

Sermon Title: **The Hand Writing on the Wall**

Written: June 3, 2017

Preached: June 4, 2017

Vessel: Russ LaFlamme

Scripture Reference: **Daniel 5:1-12**

Thesis: **God will hold everyone accountable for their actions, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil;**

Purpose: **Today, we will see that our accountability before God depends on our standing with Him.**

Key Word: "God's Accountability"

Key Points: #1 **The Scene Described**
 #2 **The Sign Discovered**
 #3 **The Sentence Delivered**

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Daniel 5:1-12**

A) The Setting:

- 1) **Most of you here today have probably heard the phrase or expression "The handwriting is on the wall".**
- 2) Do you know where that expression came from?
- 3) Like many expressions it originated from an event that is recorded in the Bible.
- 4) In fact, it came from today's study.
- 5) **We are continuing our study in the book of Daniel.**
 - (a) Between chapter 4 and chapter 5 of Daniel approximately 65 years have passed.
 - (b) Daniel is no longer in charge; but probably living out his days fairly quietly.
 - (c) Nearly 70 years since Daniel's capture who is probably now in his mid to late 80's.
- 6) **King in today's story is believed to be Nebuchadnezzar's grandson.**
 - (a) And the 5th King since Nebuchadnezzar.
 - (b) He was co-ruling with his Father who had been captured and imprisoned by the Persians leaving this young man to rule.
- 7) **We will learn that this young king is arrogant, doesn't respect the rules of governance and has no regard for religion or politics.**
 - (a) Sounds like our own society does it not?
 - (b) Most of all, he has no use for history or learning lessons from the past.
 - (c) What happens when we fail to learn from the lessons learned by those in history?
 - (d) We are doomed to repeat their mistakes
- 8) **Turn with me in our Bibles to Daniel 5:1-12.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Hook)

- 1) **On March 19, 2003, Saddam Hussein and his sons Uday and Qusay invited a few of their close friends and advisors to have dinner with them in an exclusive restaurant in downtown Baghdad.**
 - (a) They did this despite the fact that an invasion seemed imminent from the U.S. forces amassing across the border in Kuwait.
 - (b) Saddam and his sons were used to the good life, and they weren't about to let the threat of war ruin an opportunity to party with their friends.
 - (c) But someone tipped off some of our Special Forces who were already operating in the area and President Bush ordered a strategic strike.
 - (d) Saddam's dinner party came to an abrupt end when cruise missiles slammed into the building and completely demolished it.
 - (e) Saddam and his sons survived this initial attack, but it was the beginning of the end for a brutal dictator who had ruled Iraq for more than 30 years.
- 2) **What would happen if someone gave a party—and God crashed it?**
 - (a) In the first verses of Daniel chapter 5, we find a description of a rather wild party being thrown by a king named Belshazzar.
 - (b) When God crashes his party.

TS: **But let's begin by looking at . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **The Scene Described**

- 1) **The king's party is described for us in Daniel 5:1-4.**
 - (a) This party was unashamedly blasphemous; a drunken orgy.
 - (b) In this culture; women and men rarely partied together unless sex was involved.
 - (c) The event was designed to exalt the gods of Babylon and mock the true God of Israel.
- 2) **The room this took place in has been unearthed and it truly was massive.**
 - (a) Measuring 52 feet by 170 feet. There were probably thousands in attendance.
 - (b) To give us some perspective the entire main part of the White House is approximately that large.
- 3) **Kings and nobles rarely drank wine at public events less they become undignified and disgraced their position in the presence of their subjects.**
 - (a) **Proverbs 31:4-5** expresses this well, "*It is not for Kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted.*"
 - (b) In this case Belshazzar paid no attention to the warnings.
- 4) **To make matters worse, the Persian Army had surrounded the city preparing to attack.**
 - (a) Babylon was known for its marvelous architecture and extremely high walls protecting the city.
 - (b) With its river running through the heart of the city it was believed that they had enough supplies and water to last for 20 years against an enemy.
 - (c) There were massive gates that extended down into the river well below the water line.
- 5) **Belshazzar cared not that he was a prisoner in his own capital city; he did not intend to do battle while they could live the life of luxury.**
 - (a) What he didn't know is that the Persian Army had diverted the river so most of the water was redirected.
 - (b) As the party raged on the water was ebbing lower and lower.

TS: **The next event led to . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **The Sign Discovered**

- 1) **In his drunken state and disregard for the God of the Jews;**
 - (a) The King decided it would be a good idea to take the gold and silver vessels removed from the Jewish Temple and carried back to Babylon and use them at his party.
 - (b) No better way to show the superiority of your own gods than to use the silverware from the defeated Jew's God.
- 2) **So, in full view of the debauchery and decadence they bring out the Holy vessels and begin to pass around the wine.**
 - (a) While all the time probably making sport of the Jewish slaves and their God.
- 3) **At the height of the din all seems to be fine until . . .**
 - (a) Until the hand of God appears . . . a giant human looking hand appears overhead and begins writing on the wall.
 - (b) There is a gasp as silence falls over the room.
- 4) **Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin.**
 - (a) **Mene**, meaning "Numbered" repeated for emphasis.
 - (b) **Tekel**, meaning "Weighed"
 - (c) **Parsin** meaning "Divided"
- 5) **The king is terrified and bewildered.**
 - (a) What could the cryptic message mean?

- (b) The king then summons all the Chaldeans, diviners and wise men of the kingdom to explain its meaning.
- (c) But once again no one can make sense out of it.
- 6) **Now all this commotion must have gotten the attention of the Queen mother, believed to be the wife of King Nebuchadnezzar, and she came into the hall to see what is going on.**
 - (a) When she hears of this strange happening she immediately knows who to go to . . . Daniel.
 - (b) Daniel is no longer in a position of power as he once was in charge of all so called wise men.
 - (c) Probably living his life in peaceful quietness, a kind of retirement.
- 7) **So, Daniel is summoned and immediately comes as requested; so, he must have still lived near.**

TS: **So, Daniel comes to the party and now we have . . .**

C) Key Point #3: **The Sentence Delivered**

- 1) **Here comes Daniel as he enters and gives the official greeting.**
 - (a) After the King assures himself that this old man is the Daniel of whom they have talked about . . .
 - (b) Then he asks Daniel to interpret the message written in Arabic promising to make him the third highest ranking official in the kingdom.
 - (c) **Daniel speaks boldly showing no fear as he tells the King to keep the gifts for himself.**
- 2) **The message is a sentence from God for this King has been numbered, numbered, weighed and divided.**
 - (a) The usefulness of the Babylonian kingdom has reached its end.
 - (b) For 70 years they were used by God to judge His people for their failure to follow God's laws.
 - (c) God promised that at the end 70 years the Babylonians would be the ones coming under His judgment.
- 3) **Daniel knew the meaning of the words**
 - (a) Because God told him years ago through Nebuchadnezzar's dreams that the Babylonian Kingdom would fall.
 - (b) And then be divided by the Medes and the Persians.
- 4) **As Daniel is speaking his words . . .**
 - (a) The waters are lowering in the Babylonian River,
 - (b) Down to a level where the Persian Army can wade in the water thigh high and go under the grates and walk right up into the city.
- 5) **The Babylonian Kingdom has come to the end of their Numbered days,**
 - (a) Put on God's scales of justice and weighed.
 - (b) Judged by God and parceled out to other kingdoms.
 - (c) What goes around, comes around.
 - (d) Before this night is out, Belshazzar will be dead and another sitting on his throne.

TS: **What can we learn from this ancient story?**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

A) **What is God saying to us here? It's an age-old message.**

- 1) King Solomon summarized it this way, "**God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil**" (**Ecclesiastes 12:14**).
- 2) God holds everyone accountable for their actions, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil;
- 3) However, our accountability before God depends on our standing with Him.

4) **There is no wall so high, no fortress so secure, no activity so hidden that it can protect us from the judgment of the all-powerful, all-knowing, Holy God who will one day bring every dark thing to light and judge sin.**

- (a) Through Belshazzar's experience, God is strongly warning us not to forget that one day we too will all be judged by him.
- (b) The apostle Paul made this same point saying that one day "***we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him***" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

B) **But the good news is that Paul goes on to tell us that the reason why God warns us so strongly is because he loves us so completely.**

- 1) And God demonstrated the extent of his love for us at the cross of Jesus Christ.
- 2) **There is no warning like the cross of Jesus Christ.**
 - (a) The message of the cross completes all the Old Testament warnings about judgment.
 - (b) The cross warns us that a just and Holy God must account for our sin—because of who He is.
- 3) **The Scriptures tell us the real glory of the cross is that it does more than warn us of sin's penalty.**
 - (a) **IT ALSO SAVES US FROM IT!**
 - (b) The blood of Jesus blots out the handwriting of condemnation that has been written across all of our lives.
 - (c) **If we will simply come to Christ in sincere repentance and faith.**
- 4) **Then we are promised by God himself that on that final judgment day,**
 - (a) When we stand before his throne, **he will see all of our sin as having been covered by the royal robe of Christ's righteousness** that has been freely given to us through the faith we have put in Jesus.
 - (b) What a wonderful thing to know that in spite of all our sin, we stand completely forgiven before God!
 - (c) What a joy it is to know and to rest in God's solemn promise given to us in Romans 8:1: "***Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.***" Amen.
- 5) **But for those who have not put their trust in Jesus and asked Him to rule their lives there is a judgment day coming.**
 - (a) We are all born as sinners before God as Paul also said in Romans 3:10, "***There is no one righteous, no not one.***"
 - (b) But John tells us in his gospel "***that Jesus did not come to condemn the world. But to save the world through HIM.***" (John 3:17)
 - (c) But we don't pay enough attention to what is written in John 3:18, "***Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.***"
- 6) **It is our sin that condemns us; not God.**
 - (a) God so loved us that He sent His one and only Son to die for our sins.
 - (b) And because God paid the penalty we only have to give our life to Jesus to be set free of any judgment.
 - (c) Our judgment will be an awards ceremony where we will receive crowns we can lay at Jesus feet.
- 7) **Like Belshazzar, our world is living like there is no tomorrow, no judgment and no God.**
 - (a) We never know when that day will come when it is too late.
 - (b) I hope and pray everyone here has made their decision to follow Christ.

IV) Invitation: LET US PRAY!