

Choosing Consequences

Introduction:

- A. [No one wants to take responsibility – Government, Store, Schools, Parents... They don't want to face the consequences]
- B. However life is full of consequences & if we are going to be people of character, we must face up to it.
- C. {Most important message of this series}
- D. Daniel 5:27
- E. "From the tragedy of Belshazzar we must be aware of the consequences we face with God."
- F. What's going on here?
 - a. 33 years has passed from ch 4 to 5...
 - b. Belshazzar is now severing as co-regent to Nabonidus...
 - i. He is either a son or grandson to Nebuchadnezzar
 - ii. He is about 36 yrs old
 - c. Belshazzar decides to throw a huge drunken party.
 - i. He was doing this while Babylon was surrounded by the Medes & Persians...
 - ii. This feast could have been thrown in confidence in the greatness of their city
 - 1. Walls – 87 ft thick & 350 feet high
 - 2. 100 bronze gates
 - 3. Their store houses were filled with food & the Euphrates flowed through the middle of town
 - iii. The young king decided, while drunk, to have the gold & silver vessels brought that had been stored away from the Temple in Jerusalem
 - iv. All done in a drunken, sexually perverted party in honor of their false gods...
 - d. But then we have the writing on the wall
 - i. Fingers of a hand appear where the king could see & began to write on the plaster of the walls of the hall
 - ii. The king was immediately stricken with terror...
 - iii. He knees began to knock & he cried out for help from the wise men of Babylon, but they were no help...
 - e. Then the queen came with some advice
 - i. Believed to be the queen mother...
 - ii. She implores Belshazzar to seek out the man with the spirit of God, Daniel...
 - iii. Daniel enters the scene at about 80 yrs old...

- iv. Belshazzar offers him to be clothed in purple, given a chain of gold, & become 3rd in command...
 - v. But Daniel didn't want his offer, because he knew what was coming!
- G. Thus Daniel delivers a sermon that cuts straight to Belshazzar's consequences.
 - H. 2 Truths about choosing consequences:
 - I. We must recognize the consequences of sin in our life.
 - a. Daniel pronounced Belshazzar's sins openly. {Dan's Sermon}
 - i. He had committed the sin against knowledge. (17-22)
 - 1. Daniel no thanks [***"No one wants a promotion when the company is bankrupt."*** – Swindoll]
 - 2. Daniel begins by reminding Belshazzar that he couldn't claim ignorance of God's presence...
 - 3. He was aware of how God had humbled Nebuchadnezzar, yet he still sinned against & did not honor God.
 - 4. He failed to humble his heart of pride, even while he was aware of what God could do.
 - ii. He had committed the sin of blasphemy. (23a)
 - 1. Belshazzar willingly turned his back on God.
 - 2. He blasphemed by desecrating the holy vessels from the temple of Jerusalem
 - 3. His very defiance against God was an act of blasphemy.
 - iii. He had committed the sin of idolatry. (23b)
 - 1. Notice the steady digression Belshazzar was making.
 - 2. He was offering God's vessels to their pagan idols
 - 3. All the while ignoring the very One who held his breath & life in His hands!
 - b. We must be aware of these divisive sins in our life.
 - i. We too can be guilty of ignoring what God has already revealed.
 - 1. The sins of omission
 - a. "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." – Jam. 4:17
 - b. [Church, returning correct change, & helping someone in need]

2. But what is even worse is to ignore the message of the gospel.
 - a. The sins of thousands of Americans...
 - b. *“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”* – Heb. 10:29
 3. It is a dangerous thing to be near to the truth of Jesus & ignore Him.
 - a. *“Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”* – Matt. 11:20-24
 - b. When we ignore God, we are thus challenging Him
 - c. **[Like Belshazzar]**
- ii. We too can be guilty of having blasphemy in our lives.
1. God demands respect for His holy name.
 - a. 3rd Commandment...
 - b. *“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”* – Ex. 20:7
 - c. Yet our lips my drop blasphemy daily...
 - d. Our actions can show blasphemy
 - e. **[Miss using what has been set aside for God]**
2. Even acting like we are one of God’s people when we really aren’t is blasphemy.
- a. *“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”* – Rev. 2:9
 - b. **[Fake Christians]**
3. Jesus pointed out the root of where blasphemy comes from:
- a. *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”* – Matt. 15:19
 - b. If we find ourselves blaspheming God, if proves that we have a heart problem.
- iii. We too can be guilty to bowing down to idols.
1. God has made it clear that He be the only God in our lives.
 - a. 1&2nd Commandment
 - b. *“You shall have no other gods before Me.”* – Deut. 5:7
 - c. We still do this today!!!
 - d. ***“Idolatry is when I look to something that does not have God’s power to give me what only God has the power & authority to give.”*** - Pete Wilson **Empty Promises**
 - e. **[Achievement, Approval, Power, Money, Religion, Beauty, Chasing Dreams]**
 2. Covetousness is a form of idolatry
 - a. *“For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”* – Eph. 5:5

- b. The love for stuff can drive a wedge between us and God.
- 3. God views idolatry equal to adultery
 - a. *“My people ask counsel from their wooden idols, And their staff informs them. For the spirit of harlotry has caused them to stray, And they have played the harlot against their God.”* – Hosea 4:12
 - b. When we seek the counsel & deliverance from any other source we have committed idolatry!
- 4. *Thus it is important that we understand the destruction of sin in our life...*

“Why?...” This brings us to the truth...”

- II. We must realize the consequences of judgment.
 - a. Daniel proclaimed the coming judgment on Babylon.
 - i. The judgment of numbering (24-26)
 - 1. “MENE” – mean “to number”
 - 2. Thus God had numbered the days of the kingdom & He had determined its conclusion.
 - 3. The repetition gives double the emphasis
 - ii. The judgment of weight (27)
 - 1. “TEKEL” – is a measurement of weight
 - 2. God had weighed Belshazzar to His righteousness & he came up short
 - 3. *“wanting”* – to come up short of what the true standard should be.
 - iii. The judgment of division (28-31)
 - 1. “PERES” is the root word of “UPHARSIN”
 - 2. It means – “to divide”
 - 3. The kingdom was about to be divided to the Medes & Persians
 - a. Belshazzar honor Daniel, but he would die that very night.
 - b. That night Babylon the great fell
 - c. **[Cyrus moved the river]**
 - d. **[God’s Plan – Jeremiah & Isaiah]**
 - 4. Then Darius became the king.
 - b. We must be ready for the Day of Judgment ourselves.
 - i. A day of judgment is coming for each of us.
 - 1. *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* – Heb. 9:27
 - 2. Will be ready?

- ii. Are we going to suffer the consequences of our sins?
 - 1. Sin is deadly.
 - 2. **Rom 3:23 & 6:23a**
 - 3. If we do not accept Jesus’ payment for our sins we will go to Hell.
 - 4. *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”* – Jn. 12:48
- iii. However, we can embrace Jesus as the answer to our sin problem!
 - 1. *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit”* – 1 Pet. 3:18
 - 2. If we come to Jesus with faith & repentance we will find forgiveness!
 - 3. **[Lord & Savior / Leader & Forgiver]**
 - 4. But the choice is yours!
 - 5. *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name”* – Jn. 1:12

Conclusion

- A. {McArthur’s 1980’s observations}
 - a. Drunkenness (1-4)
 - b. Pleasure Madness (1-4)
 - c. Immorality (2-3)
 - d. Idolatry (4&23)
 - e. Blasphemy (2-4&23)
 - f. Willful Rejection (18-22)
 - g. Unrelieved Guilt (6&9)
 - h. Greed & Impure Motives (7&16-17)
 - i. Materialism (7&16-17)
 - j. Over confidence (1-4&30-31)
 - k. Corrupt Leadership (1-4)
 - l. The Decline of the Family (18-22)
- B. Are the sins of Belshazzar in your life?
- C. Are you ready to face the coming judgment?