

Jesus' response-If I use his power to force out demons, whose power do your own followers use to force them out? They are the ones who will judge you. "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, *then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*"

Luke 11:19, 20

This is fascinating! This is the *only place Jesus ever uses the term "finger of God."* It's the *only place "finger of God" is ever used in the N.T.* It's clearly a reference back to Daniel 5 by Jesus.

Jesus is saying: *The writing is on the wall, but the writing is a community of my people, in which people's lives are being changed.*

"If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that?

Even sinners love those who love them!

Luke 6:32

'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' ³⁷"Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you (like this)? ...' ⁴⁰And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'

Matthew 25:34-37,40

Community Group Questions:

1. After 65 years in Babylon, Daniel, has an even bolder approach than when he was younger in addressing the King, yet one thing remains constant, he tells the truth. Reread verses 17-23 what stands out for you in Daniel's response to Belshazzar?

2. Can you connect any dots between Luke 9:1,2; Matthew 25:34-40 and what Jesus said in Luke 11:19,20?

Earle Ellis said: *"Just as King Belshazzar's guests continued to feast unaware that his kingdom had fallen and his doom had been sealed, so the present age is unaware that Satan's reign is broken. It cannot read what has been written."*

What do the above verses tell us about what we should be writing on our culture ?



The Hand Writing is on The Wall (Oh King, your days are numbered) **Daniel 5**

I. The Party

¹ King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. ² While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. ⁴ As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. ⁵ Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. ⁶ His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way. Daniel 5:1-6

What set this party apart from others?

1. This is a big party in the aftermath of a major lost battle.
2. Belshazzar calls for the gold and silver goblets that were the plunder from the temple of Jerusalem 60 years before.
3. They drink from God's sacred goblets and they toast their own gods.

II. The Great Party Crasher

"I will clothe you in purple, I will put a gold chain on your neck, and I will make you the third highest ruler in the kingdom if you can interpret the words." Daniel 5:7

But when the queen mother heard what was happening, she hurried to the banquet hall. She said to Belshazzar, "Long live the king! Don't be so pale and frightened.

¹¹ There is a man in your kingdom who has within him the spirit of the holy gods. ¹³ So Daniel was brought in before the king. The king asked him, "Are you Daniel, one of the exiles brought from Judah by my predecessor, King Nebuchadnezzar? Daniel 5:11-13

Daniel compares Belshazzar to Nebuchadnezzar

I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor.¹⁹ Because of the high position he gave him, all the peoples and nations and men of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. Daniel 5:17-19

²⁰ But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory.²¹ He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like cattle; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes.

Daniel 5:20,21

Daniel indicts Belshazzar

²² But you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this.²³ Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. Daniel 5:22,23

Daniel gives us two lessons on how to honor God.

1. Trust in God not people

"Then Daniel answered the king, 'You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king ...'" vs.17

What is Daniel's saying? *"The reason I don't want any reward is what I'm about to tell you is not my wisdom but God's."*

This story is a cautionary tale for why we should trust the Bible.

Up until the late 19th century history had no record of King Balshazzar.

Nabonidus was known as the last king in the Babylonian Empire.

However, a discovery of the "*Nabonidus Chronicles*" a clay fragment, showed Nabonidus' son, Belshazzar, reigning as a regent over Babylon.

This is why Belshazzar could only offer the third high office in the land as a prize because he and his father had the top two slots.

2. You have to come to grips with pride.

" (Nebuchadnezzar) was driven away ... until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes." ²² But you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. Daniel 5:21,22

Pride is missing the reality that absolutely everything **you have** and everything **you are** is a gift from God to you.

III. The Hand Writing on the Wall (The Finger of God)

²⁴ Therefore (God) sent the hand that wrote the inscription. ²⁵ This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN. ²⁶ This is what these words mean: *Mene*: 'God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.' ²⁷ *Tekel*: 'You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.' ²⁸ *Peres*: 'Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.' " Daniel 5:24-28

²⁹ Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom. ³⁰ That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, ³¹ and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two. Daniel 5:29-32

*How are Christians supposed to speak to the world?
Like the Sons of thunder?"*

But the people of the village did not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When James and John saw this, they said to Jesus, "*Lord, should we call down fire from heaven to burn them up?*" Luke 9:53,54

Jesus completely reinterprets the Daniel 5:24-28 from Luke's Gospel Jesus called together his twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to cast out all demons and to heal all diseases.² Then he sent them out to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Luke 9:1,2

...but some of them said, "No wonder (Jesus) can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan, the prince of demons." Luke 11:15