then fill in the blanks.

Therefore I exhort first of all that _____, _____, _____ and _____ of _____ be made for _____, for _____ and all who are in _____ that we may _____ a _____ and _____ life in all _____ and _____. For this is _____ and _____ in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the _____.

B. Draw a line to match up the correct Bible verse with the description of the prayer being made in that verse.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Gen 18:20, 22-32 | Nehemiah prayed for Jerusalem and the Jews in times of great shame and suffering. |
| Gen 20:17-18 | Samuel never ceased to pray for the Israelites. |
| Jer 29:4, 7 | Abraham prayed for Abimelech, king of Gerar. |
| 1 Sam 12:19, 23 | Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah. |
| Dan 9:16-19 | Moses interceded for Pharaoh of Egypt. |
| Neh 1:2-4 | Jeremiah told the Israelites to pray for Babylon, their captor. |
| Exo 8:8-9; 10:16-18 | Daniel asked God to forgive the sins of Jerusalem and the people. |



FOR YOU I AM PRAYING

A. In each of the categories below, write down some things related to that category for which we can pray.



Our nation:

Our school:

Our people:

Our world:

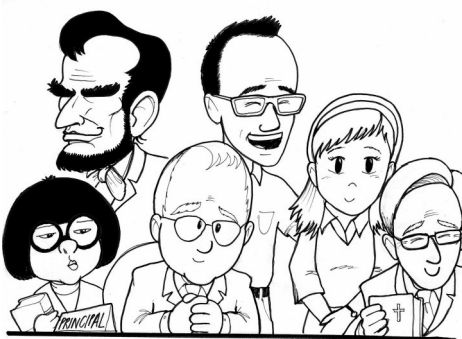
Our church:

B. Thank God for what He has done. Praise Him for the all the wonderful things you are enjoying in this country.

God, thank You for...

C. Pray for the needs and problems in your country.

Lord Jesus, I know that You can do anything. Please...



*WE SHOULD
PRAY FOR ALL
MEN, FOR KINGS
AND ALL WHO
ARE IN
AUTHORITY*



E2 Year 2 Book 3 Lesson 11—God Writes on the Wall at Belshazzar's Feast

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Bible Reading: _____

Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading.

Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. (1 Timothy 2:1-2a)

Short Answer

1. Belshazzar forgot that it was God who put him in a position of authority. As a result, he committed many sins and God took away his kingdom, a kingdom that brought him great pride. What teachings can we learn from this?

2. Belshazzar displeased God by being proud and drinking from the temple vessels while praising idols. Share a time in your life when you displeased God. How did God remind you of your errors? What did you learn from your experience?

3. God gives leaders power, riches, and authority to serve their country and glorify God. What talents/gifts has God given you? How will you use them to glorify and honor God?

4. Why is it important to pray for kings and people in authority?