

GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION

Learning the Hard Way Who's Boss

Daniel 5

“The most high God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men.” Daniel 5:21b

Day 1: Read Daniel 5.

1. Read the whole chapter (in one sitting if possible). List the main characters and jot down a few adjectives to describe each one.

2. As the chapter opens, what act of Belshazzar's precipitates God's intervention? (vss. 2–3)

3. What makes the gold and silver goblets so special? (see Ex. 40:9)

4. In the Old Testament God's holiness was concentrated in the temple. Where is God's temple today? (1 Cor. 3:16)

5. Blasphemy, for which Belshazzar is judged here, is essentially a misuse of God's holy things. Give an example of how we might commit blasphemy today. (Gen. 1:27; Ps. 24:1)

Day 2: Read Daniel 5:1–4; 22–23.

6. For what else is Belshazzar condemned? (vss. 4, 22–23)

7. What is the essence of idolatry? (Rom. 1:18–25; Col. 3:5)

8. Name something that you have worshipped in the place of God this week. Have you confessed this to God and repented?

Day 3: Read Daniel 5:5–17.

9. Describe Belshazzar's reaction to the hand writing on the wall. Why do you think he reacts as he does?
10. How does the queen describe Daniel? (vss. 11–12)
11. What contrast between the behavior of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar towards Daniel does the queen hint at in verse 11?

Day 4: Read Daniel 5:17–31.

12. Compare and contrast God's final words to Belshazzar here in chapter 5 with his final words to Nebuchadnezzar in the previous chapter (Dan. 4:24–27). Does it seem like God treats them equally? Why or why not?
13. What is the essential difference between how God deals with Nebuchadnezzar and how he deals with Belshazzar? (Rom. 9:13–18)
14. In verse 21 Daniel proclaims that God is sovereign. What does God's sovereignty entail? What does it mean to humankind? To his people, the church? To you personally?

Day 5: Read Daniel 5:17–31.

15. Give examples of ways that God's mercy and judgment operate side by side in the lives of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.
16. Think about how God has dealt with you. Recall a time that you have seen the demands of God's righteous character and the generosity of his grace play out in your own life.

17. Read Psalm 47, 93, or 97. Pray through it, and praise God for who he is.