

Daniel 5 introduces a new king, Belshazzar. Some scholars questioned the historical substance of this chapter as there was no other record of a king called Belshazzar. This changed with the discovery of the Nabonidus Cylinders that had Belshazzar as the son of Nabonidus.

- Nebuchadnezzar died in 562bc.
- His son, Amel-Marduk (see Jeremiah 52:31 and 2 Kings 25:27), reigned 562-560 bc.
- Amel-Marduk was murdered by Mergel Shar-usar, his brother-in-law, who reigned 560-556 bc.
- His son, Labasi-Marduk, reigned for just six months.
- Next came Nabonidus, the last Chaldean (Babylonian) king.

Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus and co-regent with him during Nabonidus's ten-year absence in Arabia. He was possibly a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, so more likely the term was one of respect.

Think about the last study on Daniel 4. What do you remember about what happened? Did you think or do anything differently as a result of studying last week?

Read Daniel 5

1. We know that while Belshazzar was feasting, the city was under siege from the Medes and Persians. What is Belshazzar doing in verses 2-3? What attitude can you see from Belshazzar in these verses?
2. How does wealth and power create such arrogance? *Proverbs 29:1*. Should Christians be wealthy? What is our attitude to those in the Church who have a great deal of wealth?

3. Is the writing on the wall one of the scariest stories in the Bible? Imagine a room full of people who have been eating and drinking and enjoying themselves for a couple of hours. Then, out of nowhere, a hand begins to write on the wall. How terrifying would that be? Remember this was long before we had capability to take pictures and project them on screens or walls. What do you think you would have thought? What would you have done?
4. Belshazzar tries to find someone, anyone, who can explain what is happening. He appeals to the wise men and diviners. Why couldn't they discern what was happening, yet again? *1 Corinthians 2:14*. Do you feel able to discern what God is saying when things happen in your life? How can we become better at discernment?
5. Finally, the queen, or more likely the queen mother, Nabonidus's wife, enters the room. She is familiar with Daniel's abilities, so refers the matter to him. Why do you think only she comes up with this idea?
6. In today's world people are quick to deconstruct or judge the past through a present perspective. What are the dangers of dismissing the past? How should we understand Isaiah 43:18-19?
7. 'The finger of God' occurs in other parts of the Bible. Think about the Ten Commandments, the feast in Babylon, and Jesus with the woman of John 8. What does it mean to say that God has a hand or other body parts?
8. In 2 Corinthians 3:3, Paul writes, 'You are a letter from Christ.. written... on tablets of human hearts. What has God been writing on your heart recently?

Prayer Points

Pray for the Day Centre team and those who attend. Pray for blessings as they serve and care for those in our church and in the community.

Pray for new BMS-supported church plants with the French Baptists that reach out to Afghan, Iranian, Ukrainian and Maghrebian refugees and asylum seekers.

Sermon Notes



BIBLE STUDY

October 13th 2024

Daniel – Faith in the Fire:

**Learning from the Past:
Daniel 5**

The book of Daniel tells Daniel's story—and a fascinating and instructive story it is. But the main purpose of Daniel is to reveal to us who God is - His character, His purposes, His way of working in the world for the good of His people. The main lesson of Daniel, then, is not, as is sometimes assumed *Dare to be a Daniel!* Rather, the main point is this: *Dare to trust in Daniel's God, even when the world seems against you.* How do we remain faithful to God, especially in an age where it seems a great deal is moving in a different direction? What does it look like to trust in God when our world is turned upside down? Daniel remained faithful and God used him to great effect, how can God use us in the fiery challenges of life?

If you would like to join a Connect Group, please contact the church office 01424 730001