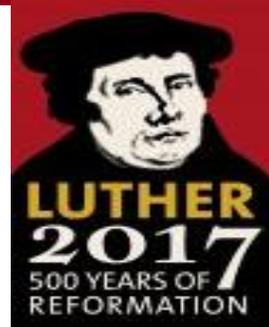


The Handwriting is on the Wall!

Daniel 5:1-31 Mark 13:3-27, 32-37

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MENÈ. MENÈ. TEKEL. PARSON.

Those are the words that were written by the mysterious hand on the wall of the palace of Babylonian King Belshazzar. He had gathered 1,000 of his officials together for a night of drinking and feasting. In the middle of it all, the King decides to use the stolen Jerusalem Temple's golden chalices to drink from – thus desecrating the vessels and blaspheming God. At this point, **MENÈ. MENÈ. TEKEL. PARSON.** is written on the wall. The king is terrified, and the prophet Daniel is eventually called in, and he interprets the writing on the wall, and he pronounces God's judgment on King Belshazzar. *That very night*, Belshazzar's Kingdom fell, and the King himself was killed.

This is the famous "*Handwriting on the wall*" story. The phrase "*Handwriting on the wall*" has come to mean that some misfortune is coming; it's a warning that some failure, disaster, or other calamity is about to occur.

The "*Handwriting on the wall*" would certainly be a good phrase to describe the **END OF THE WORLD!** God has been "writing on the wall" to warn us that Judgment Day is coming and that you must be ready. The "*handwriting on the wall*" is



Rembrandt -- Belshazzar's Feast, 1636

what we normally call the “**SIGNS OF THE END**”.

The signs of the End **warn us** and **remind us** that Jesus will return on the Last Day to judge the living and the dead. The Son of God, who gave His life for you on the cross and rose from the dead on the third day, is the Judge of all men. God has appointed a day when you will stand before Jesus on judgment day. On that day, the only thing that is going to matter is if you believed in Jesus as your Savior or not. **Do you trust that your sins are forgiven and that you are reconciled to God the Father through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Do you believe the words of absolution – that God declares you forgiven through Christ the Savior? That is what Judgement Day is going to find out!**

The only way to be prepared for Judgment Day is to repent of your sins and trust in Jesus for forgiveness. If you are caught up in sin, if you take sin lightly, if you are distracted by the world and love the things of the world, if you are lazy, sloppy and lukewarm in your faith, *then read the handwriting on the wall!* **If you are unrepentant, then you are just like King Belshazzar, and the final judgment will catch you unprepared.**

The story of King Belshazzar is about more than just his drunken antics at the feast. **The King was so unaware that he did not even realize the entire Persian army was at his gates!** The warning is clear: don't be caught **unaware** and **unprepared** when Jesus returns! Jesus warned you to **be on your guard! Stay awake! Be alert! You are to understand the times. Jesus has told you ahead of time. You are to read and understand the “handwriting on the wall”: the signs of the end!**

THE SIGNS ARE EVERYWHERE ALL THE TIME. There is “handwriting” everywhere! Recent and obvious signs of the end that made the headlines were the hurricanes in Texas and Florida this fall, the earthquake in Mexico City, the forest fires out west, the solar eclipse in August, the terrible shooting in Las Vegas, and the terror

attack in New York. Every one of these things is God's "*handwriting on the wall*" -- **warning us** and **reminding us** that Jesus will return on the Last Day to judge the living and the dead. When you see the signs of the end, **stop and repent!** Turn from your sin, confess it to God, and trust in Christ as your Savior.

The Bible teaches us that there are **3 categories of signs** to watch for.

1. The first is the **preaching of the Gospel** to all nations. This is a sign of grace for a fallen world. The preaching of the Gospel means that there is still time to repent! There is still hope! The preaching of the Gospel leads us to repentance and faith! **We get to share in this sign as we support this congregation with our tithes and offerings, as we encourage worldwide mission work, when we intentionally raise godly children, and when we personally share Christ with our neighbor.** The first sign of the end is the **preaching of the Gospel** to all nations – it's the sign of grace!
2. The second category of signs are those of wrath and judgment. These signs include **wars and rumors of war and all forms of bloodshed and dissension.** It includes disruptions in nature such as **earthquakes, floods, fires, and famine.** It includes **sickness, disease, and pestilence.** All of these things are "*handwriting on the wall*"! These are signs of wrath and judgment; read them and repent!
3. The third category of signs of the end are signs of **opposition to Christ and His Kingdom.** These signs include apostasy, false teachers, persecution of all forms, including martyrdom for many, and the great antichrist. **These signs teach you to expect to be persecuted, excluded, and ridiculed for your faith Christ and holding to His Word in your life.** When you experience opposition in your faith or hear of terrible persecution around the world, then repent! Turn from your sin and trust in Christ! Opposition and persecution is more "*Handwriting on the wall*" warning you of the fast approaching Judgment day!

We are to be alert for these things; and recognize them for what they are: God is “*writing on the wall*” – He is **warning us** and **reminding us** that Jesus will return on the Last Day to judge the living and the dead. The only way to have peace in the midst of all this is to trust in Christ as your Savior. God sent His Son to prepare you for the Last Day; God the Father forgives you through Jesus’ death and resurrection. On the cross, all of your sins were dealt with once and for all. Jesus paid for them. He was judged, condemned, and died in your place. In His resurrection, God forgives you all your sins. Because Jesus was declared “guilty” and died on the cross, you are declared, “Not guilty!” and you will live forever in the Kingdom of Heaven. Judgement Day is not a scary day of wrath; but a long awaited homecoming day!

Until then, we live our lives in **faith**, with an attitude of **repentance**, and a sense of **urgency**. There is still time for people who do not know Christ in your life --- reach out to them and tell them about Jesus and what He has done for them. Help them see the “*handwriting on the wall*” so that they too will repent, and trust in Jesus as their Savior. The last thing we want is for someone we know and love to end up like King Belshazzar: **unaware and unprepared for Judgment Day.**

The “*Handwriting is on the wall!*”

- ✓ For King Belshazzar, his Kingdom was ending; he completely missed the signs.
- ✓ For us, the world will be ending and it will be Judgment Day. The signs of the end **warn us** and **remind us** that Jesus will return on the Last Day to *judge the living and the dead!*

May you be found ready, awake, and alert, as you repent of your sins and trust in Christ as your Savior! The “*Handwriting is on the wall!*”

Amen!

There are 100s of signs of the End you are probably not aware of . . . for instance, did you know that in the last 30 days, there were 3,177 earthquakes of 5.1 or greater (according to earthquaketrack.com)?! The signs are not only everywhere all the time, but the are getting more and more intense!

**UNDERSTAND THE TIMES
AND STAY ALERT!**

There is *handwriting on the wall!*