

Sermon 7 – The Judgment

TEXT: I beheld till the thrones were cast down,[set up] and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the Judgment was set, and the books were opened.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Dan.7:9, 10, 13, 14.

We have in this scripture a most impressive description of the Judgment. The Ancient of Days represents God, the Father. One like the Son of Man, who comes to the Ancient of Days, is our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who stand in his presence, either to minister or to wait, are not men, but angels. Compare Dan.7:10 with Rev.5:11.

Daniel describes the opening of the Judgment of the righteous, which occurs in Heaven prior to the return of the Lord to this world to raise them from the dead. The Father presides as judge. The angels of God are present as ministers and witnesses. At this tribunal the Son of Man presents himself to receive the dominion of the world. Here he is crowned King of kings, and Lord of lords, with which title he afterward comes to the earth. Rev.19:11-16.

But men are not present to witness this part of the Judgment, nor to behold the coronation of Christ. The Father and the Son, and the holy angels, compose this grand assembly.

The thrones named in the text are not those of earthly governments, but thrones of judgment. The best authorities give the words "cast down" the opposite meaning. They render them "set up, " or "established."

Thus Adam Clarke says: *"The thrones were cast down, might be translated erected; so the Vulgate, positi sunt, and so all the versions."*

Dr. Hales, in his "Sacred Chronology, " vol.ii., p.105, renders Dan.7:9, thus: *"I beheld till the thrones were erected, and the Ancient of Days sat, " etc.*

The Douay version reads, *"were placed;"* and so Bernard, and Boothroyd and Wintle in the Cottage Bible. Matthew Henry, in his Exposition, renders it *"set up."*

Of the original Hebrew word, Gesenius, in his Lexicon, says, "R'mah, (1) To cast, to throw, Dan.3:20, 21, 24; 6:16 (2) To set, to place, e.g, thrones; Dan.7:9; compare

Rev.4:2." The term used by the Septuagint is *Thronoi etethesan*; which, literally rendered, according to Liddell and Scott, would be, "*the thrones were set.*" Other authorities might be given.

The Judgment scene embraces the establishment of thrones and the sitting in Judgment of the great God, amid the brightness of that glory, feebly represented by fire and flame, surrounded by angelic hosts; secondly, the opening of the life records of men, from which they are to be judged; and the Son of Man approaches the Ancient of Days, attended by multitudes of angels, here represented by the clouds of heaven, to receive dominion, glory, and a kingdom. This scene does not represent the second appearing of Christ to this world, unless it can be shown that the Ancient of Days is here.

With these remarks upon the character of the Judgment, we will briefly call attention to the prophetic chain of that chapter, which shows our time in the history of earthly governments, and the comparative nearness of the Judgment. But to make this portion of symbolic prophecy more clear and forcible to the reader, we will first illustrate:

Suppose you were traveling a road with which you were unacquainted. You inquire of a stranger - he tells you that the road leads to a glorious city, filled with every good thing, governed by the most lovely, mild, and benevolent prince that the world ever saw; that in that city there is neither sickness, sorrow, pain, nor death. He then proceeds to tell you what you may expect to pass on the road, by which you may know that he has told you the truth, and which will mark the progress you have made.

First, then, he tells you that, after leaving him and traveling awhile, you will come to a monument that can be seen a great distance; on the top of it you will see a lion, having eagle's wings. At a distance beyond that, you will come to another monument, having on it a bear, with three ribs in its mouth. Passing on still, you will at length arrive at a monument, on the top of which you will behold a leopard, having four wings of a fowl, and four heads. After that, you will come to a fourth, on which is a beast, dreadful and terrible, with great iron teeth, and ten horns. And, lastly, you will come to another place, where you will see the same beast, with this difference: three of its first horns have been plucked up, and in the place of them has come up a peculiar horn, having eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth. The next thing you will look for, after passing the last-mentioned sign, is the city.

With these directions you commence your journey. What do you look for first? The lion. At length you see it. That inspires in you some faith in the person's knowledge and truth, who had directed you. Having passed that sign, the next thing you expect to see, as marked in the directions, is the bear. At length you come in sight of that. There, say you, is the second sign he gave me. he must have been perfectly

acquainted with this road, and has told me the truth. Your faith increases as you travel on.

What next do you look for? Not the city, certainly. No; you look for the leopard. Well, by-and-by you behold that in the distance. There it is! you cry; now I know that he has told me the truth, and it will come out just as he said. Is the city the next thing you look for? No; you look for that terrible beast with ten horns. You pass that, and say, as you pass, How exactly the man who directed me described everything. Now your faith is so confirmed that you almost see the city; but, say you, there is one more sign to pass; viz., the horn with eyes; then the city comes next.

Now hope is high, and your anxious eyes gaze with intense interest for the last sign. That comes in view, and you exclaim, in raptures, There it is! All doubt is now removed. You look for no more signs. Your longing eyes are fixed to gaze on the glorious city next, and probably no man now, however wise he might profess himself, could make you discredit what your director has told you. The city - the city - is fixed in your eye, and onward you go, hasting to your rest.

Now, if we find on examination that all the events or signs that God has given us, which were to precede the Judgment day and the setting up of his everlasting kingdom, have actually transpired, or come to view, what are we to look for next? The Judgment of the great day! The glorious reward of the just! The city of the great King! Let us, then, examine the chapter before us.

Verses 1 - 3: In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions of his head upon his bed; then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said,

I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds [denoting commotions] of the heaven strove upon the great sea [waters denoting people; see Rev.17:15]. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another."

These four beasts are explained by the angel to be four kings Verse 17 In verse 23, they are said to be four kingdoms, which shows that the word king, in these visions, signifies kingdom..

Verse 4: "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it."

Babylon, as described in this vision, is here fitly represented by a lion, the king of beasts, denoting the glory of that kingdom, and corresponds with the head of gold in chapter 2. The eagle's wings represent the rapidity of its conquests, and the soaring pride of its monarchs.

"For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, [Babylon] . . . they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat." Hab.1:6-8. The plucking of his wings may refer to the humiliation of the proud monarch of babylon, chapter 4:31-37, or the cowardice of Belshazzar, who, instead of driving away his foes like a lion, shut himself up in the city, feasting and drinking with his lords, till he was killed, and the kingdom given to the Medes and Persians.

Verse 5: "And behold, another beast, as second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side [representing two lines of kings, one much longer than the other], and it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh."

The bear corresponds with the silver breast and arms of the image, and represents the Medo-Persian kingdom, which succeeded Babylon. It is clearly the kingdom here described. It was noted for cruelty and thirst for blood. "The three ribs in the mouth of this bear, evidently symbolize the three great powers conquered by the Medo-Persian kingdom; viz., Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt." See Rollin's Ancient History. It subdued many and populous kingdoms. Ahasuerus, or Artaxerxes, reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. See Esther 1:1

Verse 6: "After this I beheld, and lo, another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it."

The leopard corresponds with the brazen sides of the image of chapter 2, and illustrates Grecia. The four wings denote the rapidity of its conquests under Alexander. The four heads represent its division into four parts, after Alexander died and his posterity were murdered.

Verses 7, 8: "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and behold. in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."

The fourth beast corresponds with the iron legs of the image of chapter 2, and represents the Roman kingdom. The ten horns of the beast correspond with the ten toes of the image, and represent the ten kingdoms into which the Western empire of Rome was divided. But these verses will be particularly examined when we come to the angel's explanation.

We will also pass over the words of the text in verses 9, 10, 13, and 14, which we have noticed.

Verse 11: "I beheld, then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame."

Nothing is said of the dominion of this beast being taken away, as is said of the others. The others lost their dominion after a time; but their subjects survived, and were transferred to the succeeding governments; but the very body (subjects) of this fourth kingdom is destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

Verse 12: "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."

Babylon, Media and Persia, and Grecia, successively lost the dominion; but the lives of the respective nations were prolonged, being merged into the succeeding governments.

Verses 15-18: "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall rise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."

Mark this: There were four beasts presented to the prophet, which represent four universal monarchs, no more, and no less. The fourth "beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." This denotes the destruction of all the living wicked. Next, the saints of the Most High take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom, not for a thousand years only, but forever, even forever and ever.

Verses 19-25: "Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time."

These verses demand more extended comment. The points to be noticed, are,

1. The fourth beast, or fourth kingdom. No kingdom that has existed on earth will answer to it, except the Roman kingdom. That has been truly diverse from all kingdoms, especially in its forms of government, which were not less than seven, being, at different times, Republican, Consular, Tribune, Decemvirate, Dictatorial, Imperial, and Kingly. It was at length divided into the Eastern and Western empires; Rome proper being in the Western empire.

2. The ten horns. Between the years A.D. 356 and 483, the Roman empire was divided into ten kingdoms, as noticed in remarks on chapter 2. Thus, the ten horns are ten kings (kingdoms) that arose out of this empire.

3. The little horn. The characteristics of this horn are, first, it speaks great words against the Most High; and, second, it makes war with, and wears out, the saints.

The same character is described in Rev.13:6, 7: "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." Daniel says he "prevailed against them." Paul says, "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Daniel's little horn, Paul's man of sin, and John's blasphemous beast, are clearly identical.

It must be admitted that such a power has arisen, and that it is the Papacy. The titles the popes have assumed, of "Most Holy Lord, " and their pretensions to pardon sin, even before its commission, if we had nothing else, sufficiently establish the blasphemous character of that power.

Pope Innocent III writes:

"He [Christ] hath set one man over the world, him whom he hath appointed his vicar on earth; and as to Christ is bent every knee in Heaven, in earth, and under the earth, so shall obedience and service be paid to his vicar by all, that there may be one fold and one shepherd."

Again, Pope Gregory VII says:

"The Roman pontiff alone is by right universal. In him alone is the right of making laws. Let all kings kiss the feet of the pope. His name alone shall be heard in the churches. It is the only name in the world. It is his right to depose kings. His word is not to be repealed by any one. It is to be repealed by himself alone. He is to be judged by none. The church of Rome has never erred, and the Scriptures testify it never shall err."

Surely, here is a power diverse from all others, and proud and blasphemous enough to answer the character of the little horn. It is said of this horn that he shall think to change times and laws. It is evident that the laws here spoken of are the laws of the Most High; for his work is to oppose God. The changing of human laws would not be here noted as a characteristic of the man of sin; for his distinguishing acts are against God and his saints. In fulfillment of this part of the prophecy, the Roman apostasy has practically removed the second commandment from the decalogue, has changed the Sabbath of the fourth, from the seventh to the first day of the week, and has divided the tenth to make up the number of ten commandments. See Catholic Catechism.

4. The time when the little horn, or the papacy, arose. It came up among the ten horns, hence did not arise prior to 483, when the tenth horn came up. Three of the ten horns were plucked before the little horn on its way up. It was therefore established at the very point where the third horn fell.

In the year of our Lord 493, the Heruli in Rome and Italy were conquered by the Ostrogoths. In 534, the Vandals, who were under Arian influence, were conquered by the Greeks, for the purpose of establishing the supremacy of the Catholics. The Ostrogoths, who held possession of Rome, were under an Arian monarch, who was an enemy to the supremacy of the bishop of Rome. Hence, before the decree of Justinian (the Greek emperor at Constantinople) could be carried into effect, by which he had constituted the bishop of Rome head of all the churches, the Ostrogoths must be plucked up.

This conquest was effected by Justinian's army in the month of March, 538; at which time the Ostrogoths, who had retired without the city, and besieged it in their turn, raised the siege, and retired, leaving the Greeks in possession of the city. Thus the third horn was plucked up before the papacy, and for the express purpose, too, of establishing that power. See Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

The facts answer well to the prophecy. Here is the letter of Justinian to the bishop of Rome, A.D. 533:

"Justinian, pious, fortunate, renowned, triumphant, emperor, consul, &c., to John, the Most Holy Archbishop of our city of Rome, and Patriarch. "Rendering honor to the apostolic see, and to your holiness (as always was and is our desire), and as it becomes us, honoring your blessedness as a father, we have laid without delay before the notice of your holiness all things pertaining to the state of the church. Since it has always been our earnest study to preserve the unity of your holy see, and the state of the holy churches of God, which has hitherto obtained, and will remain, without any interfering opposition; therefore we hasten to subject, and to unite to your holiness, all the priests of the whole East. As to the matters which are

presently agitated, although clear and undoubted, and, according to the doctrine of your apostolic see, held assuredly, resolved and decided by all priests, we have yet deemed it necessary to lay them before your holiness. Nor do we suffer anything which belongs to the state of the church, however manifest and undoubted, that is agitated, to pass without the knowledge of your holiness, who are the head of all the churches. For in all things (as has been said or resolved) we are prompt to increase the honor and authority of your see."

"The authenticity of the title, " says Mr. Croly, "receives unanswerable proof from the edicts of the `Novellae' of the Justinian code. The preamble of the 9th states `that as the elder Rome was the founder of the laws, so was it not to be questioned that in her was the supremacy of the pontificate.' The 131st, on the Ecclesiastical Titles and Privileges, chap. ii., states: `We therefore decree that the most holy pope of the elder Rome is the first of all the priesthood; and that the most blessed archbishop of Constantinople, the new Rome, shall hold the second rank, after the holy apostolic chair of the elder Rome.'" - Croly on the Apocalypse, pp. 114, 115.

Imperial Rome fell about A.D. 475, and was in the hands of the barbarians. Thus it continued till the conquest of Rome by Belisarius, Justinian's general, 536 to 538, when the Ostrogoths left it in the possession of the Greek emperor, March, 538. Thus the way was open for the dragon to give the beast his power, and great authority. Rev.13:2.

5. The length of time this power was to continue. Daniel says, "A time, and times, and the dividing of time." John says, Rev.13:5, "Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." He was to make war upon the saints, the church; and in Rev.12:6, we are told that the woman, the church, fled into the wilderness 1260 days;

In the 14th verse, that it was for "a time, and times, and half a time." here, then, we have the period of the continuance of this power given us in three forms of expression, which settles the point that the time, times, and the dividing of time, are 42 months, or 1260 prophetic days, or literal years.

6. The termination of the 1260 years. From 538, 1260 years would extend to 1798. Did anything transpire that year to justify the belief that the dominion of the papacy ended at that time? It is a historical fact that, on Feb.10, 1798, Berthier, a French general, entered the city of Rome and took it. On the 15th of the same month, the pope was taken prisoner and shut up in the Vatican. The papal government, which had continued from the time of Justinian, was abolished, and a republican form of government given to Rome. The pope was carried captive to France, where he died in 1799. Thus, he that led into captivity went into captivity; he that killed with the sword was killed (subdued) with the sword. Rev.13:10. His dominion was taken away by war.

Verse 26: "But the Judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." See 2Thess.2:8: "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

That the pope was restored, or a new one chosen is admitted. But that he has power to depose kings and put the saints to death now, is denied. Before his dominion was wrested from him, he deposed kings at pleasure for centuries, and silenced heretics by the flame, the rack, the prison, and the sword.

This he cannot do now, nor has he been able to do it since 1798. The papacy is compelled to tolerate Protestantism. Hear the pope himself on that subject. Here is his letter, dated Sept., 1840, at Rome:–

"ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF OUR MOST HOLY LORD GREGORY XVI., by Divine Providence Pope, to all Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops. *"Venerable Brethren, - Health and the Apostolic Benediction. You well know, Venerable Brothers, how great are the calamities with which the Catholic church is beset on all sides in this most sorrowful age, and how pitifully she is afflicted. . . . Indeed, are we not (oh, how shameful!) compelled to see the most crafty enemies of the truth, ranging far and wide with impunity; not only attacking religion with ridicule, the church with contumely, and Catholics with insults and slander, but even entering into cities and towns, establishing schools of error and impiety, publishing in print the poison of their doctrines, skillfully concealed under the deceitful veil of the natural sciences and new discoveries, and even penetrating into the cottages of the poor, traveling through rural districts, and insinuating themselves into familiar acquaintance with the lowest of the people, and with the farmers? Thus they leave no means unattempted, whether by corrupt Bibles in the language of the people, or pestiferous newspapers and other like publications, or caviling conversation, or pretended charity, or, finally, by the gift of money, to allure ignorant people, and especially youth, into their nets, and induce them to desert the Catholic faith.*

"We refer to facts, Venerable Brethren, which not only are known to you, but of which you are witnesses; even you, who, though you mourn, and, as your pastoral duty requires, are by no means silent, are yet compelled to tolerate in your dioceses these aforesaid propagators of heresy and infidelity. . . . Hence it is easy to conceive the state of anguish into which our soul is plunged day and night, as we, being charged with the superintendence of the whole fold of Jesus Christ, and the care of all the churches, must give account for his sheep to the Divine Prince of Pastors. And we have thought fit, Venerable Brethren, to recall to your minds by our present letter the causes of those troubles which are common to us and you, that you may more attentively consider how important it is to the church, that all holy priests should endeavor, with redoubled zeal, and with united labors, and with every kind of efforts, to repel the attacks of the raging foes of religion, to turn back

their weapons, and to forewarn and fortify against the subtle blandishments which they often use. This, as you know, we have been careful to do at every opportunity; nor shall we cease to do it; as we also are not ignorant that you have always done it hitherto, and confidently trust that you will do hereafter with still more earnest zeal."

"Given at Rome, at St. Mary the Greater, on the 18th of the Kalends of September, of the year 1840, the tenth of our pontificate. "GREGORY XVI., Pope."

Verse 27: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Thus the immortal kingdom of the Most High is located under, not above, the whole heaven. It will therefore embrace the whole earth when it shall be purified by fire, and made new. Rev.21:5.

Then will be fulfilled the word of the Lord by his prophets: "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Num.14:21.

"But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Ps.37:11.

"For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isa.11:9.

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Hab.2:14.

Now let us see whereabouts we are in the prophetic chain. We have passed the lion, Babylon. We have gone by the bear with three ribs in his mouth. The sign of the leopard with four wings of a fowl and four heads, has been passed. The dreadful and terrible beast with ten horns has been seen. We have passed the little horn having eyes like the eyes of a man. That is among the things numbered with the past. What comes next? The Judgment, and God's everlasting kingdom.