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Daniel 7:9&10,13&14¹
The Ancient of Days judges
3rd Last Sunday of Reformation
& Endtime – Sunday of
the Last Judgment
Supplementary Lectionary Series “A,”
Old Testament, adapted

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⁹ “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.
¹⁰ 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.

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¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.
¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his Kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

WHAT WILL JUDGMENT DAY BE LIKE?
I. JUDGES
II. THE JUDGE
III. THE JUDGMENT

¹ *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.
All Scripture references are taken from this translation unless noted otherwise.

In the Name of Jesus who will come to judge the living and the dead, Dear Fellow-Redeemed,

The main thing that happens as you study God's Word is that your faith in Jesus as your Savior increases and becomes stronger. As you continue to study that Word, you also come to learn that there will be a Last Day, Judgment Day. On that Day, the Scriptures clearly tell us that Jesus will raise all the dead, and he will judge all. What will that Day be like? WHAT WILL JUDGMENT DAY BE LIKE? We look at ... I. JUDGES; II. THE JUDGE; and, III. THE JUDGMENT

WHAT WILL JUDGMENT DAY BE LIKE? I. JUDGES

Daniel tells us about one of the visions God gave to him. He says, "As I looked, thrones were set in place" (7:9a). Take note of the plural: "Thrones." While we are later told about One Throne that is the most important and the most significant, nevertheless, in his vision, Daniel saw many thrones being set in place. In other words, there is not just one judge but many who are seated. Who are these?

On one occasion, Jesus told his disciples, "I confer on you a Kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29,30; cf. Matthew 19:28-30). Those who had followed Jesus, believed in him, and shared sorrow and tears with him, would rule and reign and judge with him. This picture of believers participating in Judgment is also described in the Book of Revelation.

One of the visions that John saw and recorded in the Book of Revelation is as follows: "Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads" (Revelation 4:4). These seated on thrones and therefore participating in rule and judgment are further described:

⁹ ***Whenever the living creatures*** [also described in this section of Revelation] ***give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the Throne and who lives for ever and ever,*** ¹⁰ ***the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:***

¹¹ ***"You are worthy, our LORD and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being"*** (Revelation 4:9-11).

A study of the symbolic use of numbers in the Book of Revelation, indicates that the numbers 12 and its multiples – here 24 – are used as symbols for the church – the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints, the Fellowship of Believers in Jesus. In addition, the Apostle Paul describes the crown that these believers are wearing.

St. Paul describes the crown that he and all believers in Jesus will wear in heaven. Paul writes in his Second Epistle to Timothy, “Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8). The crown given to believers is the crown of righteousness by faith alone in Jesus. In addition, St. Paul makes the comment in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, “Do you not know that we will judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:3a).

Yes, believers in Jesus will participate as judges on the Last Day. Of course, they will agree with the judgment made by the Judge of all and give praise to him for that judgment.

APPROPRIATION

This is a picture of what is waiting for you, dear fellow-believers in Jesus. By faith alone in Jesus, you have waiting for you the crown of righteousness. That crown of righteousness is yours only by faith in Jesus and even your faith in Jesus is something that has been created and given to you by the Gospel or Good News of Jesus. That Good News reminds you that Jesus substituted himself for you. Jesus’ perfection, holiness, righteousness and innocence is substituted for your sinfulness. Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross is the punishment you deserve for your sins. Your crown of righteousness is not based on what you deserve but on what Jesus has done for you. You have that crown of righteousness by faith alone in Jesus. By this faith in Jesus, you will participate in rule and judgment on the Last Day. But of course, there is One Judge that is clearly identified in Daniel’s vision, as well as in all of Scripture.

WHAT WILL JUDGMENT DAY BE LIKE?

II. THE JUDGE

On the Last Day, there will be “judges” but there will also be a Judge. Listen again to Daniel’s description: “As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat” (7:9a,b). “The Ancient of Days” takes the central place of Judgment. His Name indicates his eternity – he is from everlasting to everlasting; he is “as it was in the beginning is now and will be forever.” His appearance indicates his holiness: “His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool” (7:9c,d). His absolute authority to judge and condemn is indicated by the description of his throne and the fire associated with it.

***⁹ His throne was flaming with fire,
and its wheels were all ablaze.***

**¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing,
coming out from before him (7:9e,f & 10a).**

These words serve as a reminder of what the Israelites saw when they were at the foot of Mount Sinai when God gave them his Law through Moses.

¹⁸ Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, ¹⁹ and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder... (Exodus 19:18,19a).

Understandably, Israel reacted to this with great fear – so also when Judgment Day comes upon those who have not believed in Jesus as their Savior. In addition, Daniel gives attention to those who are before this Judge.

In his vision, Daniel reports, “Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him” (7:10b). All of these are under this fierce Judge, who is pictured in the first part of our text. But then there is another Judge introduced.

Daniel continues in our text:

¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his Kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (7:13&14).

Daniel sees “the Son of Man” who comes with the clouds of heaven. (The NIV translates this phrase as “one like a son of man.” This a point however in which the NIV translation ignores the fact that Scripture interprets Scripture, for the New Testament makes clear that the One who is The Son of Man is Jesus.) This “Son of Man” is brought into the presence of the Holy and Righteous Judge – the Ancient of Days. Notice the description of this Son of Man. He is given “authority, glory and sovereign power” – there is none greater than he. His dominion, rule and authority is “everlasting” and his Kingdom lasts forever and ever. Moreover, “all peoples, nations and men of every language” worship him. Some will worship him in everlasting joy, for they believed the Gospel of this Son of Man. Others will worship him but in agony, sorrow, fear, trembling, and eternal pain, for they did not believe in this Son of Man. This Son of Man is Jesus.

Jesus is this Son of Man. During the time of his earthly public ministry, Jesus referred to himself many times as the Son of Man. The words surrounding Peter’s confession of Jesus indicate this.

Matthew's Gospel records,

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I Am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:13-16).

Jesus asks, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" Then Jesus follows up with the question: "Who do you say I Am?" Clearly, Jesus is referring to himself as the Son of Man. In addition, Jesus gives this same testimony under oath when he was arrested and interrogated by the High Priest on Maundy Thursday night.

Matthew's Gospel records:

⁶³ The High Priest said to [Jesus], "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

⁶⁴ "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:63b,64).

Jesus takes his testimony concerning himself directly from this Book and Chapter of Daniel, as he describes himself "coming on the clouds of heaven." Jesus is the Judge.

Recorded for us in John's Gospel, Jesus says,

²² Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him" (John 5:22,23).

Jesus is coming to judge the living and the dead.

APPROPRIATION

You will stand before Jesus on Judgment Day. That is clear in the Scriptures. You will stand before him. You heard of all Jesus' attributes, which are brought to bear on his work of judging. Jesus has "all authority, glory and sovereign power" (7:14a). The fire that comes out from before the throne of the Ancient of Days, is also the fire with which Jesus judges. Jesus is also omniscient; he knows all things. Jesus knows all things about you.

Jesus knows about you. He knows about your sins – both public and private and secret. Jesus knows the vileness and wickedness of your heart. Jesus knows your every thought. The

sinfulness, which no one else sees, Jesus sees. How should Jesus judge you? How will Jesus judge you?

WHAT WILL JUDGMENT DAY BE LIKE? III. THE JUDGMENT

Daniel states in the last verse of our text concerning this Son of Man,

“He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his Kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (7:14).

From this description, it is obvious that there is no appeal from this Judgment of the Son of Man. His Judgment is absolute, irrevocable and irreversible. His Judgment is also based on fact.

Daniel sees that “The court was seated, and the books were opened” (7:10c). There is a further and more complete description of these “books” found in the Book of Revelation.

John writes,

¹¹ Then I saw a great white Throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹² 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. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ If anyone’s name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

So, there are these books. Each book contains all of the wicked, vile, adulterous, and sinful things a person has ever done, thought or spoken. Another book is the Book of Life. Those whose names are recorded in the Book of Life have eternal life in heaven with their Savior Jesus. Those whose names are written in this Book of Life are believers in Jesus.

APPROPRIATION

What will Judgment Day be like for you? Jesus is omniscient; he knows all things; he knows every one of your sins, weaknesses, failures and shortcomings. He knows the vileness

of your thoughts. The book that has your name on it, is overflowing with the list of how guilty you really are. But there is for you that other book also.

The Book of Life is also for you. Your name is written in the Book of Life by faith in Jesus. Your name was placed in Jesus' Book of Life when you were baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Your name has remained in Jesus' Book of Life as you have continued in the Gospel or Good News of Jesus – hearing it, reading it, studying it, contemplating it. Through Holy Communion, your name in Jesus' Book of Life has been sealed. By faith in Jesus – created and strengthened in your heart through the Gospel in Word and Sacraments – by faith in Jesus, Jesus pronounces judgment upon you: “Not guilty!”

CONCLUSION

There is a story about a man who had a dream. He dreamed that it was Judgment Day, and Jesus ushered him into a large room filled with filing cabinets. As the man examined the filing cabinets, he found one that had his name on it. He opened the top drawer of his filing cabinet and there he found file after file recording every sin he had ever committed. Every file drawer of his filing cabinet was filled with his guilt. Jesus then stepped forward and began to write on each file with his blood: “Forgiven.” That is Jesus' Judgment for you. Amen.