Excursus on the KJV Rendering of Daniel
7:9-10 and 26

In verses 9-10 there are three places where most of the recent translations differ greatly from the KJV. The first of these relates to the KJV rendering of the first line of the passage: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down." Although the meaning "cast" or "cast into" fits the context very well in most of the twelve places where the verb r^ema occurs in Biblical Aramaic it is generally recognized that it would be extremely difficult to find a reasonable way to fit the idea of thrones being "cast down" into this part of Daniel's vision, and all of the recent translators render r^ema as "to set or place" in this verse. They support this idea by pointing to the fact that the Targum (the ancient translation into Aramaic) uses r^ema in Jeremiah 1:15 to translate the second verb in the sentence: "their kings will come and set up their thrones."

It should be noted that the phrase "thrones were placed," or "thrones were set in place" does not necessarily mean that Daniel saw thrones brought in and put into place. It is equally possible to understand the words as meaning that as the heavenly scene came before his eyes it included thrones already standing in their proper place.

The other important differences between the KJV and the NIV renderings occur in the second and eleventh of the twelve lines in the passage (as divided into lines in the NIV). Both of them deserve attention, as they can greatly affect the impression produced by the passage as a whole.

The lines between line 2 and line 11, if read by themselves, give the impression that what Daniel saw was an awe-inspiring symbolic representation of the tremendous power of God, pictured as sitting on a fiery throne with a river of fire flowing from it, while untold millions stand before Him to carry out His commands. In most of the recent translations the effect of this symbolic representation of the great Creator of the universe, whose power is supreme and whose wisdom far surpasses that of all His creatures, is somewhat blunted by the impression given by