THRIVE – **WK 6 – Partying in Babylon**

**Rumors the enemy is near - music is load, laughing, wine, dancing, concubine. Host says bring the gold chalices from that temple… he raises a toast to himself & to the gods of materialism! Smashed… what is that? Am I seeing things?**

**Rewind: Daniel & friends (teens) kidnapped, names changed, forced into a culture that’s hostile to God – yet despite this incredibly difficult situation – knowing God is always in control – they Thrived**

**Last week: Nebuchadnezzar after 40 yrs of Daniel sharing about the LORD – finally bows his life to the MOST HIGH GOD!**

**Neb ends up dying just a few years later.**

**Background check: What happened after Neb’s death? Timeline**

* **Amel-Merdach (Neb son) becomes king (murdered)**
* **Nergal-sharezer (Neb son-in-law) becomes king (Neriglissar dies)**
* **Labashi-Marduk (Nebs grandson) becomes king (murdered)**
* **Naboni-dus (Nebs great gran) become king (moves Tayma, Arabia)**
* **Nab leaves his son Belshazzer to reign as regent / King of Babylon**

**Historical issues, cylinders of Nabonidus (1854) – proof of true**

**This is where we start - 26 yrs after chp 5 - and 66 yrs since chp 1**

**A Wild Party**

**(One of the more bizarre stories of the bible – starts at a wild party) Daniel 5:1 King Belshazzar (3rd yr of reign as crown prince. Dan 7/8 are visions during his first 2 yrs) gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. (massive xxx party, while their enemies camp fires are in sight – we are indestructible) 2 While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father (not lit father – family father) had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. (Holy items from the temple of the LORD God – being used in a sex party – getting smashed – mocking the LORD) 3 So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. 4 As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.**

**A Party Crasher**

**(God interrupts the party) 5:5 Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. (is he drunk or is this real…) The king watched the hand as it wrote. (does not say what size probably normal size – as it is decried as human hands) 6 His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking. (This is the inscription: mene, mene, tekel, upharsin)**

**Written is in another language. They do not know what is says.**

**8 Then all the king’s wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. 9 So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled.**

**Why terrified? – is could have said, “happy birthday, there’s a pony outside. He knew - something dark was about to happen.**

**10 The queen, (daughter of Nebuchadnezzar) hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. “May the king live forever!” she said. “Don’t be alarmed! Don’t look so pale! 11 There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. 12 He did this because Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means.” (Daniel was not at the party)**

**The last 12 yrs Daniel and friends are living in peace and quiet. Out of the royal limelight after Neb’s death. Wealthy from Neb. Life was good he is a senior – enjoying 55<Better group.**

**BTW – As a follower of Jesus - You may not be invited to the party, but when crisis hits. They’ll be looking for your number.**

**Keep standing for Christ – be ready. They will call.**

**Today - You might look down on the those who serve God – think they are missing out, unintelligent, out of date, lame… Until the writings on your wall. That phone call, that accident, that summons, etc.**

**5:13 So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, “Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah? 14 I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom. 15 The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it.**

**16 Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple (royal) and have a gold chain placed around your neck, (you’ll be made the next greatest rapper – gangsta’) and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.” (he’s 2nd)**

**17 Then Daniel answered the king, “You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. (older & bolder - I don’t want you’re your stuff) Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means. (I don’t serve God to get rich) 18 “Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor.**

**Daniel goes on to explain last week’s story to Belshazzser.**

**12 yrs ago God humbled Neb (thru temp insanity) Neb finally acknowledged the great Most High God as ruler of all things.**

**22 “But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. (He was unwilling to learn from the past. Unwilling & unteachable - As a result - He was unable to understand the present.) 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. (you chase and pursue the temporary) But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. (As a result - He was not be ready for the future.) 24 Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription. 25 “This is the inscription that was written: mene, mene, tekel, parsin. (upharsin)**

**A Case of Evandelism**

**Each word represents a sentence. Mene= to count / Tekel= to weigh / upharsin= to divide. Count, count, weighed, divided.**

**26 “Here is what these words mean: Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign (counted God is a God of grace) and brought it to an end.** **27 Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. (lacking) 28 Peres: (parsin) Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” (Your days are numbers, finished - Judgment is at the door) 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. (I can see Daniel rolling his eyes…) 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. (Lights OUT! Party’s over)**

**It happened Oct 539BC – within 2 wks the Median & Persian army was in full control. Babylonian Empire was dead. It was the rise of the Persian Empire. What happened to Daniel? Next week – the conclusion of THRIVE.**

**The Writing on the Wall (The phrase came from this story)**

**What’s written on his wall is written on ours. It asks 5 questions.**

1. **Has the knowledge of God made it to you heart?**

**5:22 “…Belshazzar, (you) have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this.**

**The longest distance in the world is 1 ft - from your head to your heart.**

**Belshazzar knew about the Lord – told by his mother, by Daniel, heard the stories, knew about Neb’s. knew enough to make the right choice…**

**But felt it did not apply to him. It’s old news, irrelevant, diff age, I am my own king – I rule myself! He make life about himself. His pleasures. His achievements.**

**Maybe you’ve heard of Jesus, been to church – but, getting that knowledge to your heart, might be the longest journey of your life.**

1. **Where do you place your confidence?**

**Belshazzar – saw his wealth – his women – his power – and partied! – Daniel 5:23 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.**

**What about you, where’s your confidence? Yourself, your money, your will, your power? Do you chase the things that are not eternal – the temporary – the empty?**

**Little did Belshazzar know – history tells us – the night of that festival – while 1000’s of his generals were in a drunken stupor - the armies of Median were already in the city. They drained the river - Unaware that his confidence was to be shaken and taken. It was Judgment day.**

**We all live with a danger outside our gates. How will we respond? Our possessions won’t be able to save us.**

**God has numbers each of our days – then it’s curtains.**

1. **How long do you think you can get away with your sin?**

**Sin for a season can be fun – lots of fun - but a day will some.**

**Belshazzar was given a kingdom he did not earn, he lacked the self-discipline to run it and a respect of God. He squandered his position. He indulged in the everything he could do – he seized the day.**

**Abercrombie ad – youth often feel immortal – foolishness is expected! No matter how fun it’s made to look – some things are unrecoverable. A fool has no reward.**

**Belshazzar’s party fouls -**

**Sins of commission (you do lawless actions, perversion, idols, pride)**

**Sins of omission (you don’t honor the Lord w/ your life and your ways)**

**Blowing off the words of God – he was confused & clueless**

**Sin clouds our life – its confuses us – leaves us without clarity**

**He was unwilling to learn from the past – therefore was unable to understand the present - As a result he was not be ready for his future.**

**Mene: lit. - Your numbers up! God had spoken - Belshazzar was not ready? Will you be? He ignored his sin – and was oblivious to appointment with God.**

**Jesus Parable - Luke 12:20 – God said to him, 'You fool! This night, your soul is required of you. Then who will get everything you worked for?'**

1. **What do the scales of your life say?**

**Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found lacking.**

**You have been weighed on the balance scale and found wanting. Like a scale, our life is measured. It will be weighed. Sin will always leave us lacking, only one thing can balance the scale – Jesus.**

**All of us have sinned and fallen short (Ro 3:23, Ecc 7:20) We are lacking…**

**Our sin weighs us down and on the scale of justice we are lacking righteousness – there is nothing we can do to shift the weight…**

**Like a teeter totter – illus. flying up when someone sits on it.**

**We tried to get enough to lift the biggest adult.**

**The Finger of God – shows us 5X in the Bible:**

**Babylon - Daniel 5 – The writing on the wall. Belshazzar’s hard heart.**

**Egypt - Ex 8:19 - Plagues called the finger of God. Pharaohs hard heart**

**Sinai - Ex 31:18 - God’s finger wrote the very 10 commandments.**

**Written by his own hand to dispel the notion that we are the law givers – that we write our own agenda. God says… no.**

* **In OT – it tells of God’s sovereignty, justice and judgement.**

**Jesus - Luke 11:20 – I (Jesus) drive out demons by the finger of God…**

**Jesus - John 8:5 - He bent down to write on the ground w/his finger…**

* **In NT – it tells of God’s deliverance, healing, & forgiveness.**

**God’s top 10 tell us we are sick. (all have sinned and missed the mark). It is the diagnosis. Not the remedy. Judgment is the prognosis – unless we look to the great physician. His prescription – the cross. You need a blood transfusion. Apply the blood liberally.**

**Left to ourselves our scale is left wanting.**

**While - Romans 3:23 (says) Everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. (thank God it continues) 24 Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. 25 For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. (Jesus was placed on the scale) People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood…**

**We will all stand before the scales of eternity - what will the scales of your life say? I know what mine will say!!!!!**

1. **Do you see hand of God? What is written on your wall? (Facebook)**

**Belshazzar – his writing was that his kingdom will divide and fall.**

**Daniel came when he was called, he gave meaning to the words of God. But indifference was in the heart of Belshazzar. That night was his last.**

**The writing is on the wall - We have a choice to make.**

**We will either ignore God’s words – or – live like it’s true**

**BIG IDEA - Like Daniel – when it seems the world is getting darker and even perverted – you can remain hopeful.**

**Being foolish or wise????**

**Transcript from commercial:**

**This is the time to screw up, date all the wrong people, learn by doing. This is the time to explore your new city, your new feelings, to be honest. Because for this brilliant little window, the world is expecting you to fail and try, to scream and cry, to sharpen your skills and pick up some scars – to be brave and foolish, searching and strong. For these few years, your free and forgiven. Let loose to find what’s next, to find your match, to find yourself. In 60 years when the scars have become lessons, and the risks have become rewards, these are the images that will surface. These are the days you’ll remember.**

**What about the scars you leave on others as a result of your foolish stupidity?**