

# FAITH WHEN THE WRITING IS ON THE WALL

DANIEL: APOCALYPTIC IMAGINATION AND EXILE FAITH | DANIEL 5:1-31 | OCTOBER 27/28, 2018  
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*"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 and tell him what it means.'" (Daniel 5:17)*

## Another Ruler Terrified (Daniel 5:1-9)

## Daniel Returns with a Piercing Word from God (Daniel 5:10-24)

## Hearing the Message in the Midst of the Words (Daniel 5:25-28)

## God is King...So Hear! (Daniel 5:29-31)

### STUDY GUIDE:

1. Have you ever felt like things in your life or the world were out of control? How did you deal with that? What role did your faith have in that situation?
2. This week we continue our series, "Daniel: Apocalyptic Imagination and Exile Faith," by looking at chapter 5. Quiet yourself before God, then ask God to speak to you before reading Daniel 5:1-31 aloud.
3. *Background: Daniel 5 begins with a quick transition in rulers from Nebuchadnezzar to Belshazzar. Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, who came to the throne in Babylon after overthrowing Neriglissar, who succeeded Amel-Marduk, the literal son of Nebuchadnezzar, as king. Belshazzar ruled in the city of Babylon briefly while his father, Nabonidus, ruled the empire from Teima, a site in present-day Saudi Arabia. While Belshazzar mentions Nebuchadnezzar as his "father," this word is used metaphorically in the sense of "predecessor."*
4. Summarize the situation and mood of this episode in verses 1-4?
5. That situation is interrupted in verse 5. What happens and what is the change of mood that results in verses 6-9?
6. The queen (likely the queen mother) arrives to remind Belshazzar of a person who may be able to help. How is Daniel described by the queen (vss 10-12) and Belshazzar (vss 13-16)?
7. What does Daniel's immediate response (vs 17) and reflection on the situation (vss 18-24) tell you about how he sees the writing on the wall?
8. In what ways is the present situation both similar to, yet different from, that found in Dan. 4?
9. In Daniel 5:25-30 Daniel interprets the words and we see immediate action take place. What happens and how does the outcome relate to Daniel's interpretation?
10. If, as one writer says, the purpose of Daniel is "in spite of appearances, God is in control!", how does chapter 5 speak to you about your present circumstances personally or in the world in general?
11. What is one specific thing that God is speaking to you through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and pray for one another. If you are studying on your own, write it down and share it with someone.

### TAKE IT FURTHER:

Here are some ways you can take your study of the book of Daniel deeper this week:

- Read through Daniel 2 and consider the connections between Nebuchadnezzar's dream in that chapter and the writing on the wall in Daniel 5.
- Look at Rembrandt's famous painting, "Belshazzar's Feast," as a way to reflect on what the situation might have been like: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/rembrandt-belshazzars-feast>.