

The Greatest Verses of Daniel - 1

Daniel 7:9-10

Now we come to the greatest passage in all of Daniel – greater than the visions of the statue and of the 4 beasts last time; greater than the faithfulness of the 3 Hebrew children and of Daniel in the lion’s den; greater even than the overthrow of Babylon after the writing on the wall, and the people of Israel permitted to return to their homeland.

We come to the mighty vision of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

We left off last time with the Jungle-like Picture of 7:1-8, without getting into the little horn with the big mouth. We will be reserving remarks for him until later. But here we see, just as Daniel did, that when this blasphemous creature steps up, whatever he is, it is then that the glorious revelation of God the Father, the Ancient of Days, and His Messiah, the Son of Man’s Kingdom, are set against this ugly and loud creature.

As Daniel is contemplating the horns that this other horn comes from in verse 8, as he kept looking, the heavenly scene breaks into view in verse 9, and behold this great paragraph, this *greatest* paragraph, bursts into view. Thrones and the heavenly Father, the Ancient of Days, filled with glory, holiness, and flames of fire and a river of lava, surrounded by a great host – the court is set and the books are opened.

But this is interrupted by the sound of the boastful little horn, and Daniel sees it continuing to speak, like the same sight is seen by him, and he makes his boast louder, because of the coming judgment; and

indeed he is judged and destroyed and cast into the lake of fire, and the dominion of the other beasts is taken away, yet they live.

That would have been enough, but there are still even greater things. For as Daniel peers into the night visions, he sees the coming of the splendid One upon the clouds, coming to that Ancient of Days, and receiving from him a kingdom, a dominion, a glory, over all the peoples of the world. This is a universal kingdom – all peoples and nations; a sovereign and almighty kingdom, where all serve Him; and an everlasting kingdom, never to pass away, for it is indestructible!

Remarkably, even after the glory of the everlasting kingdom of Christ in 14, the 4th beast and the little horn reappear in 21, 22, and 24-26.

Although Daniel walked away alarmed, troubled and pale, we need not do so. Why? Because you and I have seen the Son of Man, who has humbled himself, has suffered and has entered into His glory!

This brings us to the first half of the Greatest Verses of Daniel. We are only taking the revelation of the Ancient of Days upon His fiery throne of judgment in 9-10.

Oh, what a day – a day of days!

Day of judgment! day of wonders!

Hark! the trumpet's awful sound,

Louder than a thousand thunders,

Shakes the vast creation round.

How the summons

Will the sinner's heart confound!

God help us as only He can to open something of what will be only felt in full on that sure and coming day!

We come first, not to the throne of thrones, but to the thrones around the Throne.

The old KJV wrongly took the verb here to mean the thrones were cast down. And that context might fit, as we see these kings and kingdoms – Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome – all owing their power and rule solely to the God of heaven. But “He removes kings and establishes kings” – “The most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes, and sets over it the lowliest of men.” This we learned in chapter 4.

But we find in more than one place that there are thrones established and set by God for His heavenly attendants. In Revelation we read:

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, (Rev 11:15-16)

And again:

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (Rev 20:4 NAU)

These demonstrate positive thrones in glory. While the wickedness of kingdoms seem entrenched and enthroned, it is the godly, the grace-redeemed, who will wear the crown, and walk in glory.

Here is another feature of this vision. We pass from the turmoil and beastliness of the 4 kingdoms, into the serenity and peace of heaven and a sovereign God ruling, without a wrinkle of worry on his brow. The troubled sea of verse 2, gives way to the calm sea of glass in Revelation 4.6.

This brings us to the centerpiece of these verses: the enthronement of the Ancient of Days.

We can break the rest of the message into two points:

We have first, the Greatness of God the Father displayed in the Judgment – His title, His appearance, and His throne all described.

Then, we have the Greatness of His Court in verse 10 – in His judgment symbolized by fire, and His attendants beyond number, and His audit, opening the books.

Sinclair Ferguson does a good job highlighting the dignity of the elderly, the ancients, as the meaning of the Ancient of Days.

But I believe the eternity and not old age is to be taken from this lone appearance of this title in the Bible. He is the One who is eternally before these Kingdoms, and He is the One long after they are laid in the dust. This is akin to His being from everlasting, to everlasting, GOD! (Ps. 90:2) He alone has the right to be the Judge. He is the Maker and Consummator of the world and of mankind.

He takes His rightful seat.

His appearance only adds to His purity, righteousness, and fairness. In snow white robes, and with snow white hair, He is not compromised or tainted by the long years of sinful history. He also is sacred, perfect, good, and true.

Wisdom is on His brow, holiness in His eye, burning purity the standard of His realm and rule. As we will see next Sunday, His Son is too!

Ferguson says: “God wears a garment white as snow – He has never compromised His righteous dealings in establishing His Kingdom, as humans have in gaining their kingdoms. Human kingdoms are always caught up in feverish activity, military or diplomatic, but the Ancient of Days was seated! He is never taken by surprise, never undecided, never in a panic about his world. He reigns. In the face of the terrible havoc that people are able to cause, Daniel is reminded that ultimate authority does not reside in Babylon, Persia, Greece or Rome. It is in the hands of God.” p. 142

His throne is furthermore described as one of fire, as well as the wheels upon it. This too is a picture of purity, judgment, and liveliness. Often fire is associated with the presence of the Lord. He spoke in a burning bush, revealing himself at a burning Sinai, a consuming fire. Listen to these awesome lines of Psalm 97:

The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad. ² Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. ³ Fire goes before Him and burns up His adversaries round about. ⁴ His lightnings lit up the world; the earth saw and trembled. ⁵ The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

⁶ *The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen His glory. (Psa 97:1-6)*

One sees how this flows into verse 10.

The point to be made about the Greatness of the Ancient of Days, is how worthy He is to Judge – He and no other. None can truly argue His right, His fitness, His authority, to say nothing of His power. God is the authority of the world, and all will stand before Him at the last day, and give an account.

That brings us to the second point – the actual exercise of His authority to judge. And the first thing we are greeted with is a river of lava coming out before Him. Again, the Psalms echo this scene:

The Mighty One, God, the LORD, has spoken, and summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. ² Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth. ³ May our God come and not keep silence; fire devours before Him, and it is very tempestuous around Him. ⁴ He summons the heavens above, and the earth, to judge His people: ⁵ "Gather My godly ones to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." ⁶ And the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge. Selah. (Psa 50:1-6)

This speaks, does it not, of the irresistibility of His judgment? There is no appeal and no escape from His sentence or punishment. The sinner, the wicked, the godless, the false worshipper, has nothing to find here but fear and wrath.

That is not to say that all will wind up in the lake of fire. For there is a myriad who attend upon Him – who are at the ready to serve Him. This, by the way, had been anticipated since the most ancient of times:

¹⁴ *It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jud 1:14-15)*

This most surely speaks of the whole triumphant host, of redeemed mankind and holy angels. At least that is the case in Rev. 5:

¹¹ *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."*

¹³ *And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." ¹⁴ And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped. (Rev 5:11-14)*

Last but not least, we are referred to the court being set, and the books being opened. Everything, all things are done according to truth, to what is fact, according to the works done. Again, listen to Revelation:

¹¹ *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one*

of them according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:11-15)

There is no hope for the wicked in the life to come; no hope for the little horn and his boastful mouth, in his opposition to the Lord and His people.

There is all hope for those who stand in that great body, dressed, not in the righteousness of their own, but in the righteousness of Christ. Only those found hiding in the ark of God, who have fled to Jesus, the city of refuge for our souls, will be saved.

Truly, the answer to this scene is found in the second half of the greatest verses in Daniel, in this Son of Man, whose Kingdom of grace and glory is our all in all. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and these things will be added to you.”

Oh, friends, where are you today? Are found in arrogance and unbelief against the Word of God, and the God of the Word? Jesus warns us: “broad is the path to destruction, and many there are who go therein.”

But even now, a door of life is opened, in Jesus Himself, the way, the truth and the life – oh, look to him, and you will live, and that for all eternity. Never let anyone tell you that the Christian life is a poor or too hard way to live! The way of the sinner is hard; the way of God’s people is blessed, as they bear the easy yoke of Jesus!

Here is a strange paradox, as explained by the writer, CS Lewis. If you aim at earth, this world, you will lose both heaven and earth. Look at

how miserably those are who do not have God, Christ, the Bible and the hope of the gospel!

But if you aim at heaven, as offered to you as a free gift of God, you gain both heaven and earth! Jesus' arms are open to you, here and now. Oh, come to Him now; make no delay! Why wait for a better time? That time might not come.