

God's Judgment Falls upon Bestial Kingdoms

Daniel 7:9-14: Psalm 110:1

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Judgment scenes like the one we find in our text today are so important for us to seriously consider and not to pass by quickly (especially in an age that does not want to hear about a God who is a just Judge). A message of judgment is not easy to hear, but it is necessary to hear. God abounds in infinite love and mercy. But God reveals in Scripture that He is also absolutely just.

Interestingly, we want justice when it is we that have been injured in some way (a car stolen or a loved one harmed). We would consider it a travesty for a judge to set free one whom we witnessed brutally kill a loved one. However, most people do not want God to be a just Judge when it comes to their own sins committed against Him. This reveals our hypocrisy. We want justice when others sin against us, but not so much when we sin against God.

God's justice as a righteous Judge must be applied to all sins committed against Him (without exception). Otherwise, He would not be just. Someone must pay for sins committed against the Lord: either Jesus paid for those sins upon the cross or the sinner must pay for those sins for all eternity in hell. God's justice demands it, or He ceases to be God. In the crucifixion of Christ, God revealed both His justice and His mercy. That is the glory of the cross—it is where God's justice and God's mercy kissed. We can only truly adore God's mercy when we adore God's absolute justice. Let us adore God's glorious justice as we behold His judgment upon these bestial kingdoms (Revelation 15:3-4).

Our main points are: (1) God's Judgment Falls upon Bestial Kingdoms (Daniel 7:9-12); (2) God's Anointed King Is Given Power over All Bestial Kingdoms (Daniel 7:13-14).

I. God's Judgment Falls upon Bestial Kingdoms (Daniel 7:9-12).

A. Our sovereign God raises up nations and puts down nations. He calls nations to turn to Him and worship Him as King of the nations (Jeremiah 10:7). As nations resist and rebel against God's goodness and His holy commandments, and as nations persecute those who faithfully stand for the Lord, God brings His solemn judgments upon those nations and those rulers. God's righteous judgment that falls upon these four great ancient empires in Daniel 7 is true of all nations, especially when a nation (like our own) has been graciously blessed with God's Word and yet rebels against the Lord. God's full judgment is only delayed because He is merciful (Romans 2:4).

B. As Daniel continues to behold this vision from the Lord, he sees in symbols the heavenly court made ready to issue forth God's righteous judgment upon these four beastly nations that have rebelled against God. Let us examine some of the details of the heavenly courtroom.

1. Thrones are said to be "cast down" (Daniel 7:9), which most likely means that thrones of judgment were cast into place, set up, erected, not cast down and destroyed.

2. "The Ancient of Days" sits in the chief place of judgment upon His throne with the angelic hosts likely sitting in the other thrones as those who vindicate God's judgment and carry it out upon these nations. "The Ancient of Days" signifies God the Father (not as being a creature that is only ancient, like these kingdoms, but as the One who sits as Judge over mankind from the beginning of time). The Ancient of Days is "the everlasting God" (Isaiah 40:28). He was not created but created all things by the word of His power.

3. God is described in symbolic language (Daniel 7:9) as having a garment white as snow

and hair like pure wool.

a. The white garment points to the absolute righteousness of this Judge (Revelation 19:8). This Judge cannot err in His judgment (though our judgment is often susceptible to error; we are not infallible, but He is—that’s why we must be careful not to act as God in our judgments of others, 1 Corinthians 4:3-5).

b. His white hair points to the infinite wisdom of our God in applying His justice in this world (at precisely the right time and in exactly the right circumstances—we must trust Him). Old age (as evidenced by white or grey hair) is no longer associated with wisdom, but with being old-fashioned and irrelevant. It is no longer honored, but dishonored. However, the Bible associates old age with wisdom, experience, and honor (Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 16:31). May the mind and wisdom of Christ in all humility be seen in us as there is more and more grey in our hair. That does not happen without going through many trials and learning through them to trust Jesus in applying His truth in our own lives before trying applying it in the lives of others. No one wants to receive our “wisdom” if we are not practicing it ourselves.

4. Note that fire flowed forth like a river from God’s throne (Daniel 7:9,10). Fire is a symbol in Scripture of God’s righteous judgment (Deuteronomy 9:3). To the unbeliever it is river of fire that flows forth from God’s throne, but to those who trust alone in Jesus alone it is a river of life that flows forth from God’s throne (Revelation 22:1). What makes the difference? Jesus makes the difference for those who trust in Him. He drank all of that river of fire of God’s judgment for us that we might drink of the river of life of God everlasting love in Christ.

5. God’s throne has symbolic wheels that turn His righteous judgment to all the world where nations rebel against Christ and will not turn in faith to Him and submit to Him as King of kings (Daniel 7:9).

6. Countless angelic hosts are present to carry out God’s judgment throughout the earth (Daniel 7:10). There is no shortage of angels to do the bidding of God in saving His people and in judging His enemies. How often we have been helped and preserved by them.

7. One more object is described in this symbolic heavenly courtroom: the books were opened (Daniel 7:10). God does not need books to record all the ways that nations/people break His holy law (He has never learned anything, nor has He ever forgotten anything—for He knows all things from everlasting to everlasting, immediately, actual, possible, great or small). The mention of books here is for our benefit, not for God’s benefit. Those books are a terror to unbelievers, but not to believers. Those books remind unbelievers that God will judge all their hidden and visible sins. Those books that reveal our sins remind us as believers that God has judged the Lord Jesus already for all their hidden and visible sins. If Jesus was judged for our sins, we cannot continue in them as if it is not big deal? How we respond to our sins says much about our love for Jesus and His sacrifice to forgive those very sins.

C. Now Daniel sees in the vision God’s judgment executed against these four bestial kingdoms (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome).

1. As Daniel continues looking at this heavenly courtroom, he hears the voice of the “little horn” speaking great blasphemies against the Lord (Daniel 7:11). This is the little horn that arose among the ten horns in Daniel 7:8 (the barbarian kingdoms that divided the united Roman Empire in Western Europe in the 5th and 6th centuries). The little horn (the papacy) arose small in ecclesiastical and political power, but grew to declare himself as God on earth, the head of the church on earth, possessing Christ’s infallibility, and declaring himself to be universal ruler over all the earth. The little horn is parallel to the Whore of Babylon that rides upon the back of the beast with ten horns (Revelation 17:1-6,18). This is the papal kingdom of Rome led by the papacy that rides on the Roman beast with ten horns.

2. Daniel sees in his vision the fourth beast (with its ten horns and little horn) destroyed by God’s judgment of fire (Daniel 7:11). The fourth beast (Rome) in its final phase of the ten horns (Western

Europe) under the little horn (the papacy) is brought under the judgment of God and ceases to exist.

3. There is a contrast between the fourth beast (Rome) that is destroyed and ceases to exist altogether as a bestial kingdom against the Lord (Daniel 7:11), and the previous three beasts that are absorbed as bestial kingdoms into the conquering bestial kingdom in Daniel 7:12 (rather than ceasing to exist altogether as God's enemy). Babylon was conquered and absorbed into Medo-Persia. Medo-Persia was conquered and absorbed into Greece. Greece was conquered and absorbed into Rome. But Rome is not absorbed into Christ's kingdom as a bestial kingdom. It ceases to exist as a bestial kingdom altogether. Its judgment is different, for it is burned and consumed by fire before the inauguration of Christ's millennial reign from heaven over the nations of the world (as is seen of the Whore in Revelation 17:16).

II. God's Anointed King Is Given Power over All Bestial Kingdoms (Daniel 7:13-14).

A. Now the vision reveals that one like the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) appears before the Ancient of Days (God the Father) and receives from Him the authority to rule as King over all the nations of the world (Psalm 2:8). "Son of Man" is a title for Jesus that He often used of Himself (Matthew 12:40). Just as a son has the nature of his father, so Jesus has the nature of a man (He is fully man—He is not less than man). So likewise Jesus called Himself the Son of God (John 10:36). He has the nature of God (He is fully God—He is not less than God).

1. He came with "the clouds of heaven" (this represents the heavenly chariot that brought Him before His Father (Psalm 104:3).

2. To Jesus (as King of kings) is given everlasting and universal dominion to rule over all people and all nations (Psalm 22:27-28; Revelation 11:15).

B. Questions

1. **When** will Jesus exercise this universal dominion over all people and nations? At His ascension into heaven that universal dominion was granted to Jesus as Mediator by the Father (Ephesians 1:20-22). He is now King of kings (1 Timothy 6:5) and Prince of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5). But He will exercise His royal authority in graciously converting and in powerfully subduing all nations to Himself after the destruction of the little horn and Whole of Babylon (Daniel 2).

2. **Where** will His throne be? Notice that Jesus is not coming to earth with the clouds of heaven, but is coming to the throne in heaven to be seated at God's right hand and to reign from there over all the nations. Jesus will not reign upon the earth from earthly Jerusalem, but from His glorious throne in heaven (Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:36-38; the last enemy to be conquered is death, 1 Corinthians 15:25-26).

C. Application.

1. This is our present and future hope—Jesus shall convert and subdue all nations. And if He shall convert and subdue nations, He is able to convert and subdue even persecutors to Himself like Saul of Tarsus and make him the Apostle Paul. It's why we must not despair about the rule of beastly governments nor look with hopelessness at any trouble or temptation we face. Jesus is Lord!

2. It is because God is a righteous Judge that we need a merciful Savior. That is why Jesus came to bear God's righteous judgment for His beloved bride. The truth that God is a righteous Judge who will judge all sin need not torment you today if you trust Him (John 5:24).

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