

Intro: Who are some sons who did not turn out like their fathers? (*Oliver Mooney Lynn, Loretta Lynn's husband, had a son named Jack. On July 22 her 34-year-old son and her heart's favorite among her six children, mounted his quarter horse, Black Jack, at the 5,000-acre family ranch, Hurricane Mills, near Waverly, Tenn. He called out to a ranch hand "I'm goin' ridin'," and went off into the hills. Sometime in the evening horse and rider tried to ford the often treacherous Duck River that bisects the Lynn spread. They never made it: On Tuesday a sheriff's search party found the horse standing beneath a river bluff, and Jack's body in the water nearby. The common story in Nashville was that Jack was a bit wild and was coming home drunk from the bar late at night. I saw Jack when he was alive. I was spending the night in their huge trailer park on their ranch. I was down at the horse barn visiting with the wranglers when a BMW came across the field and slid up to the open barn door. Horses that were tied up were breaking bridles and running. He got out of the car laughing, then drove off. I asked who that was. The wranglers said, "Oh, that's Jack, Loretta and Mooney's boy. The same thing happens to a lot of preacher's kids who grow up hearing mom and dad criticized or new home because there is always a more important church event. Many never see their kids ball games. That will destroy a child.)*

Background: Nebuchadnezzar is called Belshazzar's father. Jeremiah 27:7 tells us that he would give his kingdom to his son and grandson. It was common Semitic practice to refer to your ancestor as your father. King David was called Asa's father even though he was actually his great-great grandfather. Belshezzar is a co-regent or co-king with his father Nabonidus while his dad was conducting archaeological expeditions in Arabia. Obviously, he is not like dad or grandpa in his time as king of Babylon.

Q - Why do you suppose Belshazzar, the new king did not turn out like his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar? (*Maybe it was because he admired the earlier version of his father who was all powerful and worshiped many gods and took slaves. Maybe he thought his dad was a whimp in his last days. He had lost his mind before regaining the kingdom and then was all excited about one God and neglected all the other more fun drunken, and orgy loving gods that had previously been the source of Babylonian worship. Maybe to him this God was just boring and controlling. His dad was off on his expeditions and had no influence on him.)*

Today we will again see the miraculous hand of God use Daniel once again to show the new king a new miraculous event that God had obviously given to him to transform the new messed up king.

READ DANIEL 5:1-4

1. **Describe was King Belshazzar has done that got God's attention.** (*He threw a banquet for 1,000 of his nobles and most likely as was the custom in those days of pagan gods was drunker than a skunk. He gave orders to bring in the silver and gold goblets that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar did take them, but put them in the temple treasury of the pagan god Marduk. He kept them as sacred for all his years. Belshazzar gold goblets and filled hem with wine, then the king, his wives, the nobles and his concubines all drank from them and praised the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone that they worshiped with their drunkenness.)*

Q – How do people today dishonor what belongs to God and use it to worship other gods? (*Obviously it was done in the temple courts in Jerusalem but those selling sacrifices and making God's house a den of thieves. They were stealing from the people with animals that were not perfect, over-charging the poor, etc. Jesus cleaned house. Preachers have too often misused the Bride of Christ for their own personal gain, taking massive amounts of money from poor while promising miraculous healing. They are worshiping the god of self and the god of money, the god of ego and pride.*)

READ DANIEL 5:5-12

- 2. This next scene is like a poltergeist movie! What happens, not in a dream or vision, but right in front of the king's eyes on the walls of the Royal Palace?** (*The fingers of a human hand appear and began writing on the plaster of the wall near the lampstand where it would be clearly seen. A hand should have an arm and a body attached to it. Someone needed to call The Ghostbusters, except they hadn't been born yet! I love it that it says the king is so scared his knees were knocking, his face turns pale and his legs give way, he collapsed. That is plain scared!*)
- 3. So what does this brilliant king do?** (*Calls the enchanters, astrologers and diviners, all those people that were worthless to his grandfather! Daniel is still around so you know the stories of how he put them to shame were still well known.*)
- 4. What does the king promise them if they tell him the meaning of this miraculous apparition?** (*Whoever reads and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple, the color of royalty, and have a gold chain placed around his neck and be made the 3rd highest ruler in the kingdom!*)
- 5. What happens?** (*All of them together couldn't even read the writing, the language was unknown to them, let alone tell what it meant. The king is now really terrified! He grows even more pale. This man is terrified at the unexplainable event. Even the nobles were baffled. It is something that has never happened to them.*)
- 6. The queen seems to be the only one with a head on her shoulders. What does she do?** (*The queen has to remind the king of Daniel and his miraculous service to King Nebuchadnezzar, how her did who no magician or sorcerer could do and therefore he was made head over all the magicians, astrologers, enchanters and diviners. He can interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Obviously the old boys had regained their power and Daniel was kept out of the picture rather than be over the wise men.*)

Q – What are some of the ways men revert back to the old ways as time passes? (*Jesus shook the world until even the Pharisees could not explain away His miracles. They knew Jesus had powers that were not of this world. Yet, even today many will not believe the signs, wonders, and miracles were real and given to prove He was from God. Today men revert to science, to crystals, to the occult, to governments to save them. All of which have never proven they can do anything to give after death!*)

READ DANIEL 5:13-21

- 7. Did this king remember how King Nebuchadnezzar had declared Daniel's God, the King of Heaven and that and praise Him declaring God alone is in control?** (*No, he remembers that the spirit of the gods, the pagan gods, dwelt in Daniel and gave him intelligence and outstanding wisdom. How easy it is to only*

keep the part of the story that fits your belief or lifestyle.)

8. The king offers Daniel the same great wealth and power if he will interpret this that he offered his wise men. What does Daniel tell the king? (You can keep them or give them to someone else. I will read and interpret it for nothing.)

READ DANIEL 5:22-31

9. How does Daniel start out the story? (He tells him of the rise, the fall, and the deliverance by God of King Nebuchadnezzar, his grandfather. He makes the point that God alone allowed him to conquer and become great and because of his arrogance and pride, God took it all away until He acknowledged the Most High God is sovereign over kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone He wishes! Belshazzar gets a history lesson restoring history to its reality that had been lost my most.)

Q – How does the history of the Most High God get lost today? (Laws, courts, history and science books in schools, the media, powerful idols from Hollywood and the music world, etc., sometimes even by listening to friends to whom you are unequally yoked!)

Q – What should that cause you and I to do? (Maybe we need to listen to an old hymn that said, “Tell them the old, old story!” Don’t be the silent one; be the Daniel who would risk their life for God to tell the truth, to interpret God to your world, your family, your friends!)

10. After correcting the history of King Nebuchadnezzar’s encounter with God, what does Daniel courageously go on to do? (By not humbling yourself you have taken sides against the Lord of heaven! He reminds him of the desecration of God’s items, the goblets from the temple and how they used them to worship idols, false gods. He tells him that because of this the God who holds Belshazzar’s life in His hands sent this hand that wrote this inscription. You just saw the miraculous power of the Almighty God!)

11. What did the writing say? (MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN = God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.)

Q – Do you think God would still humble men today and even bring down their kingdoms? Can you think of any examples? (Hitler, Stalin in Hungary, East German communism, Rome, Saddam Hussein, etc.)

12. What is the king’s response? (He is not offended. Instead he has Daniel clothed in purple, the gold chain placed around his neck, and proclaims him the 3rd highest ruler in the land next to him and his father, Nabonidus. He probably believes this is going to change the events foretold by rewarding Daniel rather than executing him for saying such a thing.)

13. What does happen? (The king was slain that night and Darius the Mede too of the kingdom at the age of 62. The capture is recorded in both Babylonian and Persian historical records. The Babylonians thought their huge walls were impregnable, but the Persians diverted the Euphrates River which flowed through the city and crept under the wall at night by means of the river bed to surprise and capture the city killing the king.)

Q – What are some of the lessons you and I can learn from this chapter?