

Daniel 7:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The phrase "I beheld till the thrones were cast down" has generated debate—"cast down" can mean "overthrown" or "set in place/established." Context favors the latter: thrones are positioned for divine judgment. "The Ancient of days" literally means "Advanced in Days" or "One of Great Age," emphasizing God's eternality, wisdom, and authority. This rare title (appearing only in Daniel 7:9, 13, 22) depicts God as the eternal Judge who precedes all creation and history.

The detailed imagery conveys divine attributes: "garment...white as snow" symbolizes absolute purity and holiness; "hair of his head like pure wool" suggests both ancient wisdom and glory; "throne...like the fiery flame" and "wheels as burning fire" evoke Ezekiel's vision, representing God's omnipresence, holiness, and judgment. Fire throughout Scripture represents purification, judgment, and divine presence.

Theologically, this vision reveals:

1. God as supreme Judge over earthly kingdoms
2. His eternal nature contrasting with temporary human rulers
3. His absolute holiness requiring judgment of sin.

This Ancient of Days prefigures God the Father, whose judgment throne appears in Revelation 20:11-15.

Historical Context

Daniel received this vision during Belshazzar's first year (circa 553 BC), years before Babylon's fall to Persia. Chapter 7 shifts from historical narrative (chapters 1-6) to apocalyptic vision (chapters 7-12), employing symbolic imagery to reveal God's sovereign control over successive empires. The "beasts" represent kingdoms —lion (Babylon), bear (Medo-Persia), leopard (Greece), and a terrifying fourth beast (Rome).

The throne room scene depicts divine judgment court convening to assess earthly kingdoms. Daniel's vision reveals the heavenly reality behind earthly appearances —while empires dominate history, the Ancient of Days presides over all, rendering ultimate verdicts.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the vision of God as the Ancient of Days enthroned in judgment comfort you when earthly powers seem to triumph over righteousness?
2. What do the symbols of fire, white garments, and ancient appearance teach about God's character?

Interlinear Text

וְעַתָּה יְהִי רַמְּמָה וְעַתָּה בָּזְבֻּן הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי יְהִי כְּרָסִים
H2370 I beheld till H1768 his throne were cast down and the Ancient
H1934 H5705 H3764 H7412 H6268

רְאֵשֶׁת וְשָׁעָר יְמִינֵי יְתַבֵּית בְּלֹבֶשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ כְּתַלְגָּה כְּתַלְגָּה
of days did sit whose garment as snow was white and the hair of his head
H3118 H3488 H3831 H8517 H2358 H8177 H7217

כְּתַלְגָּה וְהַרְחֵב כְּתַלְגָּה כְּתַלְגָּה כְּתַלְגָּה
wool like the pure his throne flame fire and his wheels fire
H6015 H5343 H3764 H7631 H1768 H5135 H1535 H5135

דָּלָל:
as burning
H1815

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 1:14 (Parallel theme): His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

Mark 9:3 (Parallel theme): And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

Matthew 17:2 (Parallel theme): And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

Daniel 7:22 (Parallel theme): 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.

Micah 5:2 (Parallel theme): But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Daniel 7:13 (Parallel theme): 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.

Isaiah 9:6 (Parallel theme): For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Acts 2:33 (Parallel theme): Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

Acts 2:30 (Parallel theme): Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

Psalms 90:2 (Parallel theme): Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.