**Sermon Notes – Sunday 29th June 2025**

**‘Daniel – standing firm in a foreign land’**

Daniel Chapter 5. The book of Daniel jumps ahead to the final night of the Babylonian Empire (in 539 BC).

* If you knew this was your last night on earth, how would you spend it?

Belshazzar was not technically the king of Babylon, his father King Nabonidus was away campaigning in Arabia for 10 years and only came back to Babylon after its fall. In his absence, Belshazzar, his son, the prince regent, was functioning as King.

This episode shows that the Lord, the God of Israel, rules over the nations and holds their rulers to account. It also highlights the tragedy of being unresponsive to God (by a hardening of the heart).

Verses 1-5. It would seem that the drunkenness at the feast caused Belshazzar to abandon normal inhibitions in fetching the holy vessels taken from the Jerusalem temple and using them disrespectfully. It was an act of drunken defiance directed at Judah’s God with severe consequences.

* How does the Bible address the subject of drinking wine (Eph 5:18)
* What drives people who seek to mock Jesus, God and Christians?
* Why do you think God chose to make himself known in the way that he did in v5?

It is ironic that Belshazzar had to ask for help (v11) from a Jew, whose God he had just insulted. Daniel had been almost entirely forgotten (for 40 years), though he had exercised a significant influence in Nebuchadnezzar’s life.

* How do you account for the fact that Daniel had been almost entirely forgotten? How might this have affected him? How might you feel?

V18-24 Belshazzar should have learnt from Nebuchadnezzar’s experience. There is little sympathy for Belshazzar, ‘You knew all this’ (v22).

* Why are we so slow to learn lessons from the example of others (and insist on making the same mistakes ourselves)?
* Why are people so slow to acknowledge God’s hand in their life?

V25-30. The words on the wall were in Aramaic. Daniel gives the interpretation that tells Belshazzar his days are numbered and about to end; you’ve been measured and found wanting; your kingdom is about to be divided and given away. Belshazzar, the fool, failed to number his days and gain a heart for wisdom (Psalm 90:12).

* What do we learn of Daniel’s faithfulness and availability in this event?
* What do we learn about God’s sovereignty?