



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Ezekiel, Daniel Sermon Series
Supports Session 10: Humility Required
Sermon Title: "Handwriting"
Passage: Daniel 5:1-31

Connection to Daniel 4:28-37

God humbles people who exalt themselves and refuse to honor Him in all things.

Introduction/Opening

Warning signs tell us about the danger ahead of us. They keep us from getting ourselves into trouble. If we pay attention to them, we can steer clear of unnecessary agony. However, if we ignore them, we're setting ourselves up for disappointment and misery.

The story of Belshazzar's feast provides us with a sobering warning about self-exaltation. As we study the event, we face some hard realities about selfish pride that serve as signals of trouble ahead if we continue to take the path of arrogance.

As we examine this event, let's ask the Lord to examine us so we can steer clear of the tendency to exalt ourselves.

Outline

1. Self-exalting pride will be dangerous (vv. 1-4).
 - a. Belshazzar's pride became dangerous to him. First, he threw a drinking party for the members of the royal court who would exalt him. Then he invited his guests to drink from the cups taken from the temple when the Babylonians captured Jerusalem. With the cups from the temple in hand, they worshiped their pagan idols.
 - b. Self-indulgent pride will become dangerous to us. It will eventually control us. At first glance, our efforts at self-exaltation may appear to be nothing more than a perceived right. But one successful effort of self-exaltation can lead to another. Before long, the adulation that comes from exalting ourselves becomes far more pronounced and repulsive.
2. Self-exalting pride will be challenged (vv. 5-12).
 - a. The Lord challenged Belshazzar's attempts to exalt himself. With the handwriting on the wall, He struck the king with terror. When the king couldn't find anyone in his royal court who could translate what the hand had written, he became even more terrified. That's when his wife reminded him about Daniel. His terror forced him to listen to her advice.

- b. The Lord challenges anyone who attempts to exalt himself or herself. Peter and James remind us of the Lord's wise response to people who allow pride to consume them. The Lord resists them (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). In other words, He opposes the proud and stands against them so they will see their need to turn to Him with humility.
3. Self-exalting pride will be exposed (vv. 13-31).
- a. The Lord exposed the king's failures to him. Daniel interpreted the handwritten message to the king. According to the message, Belshazzar's reign would end soon. The message exposed the king's deficiency. It also exposed the announcement that the Lord had already decided to take the kingdom away from him.
 - b. The Lord exposes the results of self-absorbed pride. When we exalt ourselves, we will most certainly deceive ourselves. We'll evaluate ourselves based on the lies we've come to believe about our superiority over others. The shrine that we build with our pride will be exposed as a house of cards.

Conclusion

The story of Belshazzar's feast provides us with a clear warning about self-exaltation. People who exalt themselves will be humbled (Luke 14:11). Are you one of those people? The warning points to the value of allowing the Lord to have control of our lives. Letting Him have first place begins with humbling ourselves before Him so we can exalt Him instead of ourselves.

Don't allow pride to keep you from receiving God's gift of salvation through Christ. Surrender the throne of your heart to Him alone. If you've received His gift of salvation, ask the Lord to examine your heart to see if exalting yourself prevents you from exalting Him.

Argile Smith serves as the pastor of Parkway Baptist Church, Biloxi, MS. He graduated from William Carey College (BA) and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv, PhD).