

# The Writing on the Wall

## Teacher's Notes

Belshazzar, son of king Nebuchadnezzar, reigned in Babylon. During a feast for 1000 of his nobles he ordered that goblets from the temple in Jerusalem to be brought to use. As soon as he did that a hand wrote a message on the wall. Daniel interpreted the message from God, warning that the kingdom would be taken from Belshazzar.

Daniel 5 Lesson Plan		Materials Needed
<b>1. Welcome Activity</b> (2-3 minutes)	Hands for the Lord pp. 1-2	device for watching video
<b>2. Focus on the Word</b> (5-7 minutes)	Read Daniel 5 and discuss p. 2	shortened version of text included on p. 3
<b>3. Learn by Doing</b> Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Keeping the Word Holy pp. 4-5	copy of the Word with cover, plastic wine goblets or cups, silver or gold foil, stiff red paper, stapler, tape, scissors
	The Writing on the Wall Rubbing pp. 6-9	blank paper, scissors or paper cutter, white glue, tape or stapler, paperclips, crayons or markers, short pieces of crayon with wrappers removed
	Picture to Color p. 10	crayons or markers
<b>4. Recitation &amp; Closing</b> (2-3 minutes)	Recitation and Closing p. 11	Parent Note p. 12

## New Church Concept Profanation

To “drink wine from the vessels of the temple of Jerusalem” means to draw truths of the doctrine of the church from the Word; and “to praise the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone” means worship from the love of self and the world, for these gods signify idolatrous worship and profanation. That it was therefore written on the wall, “numbered, weighed, divided” signifies separation from all things of heaven and the church. See *Apocalypse Explained* 376

## Welcome Activity: Hands for the Lord

*Materials Needed:* device for playing an online video:

Seat children in a circle and invite them to wiggle all their fingers. Ask, “What have your hands done today?” “How did they help you eat breakfast?” “What about when you got dressed?”, etc. Hands can do wonderful things. Our hands are a gift from the Lord. We can use them to serve the Lord by helping others and by doing what He wants us to do. The Lord also gives us eyes so we can see, ears so we can hear and a tongue so we can speak.

continued on next page

## *Hands for the Lord continued*

Let's listen to a song. Listen to the song *Two Little Eyes to Look to God* at [www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-two-little-eyes-to-look-to-god-song/](http://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-two-little-eyes-to-look-to-god-song/). Turn on the Closed Caption feature at the bottom of the video screen to see the words for singing along. The song repeats once.

Today we will learn about a king who did not use his hands to do what the Lord wanted. Listen to find out what happened.

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### *Focus on the Word*

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**Read:** Daniel 5. A shortened version of the story is included on page 3. For young children you may wish to summarize some of the story and read aloud the sentences printed in **bold**.

1. **The king in this story is called Belshazzar. Let's say his name together: Belshazzar. His name sounds a bit like the name *Belteshazzar*, the name Daniel was given when he arrived in Babylon. King Belshazzar's father was king Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar did not know the Lord, and, like his father, tended to think about himself.**
2. **One day Belshazzar invited many friends for a big dinner. Have you been to a special dinner with lots of people? What was it like?**
3. **Belshazzar and his friends had lots of fun. Eventually he asked his servants to bring out some special treasures that his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the Lord's temple in Jerusalem, to use for the feast. This was a bad idea, because the treasures were from the Lord's house and were for worshipping the Lord.**
4. **We have special things in our church too. What do we have that's special in our church?** Engage the children in a discussion about precious things such as the Word, candles, etc. **These things help us know and worship the Lord. We treat them with care and do not use them for other purposes.**
5. **What happened when the goblets or cups from the temple were used at the feast?** A hand wrote "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin" on the wall. **Let's say these words together, "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin." The people did not know what the strange words meant because they were not in their language.**
6. **Who could explain the strange words?** Daniel. **The queen remembered that Daniel had explained Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and might be able to help.**
7. **At times we all make mistakes and do things that are wrong. When we do this, a voice inside us, our conscience, tells us that we are doing something wrong—just as Daniel told the king what was wrong. When we listen to our conscience, we can stop doing what's wrong, and try again to do what the Lord wants us to.**
8. **Only obeying the Lord can make us truly happy. We obey Him by listening to His Word and doing what He tells us to do.**

# The Writing on the Wall

<sup>1</sup>King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand nobles. <sup>2</sup>While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles might drink from them. <sup>3</sup>So they brought in the gold goblets, and the king and his nobles drank from them. <sup>4</sup>As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

<sup>5</sup>Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. <sup>6</sup>His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking.

<sup>7</sup>The king summoned his wise men and said to them, “Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

<sup>8</sup>Then all the king’s wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. <sup>9</sup>So the King became more terrified and his face grew more pale.

<sup>10</sup>The queen, hearing the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. “May the king live for ever!” she said. “Don’t be alarmed! There is a man in your kingdom who has the Spirit of the Holy God in him. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means.”

<sup>13</sup>So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, “I have heard that the Spirit of God is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and wisdom. <sup>15</sup>The wise men were brought to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. <sup>16</sup>If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

<sup>17</sup>Then Daniel answered the king, “You may keep your gifts and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.

<sup>18</sup>“Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom and majesty, and glory and power. <sup>19</sup>All nations and peoples feared him. But when the king’s heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was driven away from people and given the heart of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth. <sup>22</sup>“But you, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. <sup>23</sup>Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from His temple brought to you, and you and your nobles drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in His hand your life and all your ways. <sup>24</sup>Therefore He sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

<sup>25</sup>“This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. <sup>26</sup>“These words mean: *Mene*: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. *Tekel*: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. *Upharsin*: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” <sup>29</sup>Then at Belshazzar’s command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

<sup>30</sup>That night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, <sup>31</sup>and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

(Daniel 5:1-31 adapted from the NIV)

## Keeping the Word Holy

### Materials Needed

copy of the Word with a cover, plastic goblets or cups; silver or gold (aluminum) foil, copy of *Word Pages* p. 5, stiff red paper to make a cover for the Word pages, stapler, tape, scissors

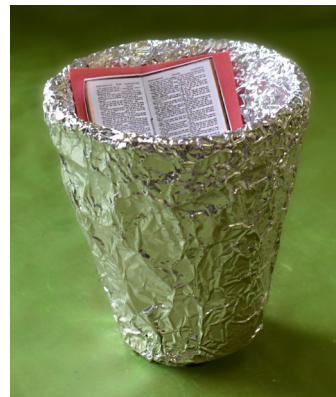
### Prepare in Advance

Buy cups and foil. Divide the foil into pieces large enough to cover the cups. Print copies of *Word Pages* and cut apart (1 for each child). Cut the stiff red paper into rectangles just a little larger than the Word pages. Staple the Word into the cover along the center line.

### New Church Concept Temple Vessels

By the “temple at Jerusalem” from which the vessels came, is signified in the supreme sense the Lord, in the representative sense His kingdom and church. The kingdom of Belshazzar being “divided” signified the dissipation of good and truth, and he himself being “slain that night” signified the loss of the life of truth and good, thus damnation; for “to be divided” denotes to be dissipated; “a King” denotes the truth of good. *Arcana Coelestia* 9093

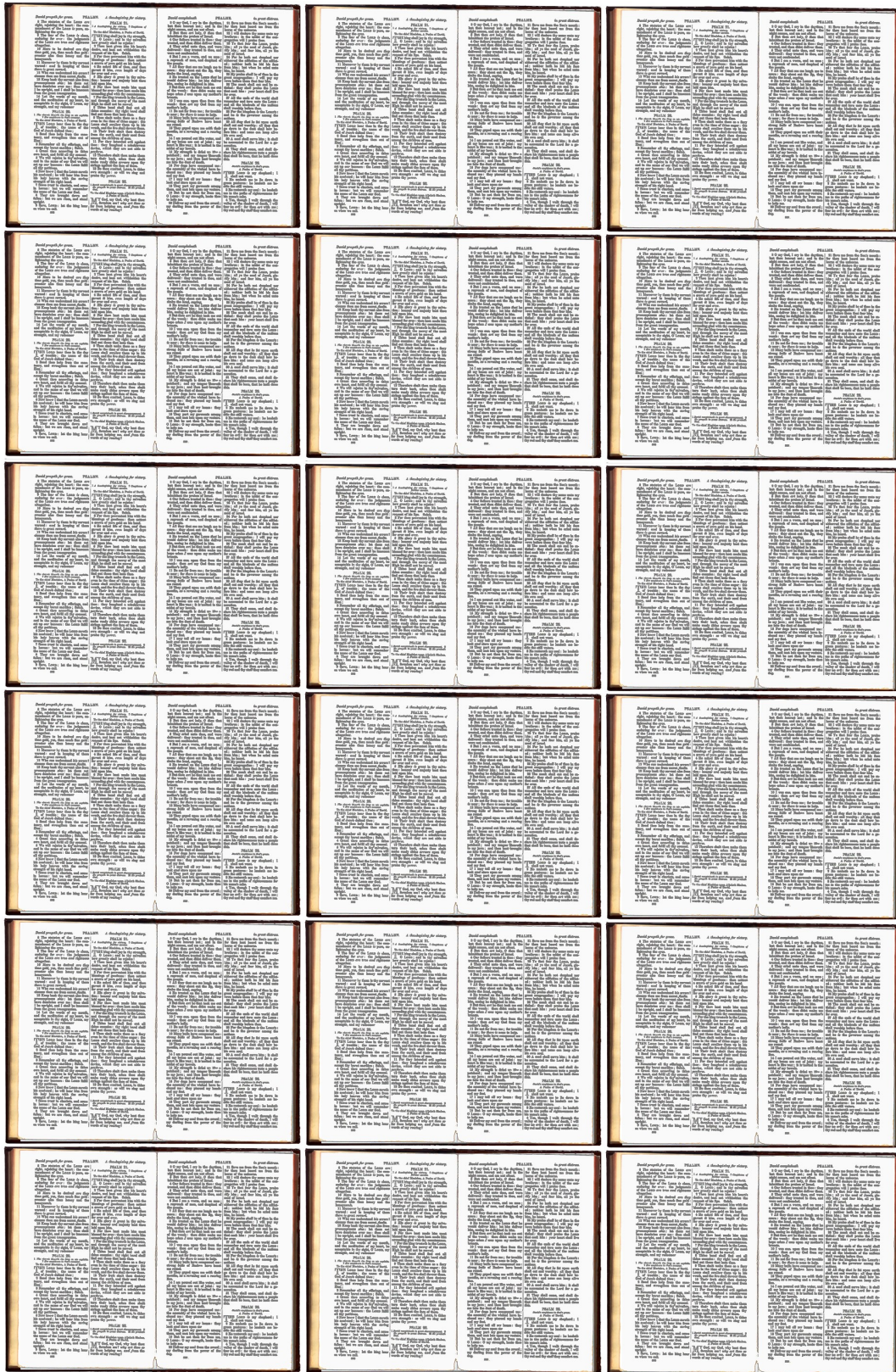
King Belshazzar, son of Nebuchadnezzar, was a selfish king. He did something that was very wrong. He took vessels from the temple, which were to be used for the sacred worship of the Lord, and used them for his own pleasure. In doing this he mixed good with evil, which is profanation. This offense was so serious that he died and his kingdom was given to the Medes and Persians that night. Children will make a “goblet” of silver or gold to represent the precious goblets from the Lord’s temple.



They will put a miniature copy of the Lord’s Word in the goblets, to remind them that we are to treat the truths from the Lord’s Word with special care.

1. Show a copy of the Word. The Lord talks to us in the Word, and so we treat the Word with care. Show the Word with a special protective Word cover on it. We use a cover to protect the Lord’s Word because it is holy.
2. Do you keep a copy of the Word in a special place in your home or bedroom? What is your special place for the Word like? What do you keep near the Word?
3. In what other ways can we care for the Word? Would we put the Word on the floor? Or put something on top of it? Or use the things the Lord says in the Word lightly?
4. What holy things did king Belshazzar use in the wrong way? The goblets from the temple in Jerusalem that were for worshipping the Lord. They should not have been used at a party. Using the goblets in the wrong way would be like us using the Word in the wrong way.
5. We are going to make goblets that are silver (or gold), to remind us of the goblets that were taken from the temple in Jerusalem.
6. Give each child a plastic cup and a piece of gold or silver foil. Wrap the cup in the foil, covering the cup completely. Tape the ends to secure the foil if needed.
7. Give each child a miniature copy of the Word to put inside their cup to remind them how important it is to keep the Lord’s Word holy, just as the cups from the temple were holy.

# Word Pages



## The Writing on the Wall Rubbing

### Materials Needed

copies of *Writing on the Wall*, pp. 7-8, copies of the pictures of Belshazzar and Daniel p. 9, blank paper, scissors or paper cutter, thick liquid glue such as white glue or craft glue, tape or stapler, paper-clips, crayons or markers, short pieces of crayon for rubbing

### Prepare in Advance

Print a copy of the pictures of Belshazzar and Daniel p. 9 for each student. Cut the page in half and tape or staple a piece of blank paper between the figures as shown in the picture above. Remove wrappers from the short pieces of crayon. Decide whether to use the English or Hebrew version of *Writing on the Wall* pp. 7-8. Spread thick glue carefully over the letters to form a raised surface for rubbing as shown in the picture below. Depending on the size of your class, you may wish to make more than one of these. *Note:* It will take about an hour for the glue to dry. You can speed this up by using a hairdryer.



Seeing “the writing on the wall” means something is about to change or end. The saying originates from this story. While Belshazzar was in drunken stupor he took vessels from the Lord’s house and used them at a party. A hand appeared and wrote a warning he couldn’t



understand. The wise queen, possibly Belshazzar’s mother, suggested he call Daniel for help. Children will create a picture of Daniel and Belshazzar and make the message “appear” between them by rubbing a raised copy of the text in Hebrew or English.

1. We are going to color a picture of Belshazzar and Daniel and then make the writing on the wall appear between them.
2. Give each child a copy of the blank page with the pictures of Belshazzar and Daniel taped on either side. Invite the children to color Belshazzar and Daniel, leaving the space between them clear. That clear space is the wall where the writing will appear.
3. Have children take turns using the *Writing on the Wall* page prepared with glue. Place the page with the writing under the blank paper between Belshazzar and Daniel and secure it with paperclips.
4. Show children how to make a rubbing, using a piece of crayon, so that the writing appears on the wall between Belshazzar and Daniel.

### New Church Concept Profanation

Profanation is mixing and linking good and evil together, and also truth and falsity together. *Arcana Coelestia* 3757

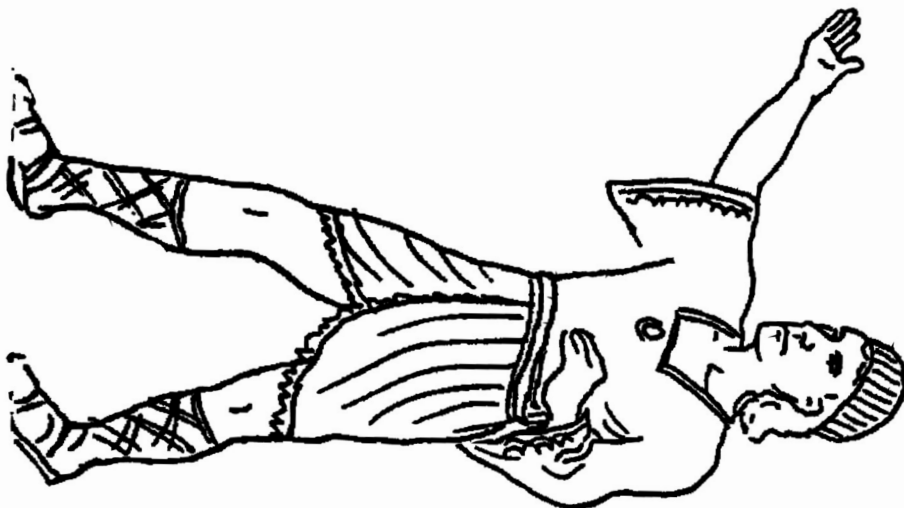
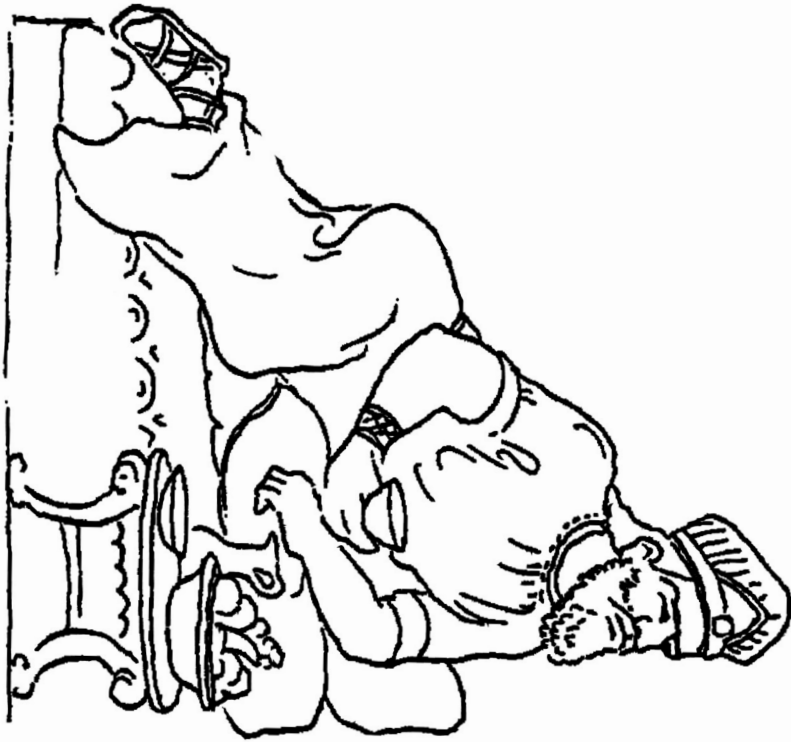
A person in a state of profanation is in contact with the heavens and at the same time with the hells, through truths with the heavens and through the falsities of evil with the hells.... In the next life a tearing apart takes place with such people, which destroys the whole of their inner life. *Arcana Coelestia* 10287

**MENE MENE  
TEKEL  
UPHARSIN**

*Writing on the Wall – Hebrew*

מֵאֵל מֵאֵל  
תִּקְוֵנוּ  
רַפְּנוּ





MENE MENE  
TEKEL  
UPHARSIN



## *Recitation and Closing*

Each lesson in the Daniel series includes a recitation. The recitations are taken from prayers in the book of Daniel. We will be learning one sentence with each lesson, and building on each sentence until all six sentences can be recited together.

Introduce the 5th sentence of *Prayers in Daniel*, the recitation for this lesson: “He removes kings and raises up kings.” Belshazzar’s kingdom was taken away from him because he used holy things from the temple at a party.

Try saying the sentence aloud and inviting the children to repeat it after you. If needed, break the sentence into phrases, e.g. “He removes kings”, “and raises up kings.” Invite children to repeat just one phrase at a time. End by joining the phrases together and saying the entire sentence.

Review sentences 1, 2, 3, and 4 and then recite sentences 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 together.

### *Prayers in Daniel*

1. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever.
2. He reveals deep and secret things.
3. How great are His signs!
4. He gives wisdom to the wise.
- 5. He removes kings and raises up kings.**
6. I thank You and praise You, O God.

*Daniel 2:20-23; 4:3 adapted*

### **Closing**

When we do things that are wrong, the Lord finds ways to let us know. Our conscience, the voice inside us from the Lord, tells us that we’re doing something wrong—just as Daniel told King Belshazzar he had done something wrong. When we pay attention, we can stop doing what is wrong and try again to do what the Lord wants. This is the Lord’s plan for making us truly happy.

Give *Parent Notes* (p. 12) to children as they leave.

Cut the Parent Notes apart and give one to each child.

## *The Writing on the Wall*

Dear Parents,

Today we learned about a new ruler in Babylon—King Belshazzar. Ask your child what the king did that was so wrong the Lord sent a hand and wrote a message on a wall. The Lord told Daniel that the message meant the king had done something wrong and that his kingdom would be taken from him.

Today we learned sentence 5 of the *Prayers in Daniel* recitation. Please help your child say sentences 1-5 at home this week.

Thank you.

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Dear Parents,

Today we learned about a new ruler in Babylon—King Belshazzar. Ask your child what the king did that was so wrong the Lord sent a hand and wrote a message on a wall. The Lord told Daniel that the message meant the king had done something wrong and that his kingdom would be taken from him.

Today we learned sentence 5 of the *Prayers in Daniel* recitation. Please help your child say sentences 1-5 at home this week.

Thank you.

## *Prayers in Daniel*

1. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever.
2. He reveals deep and secret things.
3. How great are His signs!
4. He gives wisdom to the wise.
5. He removes kings and raises up kings.
6. I thank You and praise You, O God.

*Daniel 2:20-23; 4:3 adapted*

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*Daniel 2:20-23; 4:3 adapted*