

LESSON PLAN

HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

Daniel 5

Lesson Memory Verse: Revelation 20:15 - "Whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Lesson Aim: We need to receive Jesus to save us from God's punishment for our sin in the lake of fire.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Miracles are amazing works of God. Can you tell me about any miracle that happened to Daniel, to his three friends, or to Nebuchadnezzar? (God told Daniel what Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed and what the dream meant; God saved Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from being burned in the fiery furnace; God warned Nebuchadnezzar about his pride in a dream about the great tree; God saved Nebuchadnezzar from eternal punishment, which was the greatest miracle of all.) Do you know that miracles are still happening? Every time God saves someone from the lake of fire, it is a miracle. Only God can save a person from the lake of fire. If you have been saved by Jesus Christ, you have had the greatest of all miracles happen to you. I hope you realize how wonderful it is for God to save you. Some people are not impressed with this kind of a miracle. They may even laugh when we get excited about someone who gets saved. They think that we believe in fairy tales. The trouble with them is their lack of faith in God and what He said in the Bible. In our story today we are going to learn about a king who lacked faith in God. He saw a miracle and he knew about a miracle that happened to someone else, but he did not let the miracles change his life of sin. He did not listen to God. As a result, he is in Hell today and someday he will be cast into the lake of fire forever,

HE (for Authority): Our memory verse tells us that there is a book of life. When a person receives Jesus as his or her Savior the name of that person is recorded in the book of life. When our name is in that book, we will be saved from the lake of fire. If our name is not in that book, we will be cast into the lake of fire. If a person is cast into the lake of fire, he will be in that awful place of torment forever. This is serious. Only those that believe what is written in the Bible about the lake of fire, and receive Jesus as their Savior, will be saved from this place.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scriptures for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. Our story today is about a king named Belshazzar who knew about God's miracles, but he did not listen to what God was saying to him through those miracles. Listen to the story and learn what happened to King Belshazzar.

I. Belshazzar's Feast - Daniel 5:1-4

King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his trusted leaders, but it was a sinful feast. He mocked the true God by drinking wine out of the golden vessels taken from God's temple and then he praised the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone.

WE: We must be careful never to mock God. It is very wicked and very dangerous. Some boys and girls mock God by saying bad things about God, about His churches, or about His people. Some boys and girls even swear in front of their friends because they think that is a smart thing to do. It really is foolish because God hears everything we say and He sees everything we do. We will find out how foolish it was for Belshazzar to act as he did when you listen to the rest of this story.

II. Belshazzar's Fear - Daniel 5:5-9

While Belshazzar was acting proudly and speaking foolishly against God, he suddenly saw a man's hand write a message on the wall of the banquet hall. There was no body with the hand. It was just a hand and it wrote a very strange message. The king was so afraid when he saw this miracle that his knees began to shake and hit one another. Quickly he called for his wise men to come to the banquet hall and read the message, but no one could understand it. This made the king even more fearful. What did all of this mean? Something or someone was in his banquet hall. It was a miracle for a hand to appear and write a message on his wall. What did it all mean? Belshazzar was very much afraid. He was not brash and acting cocky anymore. He was beginning to find out what it is like to meet God.

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WE: Someday everyone will meet God. For those who have asked Jesus to be their Savior, it will be a great day; but for those who have been cocky and have refused to ask Jesus to save them, it will be a fearful day. If you have not received Jesus as your Savior, you will be afraid when you are called to stand before Him and asked, "Why didn't you receive my Son as your Savior?" I am sure that you will have no answer for Him.

III. Belshazzar's Favor - Daniel 5:10-16

The queen heard about the hand that wrote a message on the wall of the banquet hall and knew that the wise men could not give the meaning of the written message on the wall. The queen probably was Belshazzar's mother. She reminded him that there was a man in his kingdom, named Daniel, that had helped Nebuchadnezzar, his father (probably his grandfather), to understand great mysteries. Since Daniel was still alive and now in Babylon, she urged him to call Daniel to interpret the handwriting on the wall, which Belshazzar did. When Daniel appeared, Belshazzar promised to favor him with great gifts and make him the third ruler of the kingdom if he could interpret the mysterious message on the wall. Daniel rejected Belshazzar's favors.

WE: We may find God's message is hard to understand. That is because sin blinds our minds so he cannot understand God's Word. Those who want to walk close to God and understand Him must put sin out of their lives. Those who put sin out of their lives will understand God and His ways the best. If you have trouble understanding God's message in the Bible, find a person who loves God and has put sin out of his life. If you can find such a person, he will be able to tell you what God is saying to you.

IV. Belshazzar's Future - Daniel 5:17-28

The message Daniel gave to Belshazzar from God's writing on the wall was not a happy one. Belshazzar had been proud against God. He had heard how God had miraculously dealt with Nebuchadnezzar when he was proud (5:18-22), but he did not learn from Nebuchadnezzar's experience (5:23). So God miraculously had a hand write a message of judgment on Belshazzar's wall. The message told Belshazzar what would happen to him in the future. God told him that He was going to give Belshazzar's kingdom to the Persians because he of his proud talk and actions that climaxed at the banquet.

WE: We can be sure that God will punish everyone who loves to be proud. Do not be proud. Instead, we need to humble ourselves under God's powerful hand. If we do humble ourselves, He will lift us up with great honor, even as He did to Daniel (1 Pet 5:5-6).

V. Belshazzar's Fall - Daniel 5:29-31

Belshazzar made Daniel the third ruler in his kingdom for interpreting the strange message on the wall, but there was no sign that he ever repented of his sins. He did not even seem to realize that God was serious. Maybe he thought that he had plenty of time. But God was serious and He was not going to give Belshazzar more time to repent. In fact, it was that very night that Belshazzar was killed, his kingdom was given to his enemy and he went to Hell. Someday he will be taken from Hell, judged at the great white throne of Jesus Christ, found guilty because his name will not be in the book of life and he will be cast into the lake of fire. The writing on the wall was God's final warning to Belshazzar before he perished in his pride.

WE: We must talk about the lake of fire as a real place where sinners without Christ will be punished forever. Some people think that God's love for people will keep Him from sending most people to the lake of fire. They talk about Hell and the lake of fire as a joke. Other people think that they have plenty of time to humble themselves and ask Jesus to save them. They want to enjoy their sins a little bit longer. Many boys and girls and older people are still doing their sinful things when Jesus says it is time for them to die. How terrible it is for them to love their sins and refuse to let Jesus take away their sins. Do not be foolish like Belshazzar and force God to punish you forever in the lake of fire.

BE (for Action): If you still love your sins, you are in great danger. What will happen to the person who refuses to let Jesus take away his sins? (He will force God to send him to the lake of fire where he will stay forever.) Ask the children to bow their heads. Have those raise their hands who want to ask Jesus to save them from their sins. Dismiss the class and deal with those children who raised their hands.