

Daniel Dialogue 5

Reading Guide for Daniel 5

God Responds to our choices!

Group Discussion

1. Who has been (or is) your favorite teacher at school? Why was (or is) this teacher your favorite? What impact did this person have (or is this teacher having) on your life?
2. Have you ever made a decision in your life that you would like to go back and change? If you had the power to change one thing in your life, what would you change?

Kids Activity

After listening to the story, draw a cartoon strip of how you think the story should have gone.

This story should have ended differently!

Belshazzar knew all the stories of God and worked with Daniel—just like his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar who had learnt to honour God as the Ruler of the universe. But Belshazzar chose another course. He had no respect for precious or sacred things.

He had had many opportunities to know God's will and his responsibilities to Him. He would have known of his grandfather's banishment from the throne by God and his subsequent conversion and restoration.

However, Belshazzar regarded with indifference the lessons Nebuchadnezzar had learned at the cost of untold suffering and humiliation. Nebuchadnezzar had now died—and Daniel was a very old man. Belshazzar gloried in his power and lifted up his heart against God. He wasted the opportunities given him. He neglected truth. He lived for pleasure and self-glorification. Even when his city was besieged by Cyrus, the nephew of Darius the Mede, Belshazzar gave a drunken feast.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST **verses 1-9**

1. THE FEAST verses 1-4

With a reckless sense of security Belshazzar led a thousand of his nobles into drunkenness and feasting. Reason gave way to drunken passion.

2. THE WRITING ON THE WALL verses 5,6

There was an unseen heavenly Witness to Belshazzar's drunken, profane, sacrilegious mirth—his revelry and idolatry. When that Witness made His presence felt, terror seized every person in the banquet hall.

3. HUMAN WISDOM FAILS AGAIN verses 7-9

Review the three episodes of defeat mentioned in Daniel:

Chapter 2: _____

Chapter 4: _____

Chapter 5: _____

DANIEL CALLED **verses 1-9**

4. DANIEL WAS CALLED IN verses 10-17

Daniel was unmoved by the promises of the king. As God's servant he stood before the drunken king and his terror-stricken guests to declare God's message.

5. DANIEL'S TESTIMONY verses 18-24

"But you his son, O Belshazzar have not _____ though you _____." Vs. 22

"Instead you have set _____ against the Lord of heaven." Vs. 23

6. DANIEL REVEALS THE MEANING OF THE INSCRIPTION verses 25-29

"This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL PARSIN." Vs. 25

	Meaning	Application
MENE	Being numbered or counted	"God has numbered the days of _____." Vs. 26
TEKEL	Being weighed	"You have been weighed on the scales and _____." Vs. 27
PARSIN	Portion or pieces	"Your kingdom is _____." Vs. 28

7. BELSHAZZAR'S LAST NIGHT verse 30

LESSONS FOR US

The practical lessons of Daniel 5 are:

1. There is a last night. "There was a last night in the history of Belshazzar. There is a last night to everything and everyone on earth. A last feast, a last fight, a last dance, a last movie, a last cigar, a last drink, a last cigarette, a last oath, a last supper, a last night ..." - W.G. Heslop, *Diamonds From Daniel*, p. 93.
2. Belshazzar resisted the invitations of the Spirit of God to repent. Daniel 5:22-24
3. The pleasures of sin are very temporary. Daniel 5:6; Hebrews 11:22-24
4. Jesus Christ said that the entire world will be reeling after pleasure in the days of His coming. The entire world will reflect the spirit of Belshazzar's feast. Matthew 24:36-39; Luke 21:34-36

DISCUSSION

1. Compare the different endings to the stories of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. What made the difference? What was the difference between the sin of Nebuchadnezzar and that of Belshazzar?
2. What parallels do you see between our day and Belshazzar's feast?
3. Each of us deals with the consequences of our choices and actions. Some choices have serious consequences. When have you found it hard to live with the consequences of your choices?
4. What is the most significant thing you have learnt about God from this story?
5. **Kids DISCUSSION:** The ending for this story could have been very different for Belshazzar—if he had made other choices. Can you think of three choices that are not so good to make and

three choices that are good to make?

6. **Read Daniel 5:23—a key verse.** What two things did Belshazzar choose between? Which choice would you like to make?

FINAL PERSONAL WORD ...

We all have choices to make in life—sometimes hard and difficult ones. Sometimes there seems to be no consequences. We miss a stop sign, check ourselves—and continue on. But at other times that same choice can lead to a terrible crash that could change life forever. Every day we are faced with choices that have consequences.

Belshazzar faced God's response—a consequences of his decisions. He was given the same opportunities as his grandfather—but he didn't take them—and so we see him experiencing God's response to his choices.

In the next story (Daniel 6), Daniel had some choices to make. It is the story of Daniel in the lion's den—one that has thrilled many. In our next dialogue we will compare the story of Daniel and the lions with some of John's prophecies in Revelation. John also wrote of choices. Sometimes these are big choices—like those Christians who have faced death sentences throughout the Christian era. From Daniel we learn how to face traumatic events and the final conflict between good and evil. You will be challenged by the story of Daniel chapter 6.