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Editorial.

Who is the Ancient of Days?

A BROTHER writes to us for instruction on this question. We can assure him that it has been one that has agitated the minds of many Bible students, and explanations have been given of it as wide apart as the poles. Laying aside all these, we will give our views on it, in a plain and simple manner, and, if not in harmony with the remainder of the Sacred Word, we trust that they will be cast aside as worthless.

The expression, "Ancient of Days," is found in the seventh chapter of Daniel. It occurs three times, but it is not found in any other portion of the Scriptures. The Hebrew word, from which it is translated, is *קטן*—*ngat-teck*—and signifies, according to Gesenius, "ancient, senex," and comes from the root, *קטן*—*ngah-thak*—"to be advanced in years; to grow old." The meaning of the word, therefore, standing alone, cannot settle the question, inasmuch as many persons and things have attained great age. We shall be compelled to rely, therefore, upon the context, in order to get a correct understanding of it.

In the thirteenth verse, Daniel says, "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." In this vision, two personages are introduced—one the Son of Man, the other the Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days is evidently *superior* to the Son of Man, inasmuch as He is in possession of all power, whilst the Son of Man appears in His presence for the purpose of receiving a share of it. This corresponds with the Roman custom, which required those who were destined to rule as kings to go to Rome, the great centre of power for all the world, and receive authority from the Emperor himself. After being clothed with this dignity, they returned to the province over which they were appointed to rule, and exercised the power with which they had been vested. In conformity with this custom, we find our Lord teaching His disciples, in parable, that a certain nobleman must go "into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." Luke xix: 12. This

nobleman represented Himself, seeing that the object of the parable was to correct the impression that possessed their minds, that "the Kingdom of God should *immediately* appear." The Son of Man must first go into a far country to receive from the Centre of All Power "a kingdom, and then to return." Did not the Son of Man go into a far country? Did not these very disciples see Him taken from their midst, and go into heaven, where their eyes followed Him in the distance until a cloud received Him out of their sight? He thus took His departure for the far country, and we read that Stephen, at the time of his martyrdom, "saw heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Acts vii: 5, 6. From this, we know that Jesus arrived safely at the point He set out for, even the presence of God, the ruler of all.

Daniel was permitted, in vision, to witness this wonderful event of the transit of the Son of Man, in the clouds of heaven, to the very presence of the Ancient of Days. He sees them bring Him "near before Him," and he attests the result of this visit, by saying that "there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom." We conclude, therefore, that "the Ancient of Days," in this case, at least, is the Father, who gives to His Son a kingdom. It was first to be *asked* for, hence the visit of the Son for this purpose. The Father says, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. *Ask of Me*, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." Psa. ii: 7, 8. Daniel sees the Son approach His reverend parent for this purpose, and the object of His visit is a success.

All that remains now is, for the King to return to His province and assume His power and reign. This He will do at the appointed time. Peter testifies that God will "send Jesus Christ," whom the heaven must receive UNTIL the times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Acts iii: 20, 21. When the "times of the Gentiles are fulfilled," the "times of restitution" will be ushered in, and Jesus, the Great Restorer, will begin to complete the work. In order to accomplish this in a world wholly given up to wickedness, it will be necessary for Him to come clothed with great power. This, God has provided Him with, as Jesus Himself testifies. He says, "ALL POWER is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth." Matt. xxviii: 18. This power He will exert at the appointed time.

To return, now, to the chapter under consideration. We have dwelt upon the vision of Daniel sufficiently to learn

1. That the Ancient of Days must be the Father, seeing He is the one who alone has power to give to the Son of Man a kingdom and dominion.

2. That the Son of Man must be Jesus, who visited His Father for the purpose of asking for, and obtaining, the *promised* inheritance.

The next point to consider is the dream of Daniel, as recorded from the first to the twelfth verses, and as interpreted from the fifteenth to the twenty-eighth verses. In this, he beholds four great beasts, representing four kingdoms, viz: the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman. The latter kingdom, or beast, troubled him, on account of its terribleness. He saw ten horns upon its head, and among them a little horn with eyes, and a mouth speaking great things. He says, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down,* and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment

* *The thrones were cast down.*—The prevailing idea relative to this text is, that it refers to the overthrow or casting down of the thrones of the Kings before spoken of. We are satisfied that this is not correct. The word *רָמוּהוּ* *r'mah*, is defined by Gesenius, to mean, 1. "To cast, to throw; 2. to set, to place, o. g. thrones." It does not signify to overthrow, or

was white as snow, and the hair of His head like 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."

Here we have a judgment scene introduced. The first thing done is to place the thrones, or judgment seats, in order, probably in semi-circle form, as were those of the Jewish Sanhedrin. This agrees with the vision which John saw. He says, "Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne, (the president of the council—Jesus), and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone, and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold." Rev. iv: 2-4. In agreement with John's vision, Daniel sees the Ancient of Days occupying one of the seats, and on comparing the glory attached to the person that Daniel saw with the description John gives of the Son of Man in Rev. 1: 12-17, we conclude that they are one and the same personage. The glorious Son of Man that John saw, "whose head and hair was white as wool, as white as snow," says, "I am he that liveth and was dead." This can refer to none but Jesus, therefore he is evidently the personage that Daniel saw sitting in the president's chair of the great council of judges that were assembled for the purpose of judging the horn power that had ruled the world in wickedness, persecuting God's Saints.

The judges who compose the council are the Saints of the Most High. The day of their adversity will have passed. The persecutions of the little horn will have come to an end, and they will sit in judgment, together with Jesus, the judge of all the earth, returning double to their persecutors for all the evil they have wrought upon the Saints in the day of their weakness.

But it will be asked, how can it be that in the vision of Daniel the Ancient of Days is the Father to whom the Son goes for power, whilst in the dream of Daniel the Ancient of Days is the Son himself. We answer, that it can only be explained upon the ground that we accept Jesus in His double character. 1st, As the Son of Man, going to receive power. 2d, As God's vicegerent, or representative on the earth, for one thousand years, clothed with all power in heaven and earth. When Daniel saw Him first in vision He had not attained to this glory. Not so, however, when he saw Him in his dream. Then he beheld Him a glorious personage, having come to His province for the purpose of "destroying those

overturn, and is never used in that sense. Its meaning is simply that of a person casting, or placing his seat in a given place, preparatory to sitting in it. Hence, Isaac Leeser in his version of the Scriptures, renders the text as follows: "I was looking until chairs were set down, and an ancient of days seated himself," etc. The Geneva Bible reads, "I beheld until the thrones were set." Adam Clarke says, that the word might be translated "erected," which is in harmony with the renderings already given. He also states that the Vulgate, and all versions excepting King James' so renders it. We conclude, therefore, that the evidence preponderates in favor of understanding this as referring to the setting up, or erecting of thrones, in place of overthrowing them. By carefully comparing with the twenty-first, twenty-second, and twenty-sixth verses, it will be seen that the judgment seats, chairs or thrones, are occupied by the Saints.

* *The judgment was set.*—The "Septuagint" renders this, "The judgment sat." Another rendering is, "the judges were seated." Leeser translates it, "they sat down to hold judgment." There is evidently a reference to the gathering of the Sanhedrin, a council of judges who met for the determination of all cases brought before them. The council consisted of seventy members, besides the president. When assembled, a seat was placed for the president, and fronting him, in the form of a semi-circle, all the other members were seated.

who destroy the earth." He sees Him then, not as the Son of Man, but as God himself, the Ancient of Days. Hence Daniel says, "I was looking until chairs were set down and an Ancient of Days seated himself." This translation, given by Leiser, does not state that *the* Ancient of Days seated himself, but *an* Ancient of Days. This lack of the definite article is important, inasmuch as Jesus in His judicial character, with raiment white as snow, and hair like pure wool, and His throne radiant with glory as with burning fire, doubtless appeared to Daniel as "An Ancient of Days," hence he styles Him such. The Prophet describes beasts, personages, etc., as they appeared to him. Therefore, when he witnessed the inauguration of the judgment, he describes the president of the council as An Ancient of Days, yet from all the rest of the Prophet's testimony, we are certain that this honor belongs to Jesus. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed *ALL* judgment unto the Son, that all should honor the Son, *even as they honor the Father.*" *Jno. v: 22, 23.* It would be folly, in view of this declaration of our Lord, to say that the very first judgment scene that is inaugurated on the earth will be presided over by the Father, as would be the case, if we concluded that the Ancient of Days that Daniel saw in the Judgment seat was the same as He who gave the Son His Kingdom. No. The Son will be *as the Father* at that time. Whatever power, glory and honor attached to the Ancient of Days when the Son visited Him, will be given to the Son when He comes to the earth to judge the world in righteousness. He will be a God upon the earth. Isaiah, in giving a description of His future character, says: "He shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." *ix: 6.* Speaking of the Son, the Psalmist says: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." *Zechariah*, predicting His future greatness, says that man shall "come up from year to year to *worship the King*, the Lord of hosts." *xiv: 16.* Again, the Psalmist, prophesying concerning the coming of our Lord in great power and glory, says: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence, a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him." *Psa. 1: 3.* Paul, alluding to this same event, refers to Jesus: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." *2 Thess. i: 7, 8.*

When the Lord shall sit upon His glorious throne in the city of Jerusalem, He shall be the praise of all the earth. "There shall be one Lord, and His name one." Isaiah referring to Him as the Redeemer of Israel, says: "the God of the whole earth shall He be called." *liv: 5.* Although He has in times past occupied a lowly position as the Son of Man, yet it will then be manifest in all the earth that "the Father hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." *Phil. xi: 9.* Although He suffered himself to be abased and maltreated before a human tribunal, yet God hath made Him judge of all the earth. Although He was compelled to appear before His Father to ask for the nations as an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as His possession," (*Psa. xi.*) yet the Father has expressed His approbation by clothing Him, as it were, in His own habiliments of glory, so that when He comes to judge the earth, He will come as the Ancient of Days, and not as the Son of Man. Then He will be accompanied by thousand thousands of ministering angels, and ten thousand times ten thousand will stand before Him. Enoch prophesied of this glorious advent in the following language: "Behold the Lord (the Ancient of Days) cometh with ten thousand of

His Saints, to execute judgment upon all." Jude 14. Zechariah, referring to the same event, says: "the Lord my God shall come, and all the Saints with thee." xiv: 5.

In conclusion, then, we think it must be manifest that in the vision of Daniel the two characters introduced are the Father (Ancient of Days) and the Son of Man, (Jesus.) In the dream of Daniel, the Ancient of Days who appears upon the scene at the close of the Gentile rule, for the purpose of sitting in judgment upon the powers of earth, in conjunction with his Saints, is Jesus. The entire testimony of Prophets, Christ and Apostles, points to Him as the future judge, therefore, it would be folly to suppose that in this single instance some one else was meant. The explanation is easy and in harmony with other texts that we have quoted, if we consider Jesus at that time as God upon earth—possessed of the glory and power of the Father. In order for Daniel to get a correct idea of the exalted position of our Lord at that time, he must see Him in a dream as the Ancient of Days, and not as the Son of Man. W.

The Truth in Geneva, Illinois.

On Sunday, June 7, we spent the day with our brethren in Geneva, Illinois, where our respected parents and the youngest brother of the family circle reside. We were glad to see the union of the congregation, after its varied trials for years past, and trust that nothing will occur in the future to mar the harmony. Surely there is enough for all to do in the great work of preparation for admission into God's everlasting Kingdom. Let each one put forth all their strength then towards building up the congregation, and frown upon everything calculated to distract or divide.

At the close of an interesting discourse by brother B. Wilson, our heart was rejoiced upon hearing the good confession of five young intelligent believers, all of whom desired immersion, one of them being the younger brother referred to. This action on his part closes up the ranks so far as the family of which we are a member is concerned. All have obeyed the truth. One, a loving sister, has fallen asleep. We expect to meet her on the morn of the resurrection, blooming in immortality. God grant that there may be no break in the family at that day, but that all may be present in the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

After the meeting closed, the applicants for immersion, together with a goodly number of brethren, repaired to the waters of the beautiful La Fox, and there we witnessed their introduction into the new life. Our mind reverted to the time, when, some sixteen years ago, we yielded a like obedience near the same spot. Recollections both pleasing and sad were forced upon us, as our eye rested upon various points of interest near that hallowed spot. We could not help reflecting upon the many and varied changes that had taken place since that time. Some, who were dear to our memory, are with us no more; death has claimed them.