

## BIBLE BACKGROUND

Daniel 7:9,10,13,14

Verses 9,10

**I kept looking; thrones were put down  
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.  
His gown was as white as snow  
and his hair like pure wool.  
His throne was ablaze in flames,  
its wheels burning.**

**A river of fire was flowing  
and coming out before him.  
Thousand upon thousands were attending him  
and myriads upon myriads  
were standing before him.  
The court sat  
and the books were opened.**

The text is in Aramaic.

The context is Daniel's dream, which came to him in during the reign of Belshazzar (Darius II) in 553BC (1). It began with four beasts coming out of the Mediterranean Sea (3-8). The first was a lion, the Babylonian empire. The second a bear, the Median empire (Darius II was a Mede). The third a leopard, the Persian empire. Finally, the fourth, a terrifying beast, corresponding to the Greek empire.

In contrast to the grasping for power, violence and boasts of these empires and their rulers, the vision suddenly turns to God's heavenly rule. This rule, it would appear, touches earth, for the **thrones**, and the plural is deliberate, are set down as though they came from above and were placed below. **The Ancient of Days** takes his seat on one of the thrones. Clearly, he is the Lord worshipped by Israel as the eternal God. Unlike earthly powers, he is not subject to decay or mortality.

He is dressed in **a royal robe as white as snow and his hair is pure white, like wool**. He is a righteous Lord, without the sins and evil of men and women. The throne is burning with fire, an image of God's unapproachable being for he is a consuming fire (Heb 12:29; Ex 19:18). Human might is minuscule in contrast to God's omnipotence. His throne has wheels (Ezek 1:15; 10:6). His throne is able to go in all directions across heaven and earth, traversing the four winds or four corners of the earth.

In Ezekiel (47:1), the river from the temple gives life and forgiveness to the world but here there is a **river of fire was flowing and coming out before him**. This is the fire of judgement on the nations who have built upon the foundations of terror and conquest (Matt 3:11). He is surrounded by angelic servants or hosts as in an army; **Thousand upon thousands were attending him and myriads upon myriads**. These are countless in numbers and far exceed the populations of earth. **They stand before him** ready to act.

**The books were opened** refer to the book of history, every thought, word and deed of every single person recorded (Ex 32:32). The plural indicates how thorough this record is. Or, does it refer to two books, one for the condemned and one for those who pass through the judgement and enter life (Lk 10:20; Ph 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; Ps 69:28? Believers have security because they are found in the book of

life and are recorded their, even from eternity, long before they existed. **The court sat** indicates that the scene is one of solemn judgement but who is in this court?

Verses 13,14

**I kept looking at the night visions  
and look, and with the clouds of heaven,  
one like a Son of Man was coming.  
And he came right up to the Ancient of Days  
and was presented before him.**

**To him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom  
so that all the peoples, nations, and [people] of every language might serve him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away;  
his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.**