

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON
WEEK 36

God judges Belshazzar for his pride

Daniel 5:1-31



DAY 1

Belshazzar challenged God's authority • Daniel 5:1-4

READ 

Daniel 5:1-4

EXPLAIN 

The truth of Daniel 5:1-4

His army had been beaten, and he was surrounded by a large enemy army. So what did Belshazzar do? He throw a part (Dan 5:1)! He wanted to show he wasn't afraid, maybe to try to boost the morale of his soldiers. He trusted in the city's impressive walls: two sets of double walls encircled the city, each one from 11 to 25 feet thick. Confident in his man-made security, Belshazzar called for the cups from God's temple (5:2). It was a wicked offense—their lips touched vessels holy to the living God as their tongues praised lifeless idols (5:4). Hadn't Belshazzar heard what happened when his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar was proud? Belshazzar intentionally mocked the God of Israel as if He were powerless before Babylon's empty-headed gods. Like all mockers, he enjoyed despising God. Like many before him, Belshazzar was *proud, puffed up, honoring himself, trusting his own strength and abilities*, not God. However, those who challenge God's authority are foolish. Because they ignore His warning about the danger and destruction of pride, they will be humbled (Prov 29:23). God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (Jas 4:6).

ASK 

1. Did Belshazzar listen to Nebuchadnezzar's warning to be humble?
No. Belshazzar did not listen; he was proud.
2. Why was Belshazzar so proud?
He trusted in the thick walls and in his idols made out of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.
3. How did Belshazzar intentionally mock God?
By using God's holy vessels for his drunken party.
4. What happens to those who challenge God's authority?
They are humbled by God.

DISCUSS 

1. Have you heard people speak badly about God? What are some other ways that people challenge God's authority today?
2. Do you brag (either with your mouth or in your own head) about your own abilities? What does that bragging sound like to God?

DAY 2

God condemned Belshazzar's pride • Daniel 5:5–28

READ

Daniel 5:5–28

EXPLAIN

The truth of Daniel 5:5–28

Have you ever been so scared your legs were shaking? That's how scared Belshazzar was when he saw a hand appear out of nowhere and write on the wall! It only became worse when none of his wise men could interpret the message (5:6–9)—if Nebuchadnezzar were around he would have told him so (Dan 2, 4). So who did they call? Daniel, again. And again Daniel first magnified God before interpreting. He proclaimed God's authority over Belshazzar and rebuked him for ignoring what he clearly knew. Belshazzar knew that Nebuchadnezzar's authority had come from the Most High God (5:18–19). He knew that God humbles the proud as He humbled Nebuchadnezzar (5:20). He knew that even Nebuchadnezzar had submitted to God's authority (5:21). Yet he knowingly refused to humble his heart (5:22). Daniel then explained that God had ordained the very days of Belshazzar's life and reign, and both had come to an end (5:26). His life had been evaluated by God, and it was found to be deficient (5:27; 1 Sam 2:3; Ps 62:9). As a result, his kingdom would be divided and given to others (Dan 5:28).

ASK

1. What did the king see during his meal?
A hand writing a message on a wall.
2. How did the king feel when he saw this?
Very, very afraid. His legs were like jelly.
3. Who suggested that Daniel be brought in to interpret the message?
The queen—possibly the queen mother, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar.
4. What was God's message to Belshazzar?
The days God had given to Belshazzar were over, his life was not valuable, and his kingdom would be divided.

DISCUSS

1. Do you listen to the warnings of your parents and others who are older than you?
2. Are you better than Belshazzar? How does God evaluate you apart from Christ (Rom 3:10–18, 23)? How does He evaluate you if you are in Christ (2 Cor 5:21)?

DAY 3

God judged Belshazzar • Daniel 5:29–31

READ

Daniel 5:29–31

EXPLAIN

The truth of Daniel 5:29–31

Sometimes God's promises do not seem like they will come true. Would Belshazzar really be defeated that very night? What about Babylon's massive walls? It turns out Belshazzar made a mistake when he trusted his walls (Dan 5:30–31). History records that the Medo-Persian army diverted the Euphrates River that and entered Babylon where the river flow under the city walls. The seemingly invincible city fell in just one night. So don't try to rebel against God!

Any rebellion against the God of Heaven is doomed to be unsuccessful, because all of man's planning and conspiring against God comes to nothing (Ps 2:1). God looks down upon man's rebellion from heaven and laughs (2:4). All rebellion against God is empty, and less than empty, for God will punish His enemies with a rod of iron, crushing all those who set themselves against Him (2:9). But God's punishment is not immediate. As He did for Belshazzar, God provides an opportunity to repent (2:10–12). Those who lay aside their rebellion and humbly declare their allegiance to the King of kings will find refuge from God's righteous anger (2:12).

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. How long before Belshazzar was killed and his kingdom conquered?
It happened that same night.
2. How did the Medo-Persian army enter Babylon?
Through the river bed under the city's walls.
3. What does God do when He looks down and sees man's rebellion?
He laughs (Ps 2:4).
4. How did Belshazzar's death show God's authority?
God had promised to raise up the Medes to destroy the Babylonians because of what they did to His temple (Jer 51:11).

DISCUSS 

1. Are there any areas of your life where you've begun to trust in yourself? What does God think about your self-dependence (Jer 17:5-6)?
2. Are there any areas of your life where you are rebelling against God? When you do rebel, do you respond when you are warned to repent?

DAY 4*Why do the nations rage? • Psalm 2:1-12***READ** 

Psalm 2

EXPLAIN **The truth of Psalm 2**

Why do the nations rage? Don't they know what happened to Belshazzar? Don't they realize who they are fighting against? Nations today continue to "rage" against God and "plot" together against Him. They want to throw off God's rule. They want to be free from His control. They even put aside their own differences to unite in rebellion against God (Ps 2:1-3). However, all their planning is worthless (2:1). God laughs at them (2:4), because the King of heaven does not fear the kings of earth. But there's nothing funny about this for the rebel nations, because God pours out swift and terrifying wrath upon them (2:5). God Himself will set His King in Jerusalem, His Son—Jesus Christ (2:7; cf. 2 Sam 7:8-16). His rule will not be challenged (Ps 2:9). While the nations deserve God's wrath, what is amazing is that God still provides an opportunity to repent (2:10-12). Though He is the one that has been offended and rejected, He still desires the nations to return to Him. And "blessed are all who take refuge in him" (2:12).

ASK 

1. What do the nations do?
They rage in rebellion against God.
2. What does God do when He hears?
He laughs, because they can't do anything to Him.
3. What does God eventually do to them?
He terrifies the nations in His wrath.
4. Does God punish the nations right away?
No. He gives them an opportunity to repent.

DISCUSS 

1. Has the country you live in set itself in rebellion against God? If so, list the ways your nation has rejected God's authority.
2. Why is it pointless to rebel against God?

DAY 5

To Jesus be all glory, majesty, dominion, and authority • Jude 24–25

READ

Jude 24–25

EXPLAIN

The truth of Jude 24–25

The power of Christ is a terror to rebel nations, but it is the greatest blessing to those who take refuge in him (Ps 2:12). If you are in Christ, God will not allow you to fall away from the gospel. He guarantees your salvation. He is both willing and able to protect you from abandoning the faith (John 10:28–29; 1 Pet 1:3–5). The Son will not lose any the Father has entrusted to Him (John 6:37–40). One day He will present you “blameless,” completely free of sin, in God’s presence. Don’t you rejoice to hear this? Jude does! He breaks forth in praise of the only God, our Savior, who saves you now and will glorify you in the future. So join Jude and give praise God for His “glory,” “majesty,” “dominion,” and “authority” (Jude 25). Delight that you belong to Christ, for He rules with absolute power, (Heb 1:3; 8:1), reigns over all the nations (Ps 66:7), and is supreme over all (Phil 2:9–11). Do exactly the opposite of Belshazzar, and ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name (Rev 4:10–11; 5:12–14).

ASK

1. Who guarantees the salvation and glory of believers?
God.
2. Does Jesus lose any of those who belong to Him?
No.
3. Can anyone challenge God’s authority?
No. He rules over the nations in unchallenged supremacy.
4. How should you respond to Christ’s power?
By praising Him for His great glory, majesty, dominion, and authority.

DISCUSS

1. Do you feel like you’re always trying (and failing) to keep yourself in God’s favor? How does the truth of Christ’s power allow you to rest in Him, not in your own ability?
2. Is your life marked by praise for God? Create a list of specific ways you can worship God this week (in word, action, and thought).

NEXT WEEK

God delivers Daniel from the lions’ den

Daniel 6:1–30

