

### **The LORD Will Have the Final Word!**

***“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.”***

Let's say you walked by the school's playground and you saw something disturbing. You see one bunch of kids pushing and shoving each other. You see another group in a fist fight. Then you see the teacher standing there with his arms crossed doing nothing about it. You frantically run up to him and ask, "Aren't you going to do something?" I bet you feel that way. You know you shouldn't, but you do. We see turmoil and chaos around us. And COVID. Need I say more? We have witnessed riots, crime, wars and rumors of war. You want to run up to God and frantically ask him, "When are you going to do something?" We understand the words in Malachi 2, "***Where is the God of justice?***" and we might agree with the words in chapter 3, "***Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.***" Why are those who despise God and sin shamelessly glorified by society? Why do Christians suffer for doing good?

In Daniel, we have God's answer. This vision of the Lord, the Ancient of Days taking his seat of justice assures us that he will have the final word.

#### *I. The Ancient of Days takes his seat.*

In Daniel chapter seven, the Lord allowed Daniel to see a vision of the future. It scared Daniel. He admitted, "***I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale.***" What he saw would make the scenes from movies like the Lord of the Ring or other special effects movie look like a preschooler's crayon drawing. He saw four awesome, fearsome beasts, each one more fearsome than the one before. He saw a lion with wings, a bear with ribs in his mouth, a leopard with four wings like a bird and finally a beast with iron teeth and ten horns. And to make it worse, one of those horns became uprooted and a small horn emerged. It had human eyes and a "***mouth that spoke boastfully.***" In a way this last strange beast, the horn, was the worse. He spoke against God and blasphemed him and his Word.

This disturbed Daniel. He and the people of his world were used to military powers sweeping through the fertile crescent conquering and destroying those in their path. He and his people had just witnessed Babylon invading their country, destroying their cities and dragging the people off into captivity. And now God says more is to come. The winged lion represented Babylon who was their present conqueror, but Babylon will be overthrown by Persia, the bear with ribs in his mouth. But there is no peace. Persia will fall to Greece under Alexander the Great, the leopard. But they couldn't gloat for long. One of the most cruel, domineering empires would devour them like a beast with iron teeth, Rome. And I suppose God could have gone on. He could have shown him visions of barbarians overthrowing Rome, the world descending into the dark ages, feudal kings massacring whole villages, the rise of monarchies and constant war, the Thirty Years War, World War I, II and so on.

And to make it worse, that little horn that blasphemed God is out there. It represents the Antichrist and all monpr antichrists who lie and speak badly about God, and they come from within God's church. That's the history of the world, this cycle of death and destruction and God's little church caught up in the middle of all of it. When are you going to do something? He will.

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Now look at him with clothing as white as snow, hair like wool. This ancient of days is pure. He is perfect. This is holiness. And there is more. Thousands upon tens of thousands of holy angels surround him. Remember, one angel killed an army of 195,000 with one wing tied behind his back. But there is something a bit scary here. His throne is a chariot. The wheels were on fire and a river of fire flowed before him. Hot lava can measure as high as 2,000 degrees, enough to melt rock. What will it do to people? This is a picture of the Ancient of Days bringing judgment on the world. As it says in Isaiah: "***See, the Lord is coming with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For with fire and with his sword the LORD will execute judgment upon all men, and many will be those slain by the LORD.***"

So you have this vision of four beasts devouring each other and then comes this Ancient of Days. Makes me think of a classroom where the teacher had to leave for a minute. While he was gone, the kids started to run around and goof off when suddenly the door flew open and there stood the teacher. Immediately the kids stopped goofing off and sheepishly go back to their desks awaiting the anger of the teacher. The world is out there, warring with each other, nations coming and going,

people hurting each other, but then it will stop. The Ancient of Days will come and the world falls in deadly silence before him. Every arrogant nation, every world leader, every person will be there. And death will not hide them. All the living and the dead will be there including you and me. And what happens? ***“The court was seated, and the books were opened.”***

## *II. He opens his books.*

Do you know you are being watched? You are. ATMs as well as gas stations and businesses And there is more. Thousands upon tens of thousands of holy angels surround him. Remember, one angel killed an army of 195,000 with one wing tied behind his back. which are taping you. Every time you use your phone or the internet, they are following you. The credit card company and bank are recording each time you use their cards. That is why you let them know when you travel. Otherwise, if they see your card being used two states away, they may block in case it was stolen.

Now imagine if every word, every thought, every deed were written down somewhere. They are. It says in Psalm 94, ***“The word of God ... judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”*** Jesus warns in Matthew 12, ***“I tell you the truth that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.”*** Our council and voters meetings record minutes. This way you can go back and see exactly what they decided. God has books, books that record everything every word, every thought.

On earth sinful people who do sinful things. Evil happens. God will not stop every evil action, but at times he intervenes. When Pharaoh refused to listen, he broke his power and freed his people. To Babylon who became arrogant after exiling God's people, he made them crumble. And when Persia and Greece did the same, he brought them down before Rome and it is no surprise Rome collapsed. Who knows how many times he intervened for you?

But if he does not intervene now, he will on the day the books will be opened. This makes me think of a couple Bible passages like in Isaiah, ***“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.”*** Or in Psalm 14, ***“There is no one who does good, not even one,”*** or Psalm 130, ***“If you, O Lord kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?”*** There is no escape. God will have the final word. All will get what they deserve.

But look again at the vision. It doesn't say a throne, but thrones, plural. God the Father isn't the only one who has the final Word. The Son of God is there, too. And what is he doing there? Romans 8 tells us, ***“Who is he that condemns?”*** Paul then answers his question as he continues, ***“Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”*** When the books are opened, Jesus is right there saying, “I died for that sin, and that one and that one.” He intercedes for us so every sin we have committed has been scratched off, blotted erased, forgotten as if it never happened.

There is another book, the book of life. It says in Revelation, ***“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life.”*** This is a most interesting book. All it has names, names like Abraham and Isaac, Moses and David, James and John and Peter and Paul, Fred and Mary. These are the names of believers who will live forever in heaven.

It will happen. But how long do you have to wait for it? A week, a year, a decade, another century? It is easy to think it will be a while. It is easy to assume it won't happen until we are long gone. And because Jesus died for our sins, it is easy to say, “I don't have anything to worry about.” And you don't, but will you stop worrying about the devil and temptation? And the good we want to do, will we continue to do it? We know we are saved by faith and not works and will we just stop doing the good? It is also easy to put Judgment and Christ out of our minds. We might forget. We can neglect. We might fall away.

That is where another book comes in, the Bible. I don't think we will have Bibles in heaven. We will not need them there, but we need them now, for faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ. Before those books are opened then, let's keep opening up The Book, the Bible now.

So, when we feel frustrated, stressed, tired, and there is no end in sight and we are tempted to ask God, “Where are you?” look at this vision. He hasn't left you, and find comfort that in the end, it is the Lord who has the final word, the final word on those who oppose him, the final word of salvation for believers. Amen.