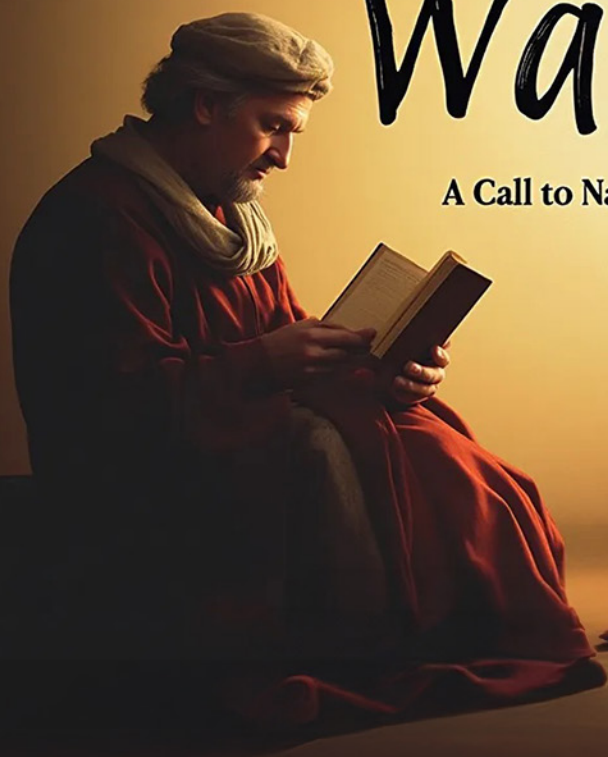


The Handwriting on the Wall

A Call to National Repentance



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A Sermon Booklet Based on Daniel 5 for Today's Church

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Foreword

We live in anxious and consequential times. Like the Babylonian king Belshazzar in Daniel 5, we must ask whether our comforts, celebrations, and cultural achievements have blinded us to our need for God. This booklet is intended to help pastors, small groups, and individual Christians preach, pray, and act in ways that reflect both the justice and the mercy of God. Its tone is sober and urgent, but above all it points to repentance and restoration through Christ.

Scripture: Daniel 5
(selected summary and key verse)

Read Daniel 5 in full. Key verses to have before the congregation:

- Daniel 5:20–23 — God’s warning about pride and failure to glorify Him.
- Daniel 5:24–28 — The handwriting on the wall: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN, and Daniel’s interpretation.
- Daniel 5:30–31 — The fall of Belshazzar’s kingdom that very night.

Key idea: God opposes pride and idolatry and pronounces consequences when a people will not humble themselves.

Exposition: The Story and Its Message

Brief exposition:

- Context: Babylon is at the zenith of pagan pomp. Belshazzar holds a great feast, uses the sacred vessels taken from God’s temple, and praises idols (Daniel 5:2–4).
- Divine interruption: A mysterious hand writes on the wall (Daniel 5:5–6). The king is terrified.
- Daniel’s interpretation: God has numbered

Belshazzar's days (MENE), weighed him (TEKEL), and divided his kingdom (PARSIN) (Daniel 5:26–28). The words describe imminent judgment for arrogance, sacrilege, and moral failure.

- Outcome: That night the Medes and Persians overthrow Babylon (Daniel 5:30–31).

Theological points:

- God is sovereign over nations and history. Earthly power is not ultimate.
- Pride, sacrilege, and injustice are serious sins that bring divine scrutiny.
- God's judgments are real, but they always point to the need for repentance.
- Even in judgment, God's purposes continue: He levels human pride and makes way for His plans.

Sermon: "The Party Is Over — The Handwriting Is on the Wall"

Introduction

- Open with the imagery: a banquet, music, laughter — then a hand writes on the wall and all joy stops. It is a striking picture of sudden accountability.
- Translate to today: nations can grow wealthy, comfortable, and confident, but comfort can breed contempt for God, indifference to justice, and moral

drift.

Exposition/Application (main points)

Pride and Idolatry Are Not Harmless

- Belshazzar's sin was not merely pleasure-seeking; it was using holy things to celebrate false gods. Similarly, a nation can idolize its achievements, freedoms, or pleasures while neglecting God.
- Scripture warns repeatedly: God resists the proud and exalts the humble (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).

Moral Failure Is Often Public and Structural

- Sins that the Bible condemns include sexual immorality, oppression of the poor, perversion of justice, and hypocrisy. These are not merely private failings; they shape institutions and cultures.
- Scripture: Amos 5:24 — “Let justice roll down like waters.” Micah 6:8 — “Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly.”

Judgment Is Real — But It Calls Us to Repentance, Not Despair

- Daniel's message involved imminent consequence. The church must speak honestly about the reality of

divine judgment.

- Yet judgment is also a wake-up call and a door to mercy for those who turn to God (2 Chronicles 7:14).

God's Mercy Is Available; Repentance Is Required

- The gospel is the center of hope: God forgives those who repent and believe (1 John 1:9; Acts 3:19).
- National renewal begins with personal renewal: the church's job is to lead in repentance, prayer, and faithful obedience.

Illustrations (brief)

- A household that neglects its smoke detectors pays dearly when a fire starts; so it is with nations that ignore spiritual warnings.
- Stories of historical revivals that followed corporate repentance (e.g., Scottish revivals, the Welsh revival, the revival movements after wartime national prayers) as examples of God's mercy in response to humility.

Invitation and Application

- Call to humble hearts: Turn from pride and repent. "If my people... humble themselves and pray..." (2 Chronicles 7:14).
- Encourage concrete commitments: pursue justice,

protect the vulnerable, model sexual purity and faithfulness, engage in redemptive civic action without idolizing political power.

- Reassure hope: Christ is risen; He rescues from sin and renews hearts and communities.

Response: Confession, Prayer, and Liturgy for a Time of Repentance

Corporate confession (short)

Leader: Almighty God, we confess that we have been proud and self-sufficient.

People: We have loved pleasure more than holiness; we have been silent in the face of injustice. Forgive us, Lord.

Leader: We have treated what is holy as common and neglected Your commandments.

People: Renew us, O Lord. Make us humble and faithful.

Prayer for the nation (example)

Lord God, have mercy on our land. Forgive our idols, correct our pride, help us to pursue justice and mercy. Turn leaders toward righteousness and the people to repentance. Raise up the church to be a city on a hill—light in darkness, salt for the earth. Amen.

Service outline for a repentance gathering

- Call to worship (Psalm 33 or 65)
- Scripture reading: Daniel 5; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Amos 5:24
- Confession and assurance (1 John 1:9)
- Sermon message (as above)
- Time of silent confession and prayer
- Corporate prayers of intercession (leaders, justice, families, the marginalized)
- Commitment liturgy: signing a covenant of prayer/action by small groups or the church
- Communion (if appropriate) or a closing hymn
- Benediction

Study and Discussion Questions

- What parallel do you see between Belshazzar and contemporary leaders or societies?
- How does pride manifest in personal life, church life, and national life?
- What are practical ways our church can “let justice roll down”?
- What barriers keep us from national or personal repentance?
- What next steps will you commit to for personal holiness and public witness?

Practical Next Steps for Individuals and Churches

Personal:

- Begin a 21-day prayer/fast focusing on repentance, justice, and intercession for leaders.
- Confess known sins to a trusted brother/sister and seek accountability.
- Recommit to daily Bible reading and prayer.

Church:

- Hold a corporate time of repentance and prayer, inviting the community.
- Start ministries that tangibly address injustice: food security, legal aid, support for families in crisis.
- Teach and preach regularly about holiness, social justice, and civic responsibility.
- Encourage congregants to engage the political process prayerfully and ethically.

Public witness:

- Model Christlike compassion in public debates; refuse to demonize opponents.
- Partner with other congregations and faith-based organizations to serve needs across ideological lines.

Suggested Readings, Hymns, and Resources

- Read Daniel 5 in the Bible; also read Daniel 4 for

contrast (Nebuchadnezzar’s humbling).

- 2 Chronicles 7:14 and related commentaries.
- “The God Who Gives Rest” — passages from Hebrews and Psalms on repentance and rest.
- Hymns: “Create in Me a Clean Heart” (Psalm 51 tune), “Come, Thou Fount,” “O Church, Arise” (for mobilization).
- Books: basic pastoral and theological works on repentance, justice, and national prayer movements.

Benediction and Final Prayer

Benediction

May the God of Daniel—wise, just, and merciful—give us the grace to see the handwriting on the wall not as a stamp of despair, but as a call to repent. May He humble our hearts, restore our land as we seek Him, and make us instruments of His justice and mercy. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Final Prayer

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge our need of You. Where we have been proud, forgive us. Where we have ignored the cry of the poor, change us. Where we have participated in a culture that dishonors You, graciously renew us. Give our leaders wisdom, our churches boldness, and our nation opportunities to return to You. For Jesus’ sake, Amen.

Closing Notes

This booklet is designed to be adapted. Use the sermon and liturgy sections as written or reshape them to fit your congregation. The aim is clear: to warn, to call to repentance, and to point to the hope we have in Christ — who alone can cleanse and restore a people that turn to Him.

Below is a focused, biblically rooted breakdown you can use as a prophetic teaching or proclamation. It lists the original wording on the wall, Daniel’s literal interpretation, the metaphorical/spiritual meaning for nations and people, and a reflection on the metaphysical significance of “the hand of Jehovah” — whom Christians recognize as the Lord Jesus Christ — writing that judgment. It closes with a short prophetic word and practical responses.

The Wording On the Wall (Daniel 5:25–28)

- The words (Aramaic transliteration): MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN (Peres)
- Daniel’s literal interpretation:
- MENE — “God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end.” (MENE = numbered)
- TEKEL — “You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.” (TEKEL = weighed)

- PARSIN / PERES — “Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” (PARSIN = divided; PERES = “divided” / also a wordplay on Persia)

Immediate historical fulfillment: That very night Belshazzar was killed and the Babylonia power passed to the Medes/Persians (Daniel 5:30–31).

The Plain Prophetic Thrust (How to Read it for Today)

- Numbered (MENE): God records and numbers the days of powers and patterns. Nothing is outside His timetable. Prosperity and celebration do not mean permanence.
- Weighed (TEKEL): God weighs motives, deeds, and structures. Moral and spiritual standards are applied; the apparent success of a nation or person is not the same as righteousness.
- Divided (PARSIN): Judgment can take the form of removal, division, loss of authority, or the breaking of systems that were built on pride, injustice, or sacrilege.

Metaphorical Meanings (Symbolic Spiritual Lessons)

- The banquet and the language of “the hand writing on the wall” = sudden divine interruption

of complacency and revelry; a wake-up call when a people have grown morally lax.

- Using sacred things for profane ends (Belshazzar's sacrilege) = a sign of cultural idolatry: when a society treats the holy as ordinary and its pleasures as ends in themselves.
- The handwriting = objective moral accounting; it says that history is morally structured — choices have spiritual and tangible consequences.
- Midnight imagery = the hour of crisis, urgency, and decision. It calls both for readiness and for the possibility of sudden deliverance if hearts turn quickly (see parallels in Scripture: the midnight cry in deliverance narratives; Matthew 25—be ready).

The Metaphysical Meaning of “The Hand of Jehovah” (Theologically Focused)

- Divine agency and authority: In Scripture the “hand” often symbolizes God's active power, governance, and control (Ps. 95:4–5; Isa. 40:12). The finger writing shows God personally intervening in history.
- Immanence and transcendence: The hand writing on the wall displays both God's transcendence (He stands over empires) and His immanence (He touches human affairs directly).
- Christ as Judge and Redeemer: Christian reading sees Jesus as the righteous Judge (Acts 17:31; John

5:22) whose authority is exercised for justice and also for mercy. The hand that writes is not a detached cosmic force but the living Lord who both weighs and offers restoration to the penitent.

- The intimate seriousness of divine judgment: A hand that writes — not thunder or earthquake alone — implies personal address. God is not indifferent; He inscribes verdicts that call for human response.
- Ontological implication: God’s knowledge (omniscience) and moral law are not abstractions but active realities — He “counts” and “weighs” and these acts have real results.
- Connection to the Cross and forgiveness: The same hand that judges is the hand that bears the marks of crucifixion for our redemption (John 20:27). This means judgment and mercy converge in Christ — punishment for sin is real, but mercy is available to the repentant.

A Prophetic Word for this Hour (Measured, Urgent)

- “The hand has written; the hour grows late. God has numbered the days of kingdoms that set themselves above holiness. Nations and hearts are being weighed. Systems built on pride, injustice, and licentiousness will not stand by divine fiat. Yet the hand that writes also offers mercy to the humble: repentance opens a door to restoration. This is a

summons — not merely to fear, but to return. Turn from idols; seek justice; love mercy; walk humbly with your God. Delay not. Midnight is near, and the Bridegroom calls the ready.”

(If you proclaim this publicly, frame it as warning plus invitation — warning to the unrepentant and invitation to those willing to return.)

Practical Spiritual Responses (What to Do Now)

- Immediate individual responses:
- Confession and repentance: personal and corporate confession for pride, complicity, silence in face of injustice, sexual immorality, and sacrilege.
- Prayer and fasting: ask God to reveal and humble hearts; pray for leaders, for justice, and for mercy.
- Return to Scripture and obedience: renew private devotion, holiness, and accountability.
- Corporate/church responses:
- Corporate fast and prayer service focused on repentance, justice, and intercession for the nation.
- Concrete works of mercy and justice: care for the poor, defend the oppressed, pursue truth in public life.
- Teach and preach repentance, redemption, and the Lordship of Christ.
- Civic posture:
- Engage in public life with humility and moral clarity