



Daniel 5

Belshazzar's Feast



ממת ו
נאלק
אל

Rembrandt



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His father. It seems that Belshazzar was a grandson of the great king; his mother was probably a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. The word “father” must be understood to mean “grandfather” or “ancestor,” as in many other passages of the Bible. Of itself, the expression “his father” could also be understood in the sense of “his predecessor.”

An example of such usage is found in an Assyrian inscription which calls the Israelite king, Jehu, “a son of Omri,” although the two had no blood relationship whatsoever. Actually Jehu was the exterminator of the whole house of Omri (2 Kings 9; 10).

v5. Upon the plaister. If the large throne hall excavated by Koldewey in the Southern Palace of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was the scene of this feast, it is not difficult to visualize what took place at the fateful moment described here. The hall was 56 by 171 ft. (17 by 52 m.). In the center of one of the long sides, opposite the entrance, was a niche, in which the throne may have stood. The walls were covered with white plaster made of fine plaster of Paris. We may imagine that the candlestick, or lampstand, was near the king's seat. Lampstands with numerous oil lamps were in use at that time. Across the room from this lampstand the mysterious hand appeared and wrote on the plaster so that Belshazzar saw it.

The third ruler. Prior to the time that Belshazzar's place in the kingdom and his relationship to Nabonidus were fully understood, commentators could only conjecture as to the identity of the second ruler in the kingdom. The existence of such a ruler was implied by the promise to make the reader of the mysterious script on the wall "the third ruler in the kingdom." The queen mother, Belshazzar's wife, or a son had all been suggested. It was, of course, thought that Belshazzar himself was the first ruler over the empire. Now that it is known that Belshazzar was only a coruler with his father, and hence the second ruler in the kingdom, it is clear why he could bestow no higher position in the realm than that of "third ruler."

Daniel 5

Prophets and Kings, page 522.2–527.1

Jeremiah 51

The Sanctuary

- ✦ Uzzah—touched the ark
- ✦ Nadab and Abihu—strange fire before the LORD
- ✦ Hophni and Phinehas—ark into battle
- ✦ Korah, Dathan, Abiram—jealousy—envy—
rebellion
- ✦ Belshazzar—sacred utensils

The Sanctuary

- ✦ The atonement
- ✦ Cleansing of the sanctuary
- ✦ Nature of Christ
- ✦ Perfection of our characters

That is the tremendous scope of the sacrificial act of the cross a complete, perfect, and **final atonement** for man's sin. (L. E. Froom, "The Priestly Application of the Atoning Act," *Ministry*, February 1957) (General Conference Field Secretary)

We feel it to be most important that Christians sense the difference between the atoning act of Christ on the cross as a forever completed sacrifice, and His work in the sanctuary as officiating high priest, *mistering the benefits* of that sacrifice. . . . (*Questions on Doctrine*, p. 353, emphasis in original)

When, therefore, one hears an Adventist say, or reads in Adventist literature—even in the writings of Ellen G. White—that Christ is making atonement now, it should be understood that we mean simply that Christ is now *making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross*; that He is making it efficacious for us individually, according to our needs and requests. (*Questions on Doctrine*, pp. 353, 354; emphasis in original)

. . . Jesus our surety entered the “holy places,” and appeared in the presence of God for us. But it was not with the *hope* of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! *He had already obtained it for us on the cross.* And now as our High Priest He ministers the virtues of His atoning sacrifice to us. (*Questions on Doctrine*, p. 381; emphasis in original)

As the priest entered the most holy once a year to cleanse the earthly sanctuary, so Jesus entered the most holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make **a final atonement** for all who could be benefited by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary. (*EW* 253.1)

After his ascension, our Saviour began his work as our high priest. Says Paul, “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” [Hebrews 9:24.] In harmony with the typical service, he began his ministrations in the holy place, and at the termination of the prophetic days **in 1844**, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, he entered the most holy to perform **the last division of his solemn work**,—to cleanse the sanctuary. (*4SP* 265.2)

Thus those who followed in the advancing light of the prophetic word saw that instead of coming to the earth **at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844**, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, into the presence of God, to perform the **closing work of atonement**, preparatory to his coming.

(4SP 266.2)

“This is vital counsel, and written for this very time when efforts are being made by some among us to have others believe that we are like the churches about us, an evangelical body and not a sect. Paul, in his day, had the same heresy to meet, he was accused of being a ‘pestilent fellow,’ a ‘ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes,’ Acts 24:5.

“In his answer before Felix, Paul confessed that after the ‘way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our Fathers believing all things which are according to the law and which are written in the prophets,’ Acts 24:14, R. V. In those days men spoke sneeringly of the true church as a sect, as men do now. Paul was not disturbed by this. We have no record that he attempted to have the church of the living God recognized as an evangelical body by men who trampled the law of God in the dust.

“On the contrary, whatever they might call him and his ‘sect,’ he confessed that he believed ‘all things which are written in the law and the prophets.’ Verse 14.” (M. L. Andreasen, “The Atonement,” *Letters to the Churches*, pp. 63, 64)

The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in **giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith**, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. **Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement.** (*ISM* 204.2)

Although born in the flesh, He was nevertheless God, and was exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam. (*Questions on Doctrine*, p. 381)

It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon himself the **form and nature of fallen man**, that he might be made perfect through suffering, and endure himself the strength of Satan's temptations, that he might the better know how to succor those who should be tempted. (*4aSG* 115.3)

Jesus took upon Himself man's nature, that
He might leave a pattern for humanity,
complete, perfect. He proposes to make us
like Himself, true in every purpose, feeling,
and thought—true in heart, soul, and life.

(5T 253.3)

Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.” John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. **This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.** (GC 623.1)

The Sanctuary

- ✦ Uzzah—touched the ark
- ✦ Nadab and Abihu—strange fire before the LORD
- ✦ Hophni and Phinehas—ark into battle
- ✦ Korah, Dathan, Abiram—jealousy—envy—
rebellion
- ✦ Belshazzar—sacred utensils

Little did Belshazzar think that there was **a heavenly Witness** to his idolatrous revelry; that **a divine Watcher**, unrecognized, looked upon the scene of profanation, heard the sacrilegious mirth, beheld the idolatry. But soon the uninvited Guest made His presence felt. When the revelry was at its height a bloodless hand came forth and traced upon the walls of the palace characters that gleamed like fire—words which, though unknown to the vast throng, were a portent of doom to the now conscience-stricken king and his guests. (*PK 524.1*)

Belshazzar was the most terrified of them all. He it was who above all others had been responsible for the rebellion against God which that night had reached its height in the Babylonian realm. In the presence of **the unseen Watcher, the representative of Him whose power had been challenged and whose name had been blasphemed**, the king was paralyzed with fear. (*PK 524.1*)

In that last night of mad folly, Belshazzar and his lords had filled up the measure of their guilt and the guilt of the Chaldean kingdom. No longer could God's restraining hand ward off the impending evil. Through manifold providences, God had sought to teach them reverence for His law. . . . Because of the strange perversity of the human heart, God had at last found it necessary to pass the irrevocable sentence. Belshazzar was to fall, and his kingdom was to pass into other hands.

(PK 530.3)

In his pride and arrogancy, with a reckless feeling of security Belshazzar “made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.” All the attractions that wealth and power could command, added splendor to the scene. Beautiful women with their enchantments were among the guests in attendance at the royal banquet. Men of genius and education were there. Princes and statesmen drank wine like water and reveled under its maddening influence. (*PK 523.2*)

With reason dethroned through shameless intoxication, and with lower impulses and passions now in the ascendancy, the king himself took the lead in the riotous orgy. As the feast progressed, he “commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which ... Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.” The king would prove that nothing was too sacred for his hands to handle. “They brought the golden vessels; ... and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.” (*PK 523.3*)

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Hushed was the boisterous mirth, while men and women, seized with nameless terror, watched the hand slowly tracing the mysterious characters. **Before them passed, as in panoramic view, the deeds of their evil lives;** they seemed to be arraigned before the judgment bar of the eternal God, whose power they had just defied. Where but a few moments before had been hilarity and blasphemous witticism, were pallid faces and cries of fear. When God makes men fear, they cannot hide the intensity of their terror. (*PK 524.2*)

Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed:

(Jeremiah 51:8)

Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite. And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.

(Jeremiah 51:56-57)