

“The Writing Is On the Wall” // Daniel 5 // *Shining in Babylon* #5

([AAPI Daniel 5 Reading](#) → [DANIEL BUMPER](#))

Daniel 5, if you have your Bible. **How many of you have heard the phrase “The writing is on the wall?”** It usually means that something bad is about to happen; that your fate has been sealed. **That phrase comes from Dan 5.**

The year is 539 B.C. Nearly 70 years have passed since Daniel and his friends were brought in chains to Babylon. Daniel is an old man now, well over 80. Nebuchadnezzar is dead--he has been for about 23 years--and Belshazzar, his uber-privileged, spoiled grandson, is on the throne. Belshazzar is hosting a party--an all-out rager--in our terms, a 100-kegger. (We know that, btw, because the Aramaic word for “wine” used in **vs. 1** to describe the party literally means “lots of wine.”) Suddenly, as they are partying it up, a mysterious floating hand appears and begins to carve a message into the plaster on the wall. Talk about terrifying; freaky--I mean, imagine what that moment would have been like. You are at a party, and a severed, floating hand appears and begins etching 3 mysterious words into the wall, and then just disappears?

The 3 words were **“numbered,” “weighed,”** and **“divided.”** People start screaming and the party descends into chaos. The Babylonian wise men are summoned, but none of them can tell the King what it means, when the elderly Queen, Nebuchadnezzar’s widow--Belshazzar’s grandmother--says, “I once knew a man who could interpret messages like this,” and she tells them about (Daniel. Evidently Daniel has long since retired from public life, or maybe he’d just been put out to pasture. Either way, they send for him, and he comes in.) He reads the message on the wall and says. **26 ‘Mene, mene’ (that word means ‘numbered’), means God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end.**

27 ‘Tekel’ (that word means ‘weighed’), and it means you have been weighed on the balance and found deficient. Unlike his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar had never humbled himself before God;

28 ‘Parsin’ (means ‘divided’) means your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

That very night, less than 50 miles away, the army of the Medes and Persians have coalesced to mount an attack against Babylon, and that very night Babylon will be overthrown and Belshazzar and all the royal family will die.

This story is about **how God ultimately brought down the prideful, rebellious, unjust Babylonian Empire** and kept his promise to restore his people to their Promised Land, but this story also gives us a picture into how God deals with prideful, rebellious people in all times and places.

So I want us to look at this story through 2 lenses: what it meant for Babylon, and what it means for us. I’m going to give you 4 things: **1. Partying in the Face of Death; 2. The Failure of Our Wise Men; 3. The Writing on the Wall for All of Us; and 4. How God’s Finger Has Appeared to Us.**

(By the way, could I share a little historical tidbit before we get started? For years and years and years **Religion 101 classes at Universities** took this story about Belshazzar as proof that you couldn't trust the Bible, because every historian knew, they said, that the last king in Babylon was a guy named Nebanitous. In fact, there was no historical proof that any King named Belshazzar had ever lived! **So, boom: Bible isn't true! Made up myths!** But then, not too long ago, some archeologists dug up an inscription in the Iraqi desert right around the place where Babylon would have been, and guess what it revealed? Nebanitous had just a couple of years before this moved out into the desert and left his son BELSHAZZAR in charge as acting King of Babylon.¹ So, boom, back at you, the Bible is historically reliable after all. That's why, btw, in the story Belshazzar offered Daniel as a reward the **THIRD-highest place** in the kingdom, because technically his dad Nebanitous was still first, and he, Belshazzar, was second). My point here is not to disrespect secular historians, or to imply that most don't do very good work, just to say that when somebody tells you history or science proves the Bible is wrong, just give it a little time and you'll see that the apparent contradiction usually clears up when we gain a little more information or a better understanding on what the author was saying.

But here we go, 4 things:

I. Partying in the Face of Death

- **What's unusual about this party is that** Belshazzar KNEW the combined armies of the Medes and the Persians were less than 50 miles away. EVERYBODY in Babylon knew that. And everybody was on edge. This wasn't the first time the city had been attacked, of course, but this one seemed different. This was a humongous and well-organized army.
- **So why, in the face of this danger, is Belshazzar throwing a party?** We don't know. Maybe he's trying to put on a brave face, to inspire everyone by his courage. Maybe he is trying to drown his own fears in amusement and alcohol. Maybe he's just so arrogant that he thinks Babylon can never fall.
 - **Many of you aren't old enough to remember this, but do you remember all the wacky ways people responded to the turning of the millennium at the end of 1999?** Those of you who are young won't remember this, there were all these doomsday theories about a Y2K computer bug that would cause a global computer crash that would bring civilization as we know it to a screeching halt. Power grids would fail; the food supply chains would break down; money would evaporate from banks; there'd be gas shortages and you know how that goes. People were genuinely worried. **Some people responded by stockpiling** (a lot of Christians I knew were in that category). About 5-6 years after Y2K I was over at the home of our first church planter, Josh Shank--and I opened up one of his closets to get something and it was stacked, floor to ceiling, with non-perishable food items like 5-gallon buckets of rice, MRE's and potted meats. I was like, "Josh, what is this?" He kind of sheepishly grinned and said, "Check this out," and then he took me to EVERY closet in his house, which were ALL packed floor to ceiling with non-perishable food. I said, "Josh, what on earth?" He said, "Remember Y2K? Take a little bit of tech knowledge and a lot of end times prophecy and you end up with \$25K worth of food supply."

¹ Chiera, Edward. "Nabonidus and Belshazzar." The Journal of Religion. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930. Pg 403 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1196122>. Accessed May 28, 2021.

- **So, some people responded to the fear by stockpiling; others responded by partying.** It even became a phrase, “Party like it’s 1999.” How many of you were a little scared when the clock flipped that night? How many of you were at a party anyway? I heard about one guy who had a bunch of people over to his house on NYE, and when the countdown was at :30, he slipped down to the basement. He could hear everyone in the house counting down, “5, 4, 3, 2, 1.” And right as the clock struck midnight, he killed all the power in the house. People started screaming, freaking out. He said it took about a minute before someone went outside and figured out the rest of the neighborhood still had power. So that was pretty awesome.

Belshazzar partied in the face of death; he “partied like it was 539. B.C.” **Why do people do this?** Blaise Pascal said the most consistent human reaction to unpleasant thoughts about their mortality is distracting themselves with amusement. **He uses two analogies:** Life, he said, is like being in a stagecoach that is barreling toward a cliff. You know that the cliff is coming, and you can’t stop the stagecoach or get out of it, but instead of thinking about your coming death and what it means for you, you start to distract yourself with observations about the beautiful scenery along the road, or you engage in pleasant conversation with fellow passengers.

The **Jewish atheist philosopher Ernst Becker** says in his book *The Denial of Death* that in the face of our own mortality, we usually turn to 1 of 3 things to console ourselves, all 3 of which you see here with Belshazzar:

- First, he said, **we boast about our accomplishments, as if those accomplishments give us some kind of immortality.** We try to tell ourselves that we’ve done something that has added meaning to human history and our significance, therefore, will last forever. We’ve really helped advance our career field. Or we console ourselves that we’ve left a legacy that will help future generations of our family live well. We see Belshazzar doing that here. He brings out all the gold and silver they’d conquered from other kingdoms to show that Babylon is special.
- **Second, Becker said, we turn to romance.** We find meaning in the thrills of sex or the feeling of being treasured by someone. Their love justifies us, gives us a reason to live. And we see Belshazzar’s party is filled with wives and concubines and sex.
- **Finally, he said, we turn to religion** to show that for whatever is out there, we’re worthy of it. We use religion to console ourselves that we’re the best of all people and that for whatever’s next, we’ll be counted worthy. You can see that in Belshazzar extravagant toasting of their gods.
- Becker, who was an atheist, said, **“Human beings cannot live in full honest awareness of the meaning of death.”** Even if you are one of those rare people that others still talk about 10 years after you’re gone, one day our sun itself will burn up, and then there will be no trace that any of us ever even existed. Becker said that when we die we’re gone and nothing matters—unless it’s done for the kingdom of a God who outlasts time and whose rule extends beyond the grave.
- **Steve Jobs, Apple’s legendary founder and CEO**, was asked on 60 Minutes, right before he died, whether he believed in God or not. He said that throughout his life sometimes he had, sometimes he hadn’t. But after he was diagnosed with cancer, he found himself wanting to believe. “It can’t be that when we die,” he said, “that it all just fades to black. All the wisdom we’ve accumulated as a race, all of our accomplishments—somehow have to live on.” (Incidentally, he said, that’s why he never liked to put

on/off switches on Apple devices. He didn't like the idea of being able just to flip a switch and shut something off.²

Friend, what is your life? Are you prepared for the end? *It is appointed unto man once to die...*

- You see, the only difference between Belshazzar and us is that he was told the day he would die. We may not know the exact day like he did, but we are just as certain of that day's inevitability.
- Only one life to live...Are you prepared to meet God? Isn't that really the only question that eternally matters?

II. The Failure of Our Wise Men

A repeated theme of Daniel is the failure of Babylon's wise men to deliver when the questions really matter. Obviously, the wise men contributed *something* to Babylonian knowledge or the king wouldn't keep them around. But consistently, when it really matters--when there's a really important dream or vision or question--they let the King down. And each of those times Daniel appears and reveals that there is a GOD IN HEAVEN who can do what the wise men can't.

There comes a point at which the wise men of every age and every culture fail. So, let me ask you to consider: **Who would qualify as our wise men today?**

- **I might first say scientists, and** let me be clear, science and scientists are wonderful gifts of God, to be revered and celebrated and trusted in their spheres of authority. But we see places today where science fails us, right? Or at least it has proven unable to answer questions that we really need answers to. Somebody says to me today, "I only believe in science; science is all I need." I say, "Really? Can science tell you what's right and wrong? Can it tell what your purpose is?" No. As soon as a scientist stops looking through a microscope and starts philosophizing about the meaning of life they've left science and they're engaging in superstition. Or philosophy. Foundationless pontifications about the unknown. **Science can tell us the "what" but not the "why."** Only the Creator can give us the why—only Something that is before the material world, and beyond it can give us meaning. So science is awesome, but it fails us on the ultimate questions of life.
- **I would add politicians and educators to our list of wise men.** But haven't they also proven unable to solve humanity's primary problem? Has any political philosophy proved able to correct the human impulse toward corruption, greed, or abuse of power? The right talks about the importance of family and traditional values and integrity in leadership and then puts up Donald Trump as their champion. The left talks about ending discrimination but then leaked emails from Hollywood reveal that racism is as much of a problem there as anywhere. The left talks about caring for the poor but then it's revealed that most are not personally involved; statistically they give less to poverty relief than their counterparts on the right! Pastor Bryan, most of you know, moved here from the San Francisco Bay area and he said, "If you want to

² "Sometimes I believe in God, sometimes I don't. I think it's 50-50 maybe. But ever since I've had cancer, I've been thinking about it more. And if I find myself believing a bit more...maybe it's because I want to believe in an afterlife. That when you die, it doesn't just all disappear. The wisdom you've accumulated, somehow it lives on. But sometimes I think it's just like an on-off switch. Click and you're gone." Walter Isaacson, *Steve Jobs* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2011), 571.

disabuse yourself of the myth that all the thought leaders on the left care about the poor, just go to SF and watch how they deal with the homeless there. Their main strategy is to give the homeless vouchers to incentivize them to be homeless somewhere else. On the outskirts of town, he says, you see rows and rows of tents of homeless people, literally shipped out of town so they can be out of sight, out of mind, and not mess up the SF young, single and wealthy vibe.

- Listen: **the point of this is not to pick on the right or the left**, nor am I trying to say that NO ONE on the right really cares about morality and no one on the left cares about the poor, and I'm definitely not trying to say there's never a wiser choice in politics. You can save your emails. :) My point is simply that our political and educational wise men have proven unable to cure, on any large scale, the problems of the human race at their core, in their source--in our hearts.

So, just as with Babylon, when it comes to ultimate questions our wise men--from Stephen Hawking to Steve Jobs to party leaders on the left and right--have failed us. We need a word from God.

That's why Daniel, btw, won't let Belshazzar pay him to provide the interpretation. He says, vs. 17, "You may keep your gifts and give your rewards to someone else; I will read the inscription for the king and make the interpretation known to him (free of charge)." IOW, "This is not my word, it's God's. You're offering me money as if this message comes from me or belongs to me, but that's not how this works. All I can do is tell you the truth." Friend, you need a word from God. That word doesn't come from me. I can deliver it to you, but it comes from him.

The failure of our wise men. By the way, don't forget that the wise men who saw the star in the sky and came to see the baby Jesus *were from this region*. Babylon, of course, had LONG since fallen by then, but the traditions and writings of the wise men had remained, and isn't it interesting that somehow in their traditions they had been taught to look toward heaven for a clue about how the world would ultimately be saved? That gives me chills. Through encounters like this they were taught that for ultimate answers about human purpose and destiny, you have to look toward heaven. And one day, God put a star there, and said, "Here's your answer." And 500 years after Daniel 5, a group of them showed up to see the baby Jesus. The encounters in Daniel taught them to look to heaven for the ultimate salvation of the world.

III. The Writing On the Wall for All of Us

Mene, mene: your days are numbered; **tekel:** you have been weighed on the balance and been found deficient; **parsin:** your kingdom has been taken from you and divided. The Bible says this will ultimately be God's verdict on all of us. Let me explain.

As Daniel interprets this message, he explains the nature of Belshazzar's sin. First, he recounts what God had taught Belshazzar's grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar; how God humbled him by making him go insane for 7 years and eat grass like a cow, and how at the end he looked toward heaven and acknowledged that Heaven rules. And then Daniel said, verse 22 "But you, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all

this. 23 Instead, you have exalted yourself against the Lord of the heavens. The vessels from God's house were brought to you, and as you and your nobles, wives, and concubines drank wine from them, you praised the gods made of silver and gold... which do not see or hear or understand. And you have not glorified the God who holds your life-breath in his hand and who controls the whole course of your life.

Daniel charges Belshazzar with 2 main things; **2 things that are the essence of all sin**: **First**, he says, **you have not worshipped God as God**. You have not given him glory, and credited him with all your power and success. You haven't lived your life in response to him. He has not held first place in your heart. Instead, you worshipped idols, because you thought you could control them, and you've lived to please yourself, not God.

Second, he says, **you took the vessels that God set apart for his purposes and used them for yours**.

Specifically, Daniel identifies the Temple artifacts that Belshazzar is now partying with: knives and plates and candlesticks that had been consecrated to the worship of God that Belshazzar is now using for his drunken orgy. But in calling this out, Daniel is giving us a glimpse into the nature of all sin: ***Sin consists of taking what God has set apart for his purposes and using it for our own.***

Let me give a few examples where we do this:

(With) **Your talents**

- Your gifts and talents were given to you to glorify God and serve him. That was their purpose, and to not use them for his purposes is like stealing the consecrated things and using them for yourself, even if you go to church all the time and keep all the other commandments. **Jesus told a story about 3 servants that were given units of money (5K/3K/1K)...** What strikes me is how Jesus responded to the servant who buried the money. He called him, *"You wicked servant."* But I ask, "What wicked thing had he done?" Evidently, there's more than one way to be wicked. You can be wicked by breaking the 10 commandments--adultery, stealing, murder; you can also be "wicked" by failing to leverage your talents for God's purposes. The first is a sin of commission; the second is one of omission. Let that sink it. You could keep all the commandments and still be thought of as wicked because you commandeered the talents God gave you for his purposes and used them for your own. You were a model church member! You never did anything wrong, broke any laws. But God sees you as wicked simply because you didn't offer your talents back to God like a blank check, saying, "God, what do YOU want to do with these?"
- We often say here at the TSC that one of the biggest myths at work in the church is that only a few of us are called to ministry. God had called all believers to leverage their talents for the Great Commission. Matt 4:19. So, the question, we say, is not "if" you're called, but where and how. (This is why we encourage all of our college students and YP's to put the mission of God first in where they choose to pursue their careers. Lots of factors go into where you pursue your career... why wouldn't the Kingdom of God be the most important of those factors? We say, do what you do well to the glory of God; but also do it somewhere strategic for the mission of God, and consider giving at least the 1st 2 years of your post-graduate life to go with one of our church plants in the US or overseas.

- All followers of Jesus are supposed to lay down their talents before God and say, “What do you want to do with these?” To NOT do that is stealing from your Master.

A second place that Scripture says we steal consecrated vessels from God is with:

Your resources:

- **“Will a man rob God?”** God said in the book of Malachi, **“And you ask, ‘How have we robbed you?’ By not giving the tithe to me,”** says the Lord.” Of all that God gave you, you were to give back at least the first 10%, and to not do that God considers stealing (misappropriation), just like Belshazzar did with the Temple vessels. You’re misusing a consecrated thing.

Let me give you one more way we do this:

Sexual sin:

- To use someone else for sexual gratification outside the ways God has prescribed God considers stealing, misusing a consecrated thing. The word the Apostle Paul uses in 1 Thessalonians 4:6 to describe sexual sin is a banking word, “defrauding.” Don’t defraud one another sexually, he says. You see, the body is a sacred thing; it is made in the image of God, and for the believer the Temple of the Lord--something you go into with someone after you have fused your whole life with theirs in a lifelong covenant--and when you use someone else for sexual pleasure, you are taking a precious thing and using it for your own gratification. And God considers that VERY serious, no less serious than what Belshazzar is doing. The writer of Hebrews says “Marriage is honorable in all and its bed undefiled, but those who engage in sexual immorality God will judge.”
- When you look at pornography, you are defrauding that girl (or guy) of her dignity, using what God intended to be holy and sacred as an object of personal pleasure. It’s serious.
- Belshazzar, of course, had taken this sin to an even greater degree. Concubines were sex-slaves. So now he’s taking this precious, holy thing by FORCE, without even the consent of the person he’s having sex with. Sexual abuse is one of the most damaging things, if not the most damaging thing, you can ever do to someone. You’re taking something that God considers holy, by force, and using it for your pleasure. Belshazzar’s story gives you warning of how seriously God takes this.

So that’s 3 examples; there could be many more. Paul says that in whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God.³ Anything we do that is not first and foremost done as an act of worship to him is stealing, we should do all of it to the glory of God. To not use every part of our body for God’s purposes and for his glory is to steal the consecrated things and misuse them for our pleasure, just like Belshazzar did.

³ 1 Cor 6:20; 10:31

These two things: (1) failing to worship God as God and serve him above all things; and (2) commandeering God's consecrated things for our own purposes is something we all are guilty of, so this **"handwriting on the wall" is for all of us. Mene, mene:** Our days are numbered--*it is appointed unto man once to die*),

'**Tekel**' (we've been weighed on the balance and found deficient). How would you do if we weighed these two parts of your life on the divine scales this morning? Have you loved and served God above all things? Have you used the time, resources, and talents that God gave you for his glory and his purposes, or for yours? If the answer to those questions is not an emphatic and unqualified yes, then the judgment of the last word is for you, also: '**Parsin**,' YOUR kingdom, YOUR LIFE will all be taken from YOU. For what is Scripture's verdict on all of us? In the book of Romans, Paul declares: "For there is none righteous, no not one; no one understands, no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and *the wages of sin is death.*"

This is the writing on the wall for all of us. **Which leads me to our last observation:**

IV. The Finger of God Has Appeared to This Generation

Maybe you're sitting there saying, "OK, J.D., this is cool and everything, but a severed hand that appears and carves a divine message into the plaster of a wall? First, that seems a little far-fetched, and second, how is that even relevant to me? I mean, if I saw a floating hand at a keg party that carved me a message, I'm sure I'd pay attention, too."

But that's where you need to see the bigger point of this story. There's some **divine imagery** at work here that you need to pick up on. You see, **this wasn't the first time "the finger of God" had appeared in Scripture:**

- The first time was in Ex 8:19, when the Egyptian magicians in Pharaoh's court are unable to replicate the miracles that God was doing through Moses. For the first couple of plagues they were able to mimic what Moses had done. Moses threw his staff on the ground, and it became a snake, and they had this little trick rod where they could make it look like they had that power. But then, in Exodus 8, Moses raised the stakes. He threw his staff into the dust, and as the dust poofed up it turned into gnats. And from there, gnats multiplied and covered the land. The Egyptian magicians couldn't duplicate that. Creating an optical illusion where it looks like a staff turns into a snake is one thing, but this--creating gnats out of dust--that was something they couldn't fake. And so they told Pharaoh privately (Ex 8:19)-- "*This is the finger of God. We can't do this.*"
- **The second place we see "the finger of God"** is when Moses gave the 10 commandments. Moses tells the people in Exodus 31 that these commandments were literally etched into stone "by the finger of God."
- **So here's what that means: "The finger of God" indicates a power that only God has, or a direct communication from God himself without a human messenger to relay it..**
- **Which makes Jesus' claim to be the finger of God very significant.** Jesus did miracles that no one else had ever done—he healed the blind, walked on water, raised the dead, raised himself from the dead, and in Luke 11:20 he said that these miracles proved "the finger of God" was at work among them. He claimed

that to hear his voice was to hear the voice of God directly. If you've seen me, he told Thomas, you've seen the Father.

- In Romans 12 the Apostle Paul said that God, through Christ, engraved God's law on our hearts, just like the hand in Daniel 5 wrote God's word on the plaster. By the Holy Spirit, God brings changes in our lives that only he can make.
- My point is that in the person of Jesus, the finger of God HAS appeared to this generation. He appeared to us. Verified through prophecy, miracles, and most of all his resurrection--and these show that God is speaking to this generation just like the mysterious hand spoke to Belshazzar.

MUSIC

In Jesus, we are given a message just as serious as what Belshazzar received. Are you going to listen? **Let me offer a conclusion for those of you who are not yet Christians (not yet fully surrendered followers of Jesus), then one for those of you who are. For you who are not yet fully surrendered Christians:**

Mene, mene: Your days are numbered.

- Belshazzar got a rare gift--he was told the day he was going to die. You may not know that, but your death is just as certain as his. "It is appointed unto man once to die, Scripture says, and after that the judgment."

Tekel: You have been measured and found deficient

- Again, all of us, when weighed on the divine scales of God's justice, are going to come up deficient. Charles Spurgeon concluded his message on this passage this way; "I would have every man put himself into the divine scales. These scales are true to a hair--one grain of sand will tip them. On one side of the scale, I put only one commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength," and I invite any man who... flatters himself that he has no need of mercy, no need of washing in the blood of Jesus Christ, no need of atonement—to put himself into the scales, and see whether he measures up to just this one command.

Oh, my friends, if we did but weigh ourselves against the very first commandment of the law, we would have to acknowledge ourselves as hopelessly guilty. But then as we begin to drop in the weight of the other commandments, until the whole sacred Ten are there, there is not a man under the scope of heaven who has anything less to say, but must confess that he is woefully short of the mark." For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; the wages of sin is death. One day we will give an account to an absolutely holy and perfect God for every unkind thing, every stray thought, every dishonest action we've ever taken.

Your days are numbered, you have been weighed in the balance and found deficient.

Some of you say, "Well, I don't like a God of judgment like this." But don't you see how he is reaching out to you in mercy, like he did Belshazzar? How he has filled your life with warning after warning? He doesn't want

you to perish, he wants you to repent and come back to him. See in Jesus' words and works the finger of God pointing at you.

You see, the core of Jesus' message was that you can never be good enough to get to heaven; we can never be righteous enough to tip the scales in our favor. So what Jesus offered was substitution--to take divine judgment in your place. He didn't come to urge you to be a better person. He came to take your place under divine judgment because you couldn't be a good enough person. He lived the life you were supposed to live (a perfect life); then died the death you were condemned to die, paying the price for your sin. And so, when you receive him, onto your side of the scales God puts the righteousness of Christ. And on the other side, he takes away any bit of condemnation that came from your sin, so there's nothing left on that side of the scale. That means that if you are in Christ, on the scales of God's justice, you are no longer deficient. Nothing in all of eternity could ever tip the scales of justice against you, because on your side is the eternally weighty righteousness of Christ.

That's the conclusion for those of you not yet Christians.

But there's also something in here for believers, too. Daniel wrote this book for Israelites discouraged in Babylon. It's easy to get discouraged in Babylon, because everywhere you look, Babylonians are in charge. We see them getting away with all kinds of blasphemy, injustice, and cruelty; they sin with impunity. Has God forgotten us? It's been 2000 years since he was here. Is he gone forever? There were Israelites there, like Daniel, who'd lived their whole lives under captivity. And many were wondering, "Is God still in charge? Does he remember us?" This chapter is a resounding "yes" to that question. The days of wickedness are numbered, and the true King soon will return, and he will restore justice and take us home soon to the Promised Land to spend eternity with him. Our hope is in that day. Our hope is in that King. And that hope gives us strength to not only survive as exiles, but to shine as exiles in our dark and hostile Babylon.

Prayer

