

Daniel 5:1-9 – At The End of the Line Came a new Beginning

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The Jews endured peace during the time after Nebuchadnezzar's conversion and before his death. I expect that that would have reignited God's people's faith in his great power and his abundant provision. Yet, they could not expect that life would always go smoothly. Christians are to persecution and difficulties throughout life. What God assures you his children of is that he will be with you always...and that he never gives you more than you can bear. Based on this knowledge, it is not surprising what happened next. **Babylon had 3 or 4 bursts of wickedness** – wicked kings, a warning to the Jew not to get comfortable in Babylon but to wait for the end of their punishment, return to Judah after, and wait for Messiah. With that lesson hopefully learned of God's mysterious ways, God started to bring an end to the Babylonian line and opened the way for Cyrus of the Medo-Persian king to assume the throne and send his people back to Jerusalem. This end of the line for Belshazzar and the new beginning for God's people is the topic for today.

Our headings are: **Belshazzar's attack on God**, and **God's response to Belshazzar's attack**.

Our goals are: **That you will see God's sovereign hand and his unchangeable word, so that you can trust him, as you move forward in your life as Christ's child.**

Belshazzar's Attack on God

1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand.

1. Belshazzar was Nebuchadnezzar's grandson. It seemed, according to history, that he co-reigned in a subservient 顺从的 way, to his grandfather, and possibly 3 other short-lived kings (Evil-merodach (Jer 52:31), Neriglissar, his brother-in-law, and Laborasorarchod (nine months). Belshazzar was wicked. He never had the blessings and privilege of being raised in a covenant home and never came to know the Lord. His grandfather was a convert 皈依者 to Jesus Christ but Belshazzar was a corrupt and cruel man. Belshazzar killed a nobleman with whom he went hunting because the man shot an animal before he. He also mutilated 毁伤 a man in his court because one of the king's concubines 嫔妃 thought he was good looking.

2. In the providence of God, Belshazzar decided to throw a big feast, even as the large city of Babylon was being surrounded by the Medes 米堤亚人 and the Persians 波斯人. Someone called this feast a "heaven-sent infatuation 迷恋" with pleasure." Belshazzar couldn't care less about the consequences. He invited 1000 noble men, his concubines, etc. Instead of trumpeting 宣告 a fast for prayer and repentance with the Persians surrounding the city, he threw a feast 宴会. The Jews believed that he threw this feast because he knew that the Jews believed that their 70 years of slavery had been completed and that they would be freed. So Belshazzar wanted to show contempt 藐视 for God. He wanted to prove that they could not leave! How deceived!

Isaiah 22:12 And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts Called for weeping and for mourning, For baldness and for girding with sackcloth. 13 But instead, joy and gladness, Slaing oxen and killing sheep, Eating meat and drinking wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

BTW, isn't it interesting that politicians are causing our countries to commit financial suicide and don't even care?

2 While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. 3 Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.

3. While indulging 放纵 in wine, Belshazzar acted like a drunk and abused the holy utensils from the Lord's temple in Jerusalem. He did what he wouldn't usually do sober 冷静. Drunks think they are more powerful, or stronger than they otherwise are. Belshazzar should have had some respect for his grandfather and for Daniel. He should have had respect for God, even if he thought of God as just one of many gods. He mocked God...treated him like a joke. He made the same mistake of being arrogant 傲慢 like his grandfather was earlier in his life.

4. Of course he could not blame his grandfather for his wicked 邪恶 actions – or say that his grandfather didn't teach him.

Ignorance of the law is no excuse for breaking the law. He didn't need to use the vessels that belonged to the Lord. This was just wanton 荒唐 wickedness. It was to spit at God's sacrifices 祭品. **Wickedness as his first name**. God cherished his worship and the things of his worship, and the worse punishment in the Bible is reserved for those who corrupt God's worship. The first 4 commands deal with the worship of God.

5. The utensils were for holy, not ordinary, things and no one was to use them except the priests in worship. The Jews even prayed for the return of these vessels (Jeremiah 27).

Ex 40:9 "And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it; **and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy.**"¹⁰ "You shall anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most holy.

Numbers 7:1 Now it came to pass, when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, **that he anointed it and consecrated 神圣 it and all its furnishings 用品, and the altar and all its utensils;** so he anointed them and consecrated them.

Numbers 4:12 "Then they shall take all the utensils of service with which they minister in the sanctuary, **put them in a blue cloth, cover them with a covering of badger skins,** and put them on a carrying beam.

Exodus 30:26 "With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; ²⁸ "the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. ²⁹ "You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; **whatever touches them must be holy.**

By anointing the utensils it meant that they were set apart for sacred 神圣 use only. And anyone who touched these utensils was considered to be holy. So when the wicked Belshazzar used these utensils it was an affront 冒犯 to the Holy God. It was blasphemous 亵渎. God's very worship was being attacked. Not one of his 1000 noblemen had the courage to say that this was sacrilege 渎圣. Where the honey is (sacred things), there is the venom (if abused).

4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone.

6. And as they drank for Jehovah's vessels, they praised false gods of silver and gold. This can only be explained by drunkenness. The phrase "drank wine" is translated "did as the wine commanded."

God's Answer to Belshazzar's Attack

5 In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

1. God did not take long to respond to Belshazzar's wickedness. He is often a patient God, but when his holy name is being violated 亵渎 and abused 妄用, he becomes an angry God. So God wrote a judgment on Belshazzar's wall.

2. Belshazzar did not know the message, but he and those who were abusing the holy things of the temple. They may have even put the lampstand from the temple on their wall as a decoration. It is also important to note that the records of the king's victories over his enemies were recorded on the plaster where God wrote. It was as if God were saying: "I am going to write of my victory over you. You grandfather recognized that I was the eternal God, with unlimited power and an unlimited kingdom, but you have rejected me."

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty 傲慢 spirit before a fall.

6 Then the king's countenance 表情 changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.

3. There were no lightning bolts 闪电 and thunder...no fire...just the written word behind the candlestick 烛台 so everyone could read it. This caused Belshazzar to be afraid – so much so that his knees began to knock. Isn't it amazing how the written Word of God can have so much impact on man? Isn't it therefore reassuring that you don't have to come up with innovative ways to bring truth to sinners...just have them read the Word and explain it to them? There were no dramatic presentations...they didn't need a movie... The most arrogant sinner is humbled by the Word. The king's face was transformed. He didn't know what was written, but he knew it wasn't good...He knew he was guilty...His conscience 良心 convicted 定罪 him.

Am 8:10 I will turn your feasts into mourning, And all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, And baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only son.

7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans 占星术, and the soothsayers 占卜者. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

4. We live in a world that loves to be deceived and so closes its eyes to the truth. And so were the Babylonians. Daniel was reputed 名誉好 in all of Babylon to be able to interpret dreams but the king did not go to him first. He went to his witchdoctors 巫医. And he promised them great treasures if they could tell the truth. Isn't it the same today? If you create evidence of evolution, you are hailed 致敬 as a hero and can get a good job in the university. Of if you claim

that there is life on Mars or there could be life on Mercury, you get government stolen money. If you say that the Grand Canyon took millions of years to form, you are hailed as scientific. If you say there was a worldwide flood during the days of Noah that could have quickly create great canyons, many treat you as a fool.

8 Now all the king's wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation. 9 Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords大臣were astonished.

5. When the men came, they could not read the writing on the wall or know its meaning. How sad! And even today, the world needs truth but they can't understand it. Belshazzar's night of pleasure turned to a night of pain.

Psalm 18:28 For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

10 The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. 11 "There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God...

6. A wise queen, probably wife of the Evil Merodach, was the source of help to the king, directing him to Daniel who was now about 90 years old.

7. And isn't it true that the world wants to live indulgently but when troubles come and it falls flat on its face that they look to Christians for answers? Didn't many wicked people call on Christians after the mass shooting of school kids in Connecticut to explain why God permitted such a terrible thing...or why God allowed the Muslims to blow up the World Trade Center buildings? They realize they don't have the answers to life's questions, but they still reject God. They know who the true God is, but if they acknowledge him in their day to day lives, it would mean they have to submit to him. And they don't want to do that. Only when they realize the total foolishness of their lives that they seek-out change. Like the people of Belshazzar's day, they needed a brighter light to see the Word of God, so they look to the church...and they should. **This means, brothers and sisters, you have to be prepared to explain the Word of God in all areas of life.** You may not simply be an observer in worship. You have to be a participant. You have to dig into truth. You have to study good doctrines. Read books. Think things through. The world needs you, so don't fail them. Jesus Christ your Redeemer is pleased to have you represent him. Do a good job of it.

7. Daniel, the old man retire. He went and interpreted the dream, without fear, and the meaning was this:

25 "And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26 "This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;

He spoke truth.

Conclusion:

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: God brought Belshazzar to his knees and brought an end to his line. And yet, this is not a story about God's judgment on a wicked king. There are many such stories of God's power that have taken place through history. This was a story of God preparing his covenant people to go back to Jerusalem, to worship him, and to wait for Messiah to come and fulfill their redemption. This is a love story between God and his people. But there are 2 other important lessons today. Learn to labor to keep the worship of God pure. If you see things falling away from orthodoxy正教, speak up. And last, but my no means least, be prepared to give an answer to the world for the questions they ask. You were saved to serve. But to do this, remember you must know the Word of God well.

Finally, only the Word of God contains the way of salvation. All other religions are like the wise men of Babylon, they look good, but they are hopeless without truth. If you want to know how to be saved and how to live in this world, you must read God's Word.