**Bible Class Notes – *Studies in The Old Testament* – Lesson 162**

**Character Studies from Daniel and Nehemiah**

**Contempt for God - The Writing on the Wall.**

**Aim** – To awaken us from indifference and complacency. There is Judgement to come! Are we ready for it? **VA**

You can see that we live in days of extreme ungodliness. The majority live as if God does not exist. Living in worldly pleasures, believing in Evolution as fact. **What about you?**

You attend College Class, many come to Church at EDT. **Good, but** we can so easily be guilty of contempt for God, and be complacent about responding to the Gospel call to come to Christ in repentance and faith.

**VA. Contempt for God.** No recognition of God, total indifference, no respect, total rejection.

Our lesson today is to **awaken us to dangers** around us. We do not know what lies ahead of us. Who would have thought 4 weeks ago that Russia would invade Ukraine? **What is your attitude towards your Creator God?**

May I remind you of the maritime disaster of **April 15th 1912. The pride of man** took this ‘ice-berg-protected ship’ into dangerous waters. The passengerspartied, unaware of danger. **VA Titanic** Out of 2,224 passengers and crew, 1,500 lost their lives.

King Belshazzar, son of Nebuchadnezzar, now King of Babylon. **Felt safe**, even though the Medes and Persians had surrounded the city, Babylon had strong walls and gates. It was October 12th 539BC. He proudly held a great party in honour of himself.

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Dancing, music, entertainment, food, wine. Over 2,000 guests. (including wives). Boasted – “I am so great and powerful, I can drink more than anyone of you, I am the greatest.” Belshazzar was worshipping his idol gods, and did not acknowledge God. He had no time for God. “No one greater than me!”

**Many like this today.** Proud and boastful of their own accomplishments and achievements. Own wealth and own abilities. Some even boast of their evil deeds and ways. Forgetting, or ignoring, all that they have been graciously given by almighty God.  **Do we thank the Lord for all He has given us?** Our life, our soul. **Do we respect Him? OR, do we take everything for granted?**

1. **We see that Belshazzar was lazy.**

**Are we lazy, and indifferent to God and His ways?** Putting no effort into getting to know God. No conscious concern for right or wrong? Untroubled by sin. No concern over what we think, say, or do. Living our lives hoping that all will be well. Can we expect God’s help, protection, and blessing if we do not show respect to Him?

Rejecting His Salvation, are we too pre-occupied with pleasure and getting our own way?

Even as teenagers you have already built up a lot of guilt before God.

This is remembered and will shut us out of Heaven.

3

1. **We note Belshazzar was Proud and Boastful**.

**Belshazzar grew up knowing that it was God Who had: - Preserved** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from death in the fiery furnace. **Driven** proud King Nebuchadnezzar from men to live as an animal for 7 years, as we learnt in last week’s lesson. **Restored** King Nebuchadnezzar, causing him to believe in God and humbly repent. **Warned** Babylon that it would be judged; its powerful world rule would soon end.

**But Belshazzar chose to ignore this.**

**Boastful:** Belshazzar wanted all to admire him, for his wealth and intelligence, (repeating Nebuchadnezzar’s sin of pride), and for his daring drinking feats.

Are we like this? Do we have sinful pride in: - Our looks, our intelligence, our possessions? **This is contempt for God**.

***Does admiration for daring sins and pride drive us? or do we humbly live to please God?***

**Belshazzar treated this knowledge with contempt (disrespect) and was: -**

**Naive:** While the enemy was at the door, he held an enormous feast, flowing with alcohol, worshipping his idol gods.

His mind was far away from matters of war and protecting his empire.

***What occupies us and our thoughts? The passing pleasure of today or the destiny of our eternal souls?***

**4**

1. **Insulting God:**

**He deliberately insulted and ridiculed God**. To show his utter contempt for God he sent for the golden and holy vessels which his father had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem over 45 years ago and used them for his drinking feats, and to bring praise to himself and his evil gods.

***Do we delight in things, or conversations, that insult God? or those that honour Him?***

1. **Suddenly, God intervened.**

**The writing on the wall:** The party was abruptly halted when the fingers of a hand wrote on the wall of the palace for all to see. **VA Picture**

No one spoke. All were panic stricken.

Whose hand was it?

What did the words mean?

***Mene, Mene, Tekel, Peres***

Belshazzar knew this was from God and his knees shook with tremendous fear.

He called for his advisors but no one could decipher the writing.

His wife, the Queen, reminds him that Daniel had interpreted the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, his father.

So, Daniel was called to interpret the writing on the wall.

***Mene, Mene, Tekel, Peres VA Words***

**Daniel reminds Belshazzar** of what had happened to his father, Nebuchadnezzar, how he was judged for his pride and brought low for 7 years, and how, when humbled, Nebuchadnezzar recognised God and found His forgiveness.

***“And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven.” Daniel 5 v22,23. VA***

**5**

**Daniel challenged Belshazzar** for using the sacred vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. Using them for his drunken orgy and worship of his idol gods.

1. **Daniel explained God’s meaning of the words,**

**“Your Kingdom is”: -**

**Mene: Numbered and Finished – The End. VA Words,** Belshazzar, who imagined his life and kingdom were his own to do with as he pleased, was reminded that his days were in the hands of Almighty God; the very One who, for all his life, he had chosen to ignore and insult.

**Tekel: Weighed and Found Wanting**. **VA Words,** The Creator and Judge of all the earth was now testing Belshazzar as a person in His Scales of Justice, and had found him wanting - worthless and sinful. **VA Scales.**

**Peres: Divided, Given to the Medes and Persians.** At the very moment Daniel pronounced God’s sentence, the enemy raided the party. **VA Words,**

All Belshazzar’s leaders were drunk, and, so, within hours they and Belshazzar were dead; judged by the very One they had mocked.

**God was saying, “Enough!” “Your time is up”.**

**That night (12th October 539BC), the great Kingdom of Babylon was destroyed and divided between the Medes and Persians.** The next power that Daniel had told Nebuchadnezzar about.

**6**

1. **Mercy had been offered, but, as it was refused sure and certain Judgement had to come.**

In mercy God had warned Babylon of its fall; Nebuchadnezzar humbly repented whereas contemptuous Belshazzar died in his last state of sinful arrogance.

**Was this the end for Belshazzar?**

**NO, he was judged.**

For his contempt of God, he would suffer eternal wrath in Hell.

**In mercy God warns us that we too will be similarly judged for our sinful acts unless we humbly repent and trust only in Jesus Christ for forgiveness.**

**Consider the Scales of God’s Justice. VA**

Us and our sin on one side, and God’s Holy Law on the other.

We need the Righteousness of Christ.

He has kept the Law and so balances out our sin.

***You been blessed with much teaching and understanding from the word of God.***

**Do not be like Belshazzar;** ***"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But, a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries (the enemies of God)."*** **Hebrews 10:26-27 VA**