



BAND of BROTHERS

FALL SERIES 2026 – WEEK 5

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

“...you...Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven... And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.” – Daniel 5:22-23 ESV

- **Setting the context**

- The year is 539 BC
- Daniel has been in Babylon 67 years
 - This number is important
 - God had made a promise to His people

*This is what the Lord says: “**You will be in Babylon for seventy years.** But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” – Jeremiah 29:10-11 NLT*

- Daniel is likely in his 80s
- And has served a number of kings

Nebuchadnezzar	(605-562 BC)
Amel-Marduk	(562-560 BC)
Neriglissar	(560-556 BC)
Labashi-Marduk	(556 BC)
{ Nabonidus	(556-539 BC)
{ Belshazzar	(552-539 BC)

- Nabonidus was Nebuchadnezzar’s son-in-law
- He never set foot in the capital

- Belshazzar, his son, was his co-regent
- He was the de facto king

*King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand. Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver **that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem** be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. – Daniel 5:1-2 ESV*

The king of Babylon...carried off all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold in the temple of the Lord, which Solomon king of Israel had made, as the Lord had foretold. – 2 Kings 24:12-13 ESV

"Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel...therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh." – Jeremiah 7:12, 14 ESV

- **The enemy was at the gates**

Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. – Daniel 5:3-4 ESV

...Belshazzar was confident and cocky
 ...his gods would fight for them
 ...Babylon's walls would protect them
 ...and the empire would be saved

Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king declared to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." – Daniel 5:5-7 ESV

- An ominous omen

...all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. – Daniel 5:8 ESV

- Belshazzar knew it was bad news
 - But he didn't know God had foretold it

- It was all part of God's plan

"Look, I will stir up the Medes against Babylon. They cannot be tempted by silver or bribed with gold." – Isaiah 13:17 NLT

For the Lord has inspired the kings of the Medes to march against Babylon and destroy her. This is his vengeance against those who desecrated his Temple. – Jeremiah 51:11 NLT

- The wrong man for the right job: Belshazzar
 - God had ordained his rise to power
 - His father's absence was God's doing
 - He was the perfect pawn for God's plan

The king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the LORD; he guides it wherever he pleases. – Proverbs 21:1 NLT

- Belshazzar should have known this
- And Daniel reminds him why

O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in 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, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored. – Daniel 5:18-23 ESV

- Belshazzar had forgotten his grandfather's words

*How great are his signs,
how powerful his wonders! – Daniel 4:3 NLT*

*All the people of the earth
are nothing compared to him.
He does as he pleases*

*among the angels of heaven
and among the people of the earth. – Daniel 4:35 NLT*

- **Cryptic, but clear**

And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” – Daniel 5:25-28 ESV

- The words are Aramaic terms of weight and measure
 - mene** – numbered
 - mene** – numbered God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end
 - tekel** – weighed You have been weighed in the balances and have not measured up
 - parsin** – divided Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians

- **The indomitable plan of God**

Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old. – Daniel 5:29-30 ESV

- Everything was falling into place
- The Babylonian Empire ended that very night
- The Medo-Persian Empire was beginning
- Just as God had said it would

*“He has made you the ruler over all the inhabited world
and has put even the wild animals and birds under your control.
You are the head of gold.” ^ – Daniel 2:38 NLT*

*“But after your kingdom comes to an end, another kingdom,
inferior to yours, will rise to take your place.” – Daniel 2:39 NLT*

- God is beginning to connect the dots
 - His plan is unfolding
 - The players are changing
 - But His will remains the same
 - And His promises stand firm



God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?
– Numbers 23:19 NLT

- **The next phase of the plan unfolds**

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. – Daniel 6:1-3 ESV

- **Discussion Questions:**

After nearly 70 years in Babylon, how could this latest event have encouraged his belief in God's sovereignty?

What kept Daniel from concluding that God wasn't in control or just didn't care?

How should Numbers 23:19 change our outlook when we consider the state of our nation and the world?



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FALL SERIES 2026 – WEEK 6 HOMEWORK

WEEK 6 – LORD OF ALL

Yet another new king ascends to the throne, yet Daniel remains a permanent fixture in the palace, sovereignly positioned to serve as a mouthpiece for God and a living demonstration of faithfulness. But as with the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we will minimize Daniel's faith-filled response to the king's edict, and focus our attention on God's faithfulness and power in the face of opposition.

- Sometime this week, read pages 75-79 of Ken's Devotionalary™ on the Book of Daniel.
- Start by reading Daniel 5:29-31. Before Belshazzar died, he made Daniel the third-highest official in the realm. Nabonidus, Belshazzar's father, was still the official king of Babylon. Belshazzar served as his co-regent. But with Belshazzar's death, Daniel would have received an immediate promotion.

Now read Daniel 6:1-3. How is it apparent that Darius, the king of the Medo-Persians, recognizes Daniel's status and rewards him accordingly?

Who is really behind Daniel's rise to prominence and why is this important to consider?

- According to verses 4-9, how did Daniel's peers take his sudden rise to fame? What did they hope to accomplish with their actions and what does their plan say about Daniel's reputation?

What was Daniel's response according to verse 10?

- Read verses 11-13. How did his enemies attempt to use his faithfulness against him?

Remember, if God is sovereign over all things and rules over the hearts of kings, how do you see that playing out in this story?

Consider the reaction of the king. When he firmly stands behind the edict and orders the death of *anyone* who violates it, is this God's will?

- Read verses 14-18. How did Darius handle the news that Daniel had willingly broken his edict?

What does this say about the king's opinion of Daniel?

- Read verses 19-24 and summarize what happened next.
- What do verses 25-28 reveal about the sovereignty of God? Keep in mind, these words came from the lips of a pagan king.