



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Aliens in a Strange Land Series, Lesson 25

Lesson Title: Handwriting on the Wall

Take Home Point: Don't serve gold or silver... be faithful to God.

Warm-Up:

Imagine you are driving through a residential area and are pulled over by a police officer. He says you were speeding, to which you reply that you didn't know the speed limit. Now imagine his reaction: "Oh, that's different. I'm glad you told me that. Since you didn't know, I'll just let you go on your way. It's not your fault you didn't know the speed limit here." Not very likely, is it? Much more likely he would tell you that along with the privilege of driving comes the responsibility of knowing the laws and obeying them. Then he would give you a ticket or at least a warning. The saying goes: "Ignorance of the law is no excuse." This applies to every area of our life, whether in social or legal settings, or in our home and workplace. It is especially true in our spiritual life, since God has given us his written word to know and apply.

Read: Daniel 5; 1 Timothy 6:17

Observation (What happened?):

When in the banquet did the fingers begin writing on the wall?

What did Daniel tell the king in response to the offer of honor and power for his interpretation?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why do you think God chose the moment he did to send his pronouncement to Belshazzar?

What does it mean that God "provides us with everything for our enjoyment?"

Insight:

I find it most interesting that both the queen and Daniel reminded Belshazzar of his father's kingship and humility before God, even though he suffered greatly in being humbled. Both were obviously disgusted with Belshazzar's idolatry, pride and arrogance in spite of the example of King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel in particular held Belshazzar accountable for knowing what his father went through. What brought about Belshazzar's demise was not his use of the golden temple objects – that God allowed the Babylonians to capture them in the first place indicated they were just things to him – but ignoring the lessons of his father. Belshazzar chose to ignore those lessons. You and I can be guilty of the same thing. As a friend of mine said, "My problem is not ignorance of the Bible. I know what it says. My problem is that I am educated beyond my level of obedience." I know that describes me, too. For Belshazzar, his arrogance resulted in his death that very night. For us, the consequences may not be as immediately obvious, but sin has consequences. It hurts our soul and our relationship to God and others. God calls us to be faithful because he knows it's good for us. He knows how much we need him.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

Is there anything you allow between you and God as your idol? What will you do about it?

Pray for the children in your small group to resist the temptation of this world to trust material wealth for security.

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