

Daniel 5:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

Analysis

After indicting Belshazzar for failing to humble his heart despite knowing Nebuchadnezzar's example, and for profaning temple vessels while praising idols, Daniel announces God's response: 'Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.' The 'then' indicates direct causation—the sacrilege triggered immediate divine intervention. The 'part of the hand'—just fingers, no arm or body—emphasizes the supernatural, disembodied nature: this was obviously divine action, not human. The passive construction ('was sent,' 'was written') highlights divine initiative. This verse connects Belshazzar's sin (v.22-23) directly to God's judgment (the handwriting). It demonstrates God's active involvement in history, responding to human actions, particularly sacrilege and pride. The timing—during the very feast where sacrilege occurred—shows divine judgment's immediacy when certain lines are crossed.

Historical Context

The supernatural handwriting appeared before hundreds of witnesses (the thousand nobles, wives, concubines at the feast), making it undeniable public miracle. Ancient Near Eastern literature includes numerous accounts of divine signs—omens, prodigies, celestial phenomena—but a disembodied hand writing on a palace wall was unique and terrifying. The timing—during Babylon's final night before falling to Persia—adds dramatic irony: while Belshazzar feasted believing the city impregnable, both divine judgment (handwriting) and human conquest (Persian army) were imminent. For Jewish exiles, this vindicated prophetic

promises (Isaiah 13-14, 21; Jeremiah 50-51) that Babylon would fall suddenly, and demonstrated Yahweh's active sovereignty over empires.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does the disembodied hand writing on the wall teach about the undeniable nature of divine intervention?
2. How does the immediate timing of judgment following sacrilege demonstrate divine holiness and justice?
3. Why did God choose such a dramatic, public method for announcing judgment?

Interlinear Text

בְּאֵזַר יָדָיו	מִן	קִדְמָה וְהִי	שָׁלַח יָדָיו	פָּטָא	דִּי	אֵזְרָא
Then	from	him	sent	was the part	H1768	of the hand
H116	H4481	H6925	H7972	H6447		H3028

וְכָתַב	דָּן הָ	רְשִׁים:
writing	and this	was written
H3792	H1836	H7560

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 5:5 (Parallel theme): In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

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