

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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More Visions: God's Perspective vs. Man's

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 of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 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. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, 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. 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. 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. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, 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 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. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. 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. (Daniel 7:1-14)

In his *Expositional Commentary* on Daniel James Montgomery Boice makes an insightful observation on this passage. In his dream in the second chapter of Daniel Nebuchadnezzar perceived the four human governments from his, and generally from man's perspective.¹ In the seventh chapter Daniel's vision depicts these same four kingdoms and perhaps human civil government in general, from God's perspective. The two views are quite literally worlds apart. Let's take a quick comparative look at these two perspectives.

Kingdom	Nebuchadnezzar's View	God's View
Babylon	Head of gold	A lion with eagle's wings, one

¹ Boice, James Montgomery, *Daniel: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Books, 1989), 77.

		animal the king of beasts; the other king of birds, both ravaging predators
Medo-Persia	Arms and shoulders of silver	A bear, another savage beast
Greece	Torso of brass	A leopard with wings
Rome	Legs and feet of iron, degenerating into iron and clay	The ten horned beast, "dreadful and terrible, strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and

		brake in pieces, and stamped the residue....
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Far more significant in this lesson than these ravenous beasts, as much as they troubled Daniel, is the appearance of the "Ancient of Days," a vivid description of God the Father. Despite all the confusion and transitions of human government, quite often shifting only from bad to worse, the Ancient of Days sits regally on His throne. He and His steady purposes are not hindered by fallen humans, even fallen humans who happen to sit on their own thrones over their earthly kingdoms.

...thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.... Every time the Bible speaks specifically of the number of those in heaven who praise and honor God it describes them as a vast multitude, not a small handful. The Bible clearly teaches that there is a literal, eternal hell, a place of eternal separation from God and of deserved punishment for the wicked. Hell is not a mere metaphor for unpleasant times on earth. It is quite real and quite populated. However, God's victory over Satan is always depicted in Scripture as decisive, including the large number of the saved relative to the whole of humanity.

...the judgment was set, and the books were opened. A cursory glance might lead us to think that this line takes us to the final Day of Judgment at the Second Coming. However, a fuller reading takes us to an earlier judgment, one far more personal and decisive for God's family.

...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. This verse is clear and powerful. We are looking, not at the Second Coming when Jesus shall come to the earth from heaven to sound the trumpet and to raise the dead, but rather at the ascension of Jesus to the Father at the end of His Incarnation. The first chapter of Acts records this event from the perspective of the disciples who saw their Lord rise in clouds of glory and ascend out of their sight. This verse reveals that same event from heaven's perspective. The moment the Lord Jesus Christ disappeared out of the disciples' sight on earth He appeared before the Father in heaven. He comes **to** the Ancient of Days. He is **approaching the Father**, not leaving the Father to descend to earth.

In this verse we see Jesus' glorious and triumphant return to glory at the end of His Incarnation. He is welcomed home and honored for His decisive and complete victory. "Mission

accomplished" merits the grand welcome that He receives upon His return to glory.

If in fact this verse sets the scene we here witness at Jesus' ascension back to the Father, what are we to make of the judgment and the books that Daniel saw? I suggest that in a very real sense Jesus entered God's judgment after His crucifixion on behalf of His elect. He quite literally entered into judgment for them. Once He satisfied God's just demands against us for our sins we have the glorious liberty of the sons of God that we enjoy beginning with our personal experience of the new birth. Quite literally Jesus' suffering for our sins was His entering God's judgment for the elect so that they would be saved from that judgment. Augustus Toplady clearly had this glorious truth in mind when he wrote the poem regarding Jesus' sufferings for His people.

It Pleased the Lord to Bruise Him

August Toplady

From whence this fear and unbelief?
Did not the Father put to grief
His spotless Son for me?
And will the righteous judge of men,
Condemn me for that debt of sin,
Which Lord was charg'd on thee?

Complete atonement thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing paid,
Whate'er thy people ow'd:
Nor can his wrath on me take place,
If shelter'd in thy righteousness,
And ransomed by thy blood.

If thou hast my discharge procur'd,
And in the sinner's room endur'd,
The whole of wrath divine:
**Payment he cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding surety's hand,
And then again at mine.**

If thou for me hast purchas'd faith
By thy obedience unto death,
He must the grace bestow:
Would Israel's God a price receive,
And not the purchas'd blessing give?
His justice answers, No!

Turn then, my soul, unto thy rest;
The merits of thy great High Priest,
Have bought thy liberty:
Trust to his efficacious blood,
Nor fear thy banishment from God,
Since Jesus dy'd for thee.

In human justice a person cannot be punished twice for the same crime. It is called "double jeopardy." Toplady clearly describes our glorious deliverance from sin through Jesus' legal satisfaction of the Father's just sentence against us for our sins. His death assures our final deliverance. Daniel sees the glorious moment of Jesus' return to the Father after His victory on our behalf. Five hundred years before the event Daniel sees the event and understands its glorious effects for God's chosen family. Praise God for such a clear view of victory in our Lord Jesus Christ!

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Worship service each Sunday 10:30 A. M.
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