**You Know Better!**

**Daniel 5:17-31**

**Introduction**

When it comes to traffic violations, we like warnings better than tickets. Many of us have received a warning when we should have received a ticket. There are times you might break the law in ignorance; perhaps there was a sudden change in the speed limit that you did not notice. There are other times when you know the speed limit and still speed. It is right for the officer to issue either a warning or a ticket in either situation. You most likely learn more from tickets than from warnings.

Those of you who have young children at home are teaching them to drive, whether you realize it or not. You are teaching them by your example and by the instruction you provide along the way. The real test will come once they receive their license, and it is their turn to drive. Belshazzar did not learn well from the example and instruction of his predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar. He watched what happened to his father, yet he sinned against his knowledge of the truth. He disregarded the warning. What happens to those who “know better?”

1. **Belshazzar and those of his kingdom demonstrated defiance against God.** 
   1. Nabonidus, Belshazzar’s father (adoptive or by birth), was just overthrown the day before.
   2. Now, the Medes and the Persians turned their attention to the city of Babylon and had the city surrounded.
   3. It was at this time that Belshazzar threw a big party for 1,000 leaders of his administration. (v. 1)
   4. Why would Belshazzar choose to continue with the festivities with the army around their walls? He did not want to show any weakness by allowing anyone to disrupt their plans. He had the massive walls of Babylon for his protection. They had the Euphrates River running through the center of the city as their water source. It was part of what made them strong! They had stockpiled a large quantity of food. It was not a time to worry. It was a time of festivity.
   5. He called for the vessels that belonged to the worship of Jehovah. (v. 2) He defied the God of Israel as a way of demonstrating his defiance to the power that now sought to take his kingdom.
   6. The king proposed a toast to the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone. The room had to be filled with laughter and loudness as their king led them in a wild party.
   7. Suddenly, the room went completely silent as a hand appeared and started writing on the wall in a prominent place. (v. 5) As the king’s knees started knocking together uncontrollably, the party came to an abrupt end. They read the words: “*Mene, Mene, Tekel, Uparsin*” (Numbered, numbered, weighed, divided).
   8. The king immediately called for the wise men to decipher the message. When they failed, Daniel was called.
2. **Daniel began his message with a history lesson about Belshazzar’s ancestor, Nebuchadnezzar.** 
   1. Belshazzar should have taken heed to what happened in his father’s life.
3. He knew the splendor of his father’s kingdom. (v. 19)
4. He knew the effects of pride on his life. (v. 20-21a)
5. He knew that all of this happened to point him to the true and living God. (v. 21b)
   1. Belshazzar’s knowledge should have brought him to a place of humility before God. (v. 22a)
   2. Belshazzar’s sin was greater than his father’s because he knew better. (v. 22b) Nebuchadnezzar sinned in ignorance. Belshazzar sinned against the knowledge of the truth.
   3. Belshazzar knew how God dealt with the prideful, but he did not apply the truth to his own life. (v. 23)
6. He lifted himself up against the Lord of heaven.
7. He misused what was given to him by misusing the holy things of God and the opportunity granted to him.
8. **Central Idea: Belshazzar received judgment rather than a warning because he sinned against the knowledge of the truth.**
   1. Judgment was announced. The writing was on the wall. (v. 24-29)
9. *Mene, Mene* is translated, “numbered, numbered.” This was Babylon’s last night. The days of the nation were numbered. Every nation has a last night coming.
10. *Tekel* means “weighed.” God’s measurement is accurate. The king was found wanting.
11. *Peres* indicated that his kingdom was divided (broken). The kingdom would be given to the Medes and Persians.
    1. Judgment came upon Belshazzar that very night. (v. 30-31)
12. Belshazzar’s defenses were not enough to avoid God’s judgment.
13. The mighty walls were not sufficient to keep the judgment of God out.
14. The men in the numerous watch towers missed something.
15. History tells us the Medes and Persians came in under the walls. They diverted the water of the Euphrates into a delta that they created. As a result, the water flowing under the walls was reduced to the point that they might wade or swim under the walls.
16. By the time that the Babylonians realized what had happened, it was too late. Ironically, their source of strength became their source of weakness. Their enemies conquered the mighty city of Babylon without a fight.
17. King Belshazzar’s party was officially over.
18. **Application**
    1. The sins of those who sin against the knowledge of the truth receive greater judgment than those who sin in ignorance.
    2. In the previous chapter, we read the words of Nebuchadnezzar as he attempted to educate the next generation. He wanted to spare them the agony of living against God’s will.
19. Christian parents are to provide Bible education to their children.
20. Fathers and mothers are to be guides in the moral wilderness.
21. Grandparents can have a positive impact as you pass on the lessons you have learned.
22. You teach them by your example and spending time with them.
23. Take time to write to them and talk to them about the need to fear the Lord.
    1. Second and third generation Christians should take heed.
24. Value what you have received.
25. Apply what you know.
26. Don’t sin against your knowledge of the truth.
    1. The first readers needed to take heed to this account.
27. Their fathers were taken captive to Babylon because they forsook the Lord.
28. As they came back to their homeland, they needed to learn from their past.
29. They should never forget that it was sin that led them into captivity.
    1. The sins of America are great because we know better!
30. We have seen what socialism does to countries. Why proceed in that direction?
31. We have seen how sexual perversion destroys lives. Why promote it?
32. We know the effects of alcohol and marijuana. Why endorse either?
    1. The sins of a Christian are worse than the sins of the unregenerate because Christians know better. (Ephesians 4:17-32)
33. You know better than to lie. (v. 25)
34. You know better than to deal in unrighteous anger. (v. 26-27)
35. You know better than to steal. (v. 28)
36. You know better than to use corrupt communication. (v. 29)
37. You know better than to live with bitterness. (v. 31-32)
    1. Those who sin against their knowledge of the truth misuse what has been given to them.
    2. The result of sinning against the knowledge of the truth still comes in the form of judgment.
38. Your days are numbered.
39. God still holds you accountable. He is weighing you at this time.
40. You cannot prevent the judgment of God once it falls.
41. Your source of strength could become your source of weakness.
42. Those who walk in pride, He knows how to abase.