

**Story Time - Read the story to the children**  
**Lesson 159: THE WRITING ON THE WALL**  
**DANIEL 5:1-31**

King Belshazzar was king Nebuchadnezzar's son and was now king of Babylon. He gave a big party for 1000 of his officials. The king was drinking wine with them. As Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he ordered his servants to bring the gold and silver cups. His father Nebuchadnezzar had taken these cups from the Temple in Jerusalem. King Belshazzar wanted his royal people, his wives, and his slave women to drink from those cups. So they brought the gold cups that had been taken from the Temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his officials, his wives, and his women slaves drank from them. As they were drinking, they gave praise to their idol gods, the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood, and stone. Suddenly, a person's hand appeared and began writing on the wall. The fingers scratched words into the plaster on the wall, near the lampstand in the king's palace. The king was watching the hand as it wrote. King Belshazzar was very afraid. His face became white from fear, and his knees were shaking and knocking together. He could not stand up because his legs were too weak. The king called for the men of magic and the Chaldeans to be brought to him. He said to these wise men, "I will give a reward to anyone who can read this writing and explain to me what it means. I will give him purple robes to wear and will put a gold chain around his neck. I will make him the third highest ruler in the kingdom." So all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or understand what it meant. King Belshazzar's officials were confused, and the king became even more afraid and worried. His face was white from fear. Then the king's mother came into the place where the party was. She had heard the voices of the king and his royal officials. She said, "King, may you live forever! Don't be afraid! Don't let your face be so white with fear! There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the days of your father, this man showed that he could understand secrets. He showed that he was very smart and very wise. He showed that he was like the gods in these things. Your grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar, put this man in charge of all the wise men. He ruled over all the men of magic and the Chaldeans. The man I am talking about is named Daniel. The king

gave him the name Belteshazzar. He is very smart and he knows many things. He could interpret dreams, explain secrets, and find the answer to very hard problems. Call for Daniel, he will tell you what the writing on the wall means." So they brought Daniel to the king and he asked, "Is your name Daniel, one of the captives my father the king brought here from Judah? I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you understand secrets and are very smart and very wise. The wise men and the men of magic were brought to me to read this writing on the wall. I wanted them to explain to me what it means, but they could not explain it. I have heard that you are able to explain what things mean, and that you can find the answer to very hard problems. If you can read this writing on the wall and explain to me what it means, this is what I will do for you: I will give you purple robes to wear and will put a gold chain around your neck. Then you will become the third highest ruler in the kingdom." Then Daniel answered the king, "King Belshazzar, you can keep your gifts for yourself, or you can give them to someone else. But I will still read the writing on the wall for you and explain what it means. "King, God Most High made your father Nebuchadnezzar a very great and powerful king and gave him great wealth. People from many nations and language groups were very afraid of Nebuchadnezzar because God made him a very powerful king. Nebuchadnezzar killed whoever he wanted and let those who pleased him live. If he wanted to make people important, he made them important. If he wanted to bring them down, he brought them down. "But Nebuchadnezzar became proud and stubborn, so his power was taken away from him. He was taken off his royal throne and stripped of his glory. Then Nebuchadnezzar was forced to go away from people. His mind became like the mind of an animal. He lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like an ox. He became wet with dew. These things happened to him until he learned his lesson. He learned that God Most High rules over human kingdoms, and he gives them to whoever he wants. "But Belshazzar, you already knew this. You are Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, but still you have not made yourself humble. No, you did not become humble. Instead, you have turned against the Lord of heaven. You ordered the drinking cups from his Temple to be brought to you. Then you and your royal officials, your wives, and your slave women drank wine from those cups. You gave praise to the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

They are not really gods; they cannot see or hear or understand anything. But you did not give honor to the God who has the power over your life and everything you do. So because of that, God sent the hand that wrote on the wall. These are the words that were written on the wall: "MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN - This is what these words mean: God has counted the days until your kingdom will end. You have been weighed on the scales and found not good enough. Your kingdom is being taken from you. It will be divided among the Medes and Persians." Then Belshazzar gave an order for Daniel to be dressed in purple clothes. A gold chain was put around his neck, and he was appointed the third highest ruler in the kingdom. That very same night, Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was killed. A man named Darius the Mede became the new king. Darius was about 62 years old.

## 159. THE WRITING ON THE WALL (DANIEL 5:1-31)



"Suddenly, a person's hand appeared and began writing on the wall. The fingers scratched words into the plaster on the wall, near the lampstand in the king's palace. The king was watching the hand as it wrote." **DANIEL 5:5**

# 159. THE WRITING ON THE WALL

## DANIEL 5:1-31

### MEMORY VERSE:

*"The Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses."* DANIEL 5:21

### TRUE OR FALSE

1. Belshazzar the king had a big feast for two of his officials and he drank wine with them. TRUE or FALSE
2. He ordered his servants to bring the gold and silver cups that his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. TRUE or FALSE
3. They drank wine, and gave praises to their gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. TRUE or FALSE
4. Just at that moment, the fingers of a man's foot appeared and wrote in the plaster of the wall of the king's palace. TRUE or FALSE
5. The king was white with fear, and his knees were shaking and knocking together, and he couldn't stand up because his legs were so weak! TRUE or FALSE

### ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. What did king Belshazzar see?
2. Could any of the king's magicians or wise men read the writing?
3. Who did they send for to read the writing?
4. What did the king say he would give to Daniel if he could tell him what the writing was?
5. Did Daniel want any of the king's gifts?

### BONUS QUESTION:

6. What did the writing mean? Did it mean that God had counted the days until his kingdom would end? And that he had been weighed, or judged, and found not good enough? And that his kingdom was being taken from him?

## Lesson 159 Activity

### ACT IT OUT!

Have the children act out today's story. You can act it out as many times as time will allow until all children that want to participate have participated.

Characters (up to 7 children can have parts – if you don't have enough children, only use one servant and one wise man):

Daniel

King Belshazzar

Two servants

One child can pretend to be the "hand" that writes on the wall.

A wise man and a magician

The rest of the children can be the king's guests at the feast.

Have king Belshazzar call his two servants over and tell them to bring him gold & silver cups.

The servants go get the cups & pass them out to the other "guests" at the banquet.

As they all are drinking, have king Belshazzar say, "Praise the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone!" (let the other "guests" say "Yes!")

Have the "hand" start writing on the wall.

The king is now very, very scared & shaking.

He calls his wise man and magician and tells them, "Please tell me what this writing means!"

The wise man and the magician both say, "I don't know."

The King says "Bring me the wise man named Daniel!"

(Daniel comes up to the king)

The king says "If you tell me what this means, I'll give you purple robes and a gold chain, and make you the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest ruler in my kingdom!"

Daniel says, "I don't want your gifts. Give them to someone else. The words mean that God thinks you are not good enough and He is going to take away your kingdom."

King Belshazzar puts purple robes on Daniel and a big gold chain around his neck and says, "You are now the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest ruler in my kingdom."

### PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to keep a heart willing to yield and obey. May we learn the important lessons God would teach us quickly and easily and never harden our hearts to His Word. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.