

Sermon for November 22, 2015 – Christ the King

Daniel 7:13-14 (NIV84)

Theme: **For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory**

- 1) *Jesus is ruling now in time.*
- 2) *Jesus will rule into time eternal.*

¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a 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.

Imagine for a moment that you are driving along Highway 29 - speeding because you have to get to Green Bay fast. (For some of us, maybe this isn't that hard to imagine!) All of a sudden you see red and blue lights in your rear view mirror and your heart sinks. This is going to be an expensive one! As you pull over and wait for the officer, butterflies form in your stomach as you imagine what you are going to say. You hear the tap at your window, look up and, what do you know: the police officer is a really good friend of yours! Even though you're embarrassed, you still feel a little sense of relief. Why? Because, you don't have to lie or cover up your sin to him. He knows you and is more likely to be merciful than a police officer you don't know.

Brothers and sisters in Christ: throughout this month we have been reminded that judgment is coming. As we watch the news and see the signs being fulfilled that Jesus said would precede that day, we can't help but be a little afraid: the all holy God is coming to judge the living and the dead. Moreover, we have sinned against him in thought, word and deed. We have clearly broken his law. What excuse can we offer? What can we say to keep us from being sent to hell?

But look again at the one coming to judge the living and the dead: it is Jesus, our human brother and dearest friend, who is able to sympathize with our weakness. More than this; he has done everything necessary to forgive us of all sins.

Yes, it's good to have a friend in authority – especially the one who is in absolute authority. Today, on Christ the King Sunday, we are going to rejoice in the fact that Jesus, our human brother, is sitting on the throne of God ruling over all things for us, under the theme: **For Thine is The Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory** 1) *Jesus is ruling now in time.* 2) *Jesus will rule into time eternal.*

Part One: Jesus is ruling now in time.

Our sermon text for this morning is part of a terrifying vision that Daniel had in Babylon. He dreamed of four vicious beasts which came out of the sea. They were frightful and powerful to rule and kill. So terrifying was the vision that, even after the dream was interpreted for him, his

face turned pale. But Daniel also saw the LORD himself – sitting in court and ready to judge. The LORD would put an end to rule of the final beast.

And this is where our text comes in: *“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a 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 does all this mean? If you read a little further in this chapter of Daniel, the Lord himself gives us the interpretation: *“The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.”ⁱ*

Basically Daniel saw a vision of world history up until the time the Christ would come. Terrifying kingdoms would arise and oppress God’s people, but the LORD would nevertheless remain in control. He will judge those Kingdoms and give all authority to his dearly loved Son – who also happens to be a man.

Now throughout this sermon you will hear me refer to Jesus as a man. Let me get one thing straight. Jesus is true God. He is of one essence with the Father. He is not a creature, but rather the creator of all things. I do not deny these facts about Jesus and it is important for us to stress them in a world that tries to deny his divinity.

But sometimes we spend so much time talking about the divinity of Jesus, that we forget the wonderful, comforting fact that Jesus is also a true human being. This is what Christmas is all about: Jesus who is true God from all eternity, taking on human flesh and blood so that he could live under the law, die and rise again in order to save us. The eternal Son of God chose to be a brother of our race.

In his vision, Daniel saw *one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.* This is fascinating on so many levels. First of all notice where this “son of man” came from. Humans are made of earth, but this man came from heaven. What is more, he could stand before God the Father – the “Ancient of Days” – and live. This is something no sinful human could ever do before, so how is it possible now? Because, even though this man *has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet [he] was without sin.ⁱⁱ* And because Jesus, the perfect man, suffered and died for all our sins, we too can stand before God– as the author of Hebrews states: *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. . . . Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”ⁱⁱⁱ*

This is why we are so happy to see Jesus, our human brother, before the throne of God. Because he is there, we can be there. Through Him we have access to the Father.^{iv}

In his vision, Daniel saw Jesus *was given authority, glory and sovereign power*. Will this happen at the end of time? It certainly will be seen at the end of time that Jesus has all authority, but that is not when Jesus received it. No, this happened at Jesus' ascension. Right now Jesus has all authority, glory and power. Right now he is in full control over everything and everyone - ruling over all for the benefit of his church.

At the beginning of the sermon I mentioned what a comfort it is to know someone in authority – especially someone who is in complete authority. And this is our status with God right now.

I know that sometimes this world seems like it is, proverbially speaking, going to hell in a handbasket – and in a certain sense, it actually is! Materialism, love of self, absolute total disregard for God and his word – all these things are around us. We feel this world's allure, the temptation of our flesh, and doubts aroused by the devil. We often fall into a vicious cycle of sin and guilt that we can't get ourselves out of, causing us to cry out with the apostle Paul: *What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*^v

Thank God we know the one in authority, and that he also knows us. Yes, Jesus is in control. He is our dear human brother who cares for us so much that He died on the cross to remove the guilt of our sins. He suffered our punishment so that we could be at total peace with the LORD. He has done this for us, and he is doing even more.

He is sitting on the throne of God, mediating with his Father on our behalf – telling him how much he loves us. How do I know this? Because of the promise recorded in Romans: *Christ Jesus . . . is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*^{vi} Right now Jesus is ruling over everything – directing even bad things like crime, terror, disease, disasters, death and any other evil you hear about – to ultimately benefit his church. How do I know this? Because of the Holy Spirit's promise *that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*^{vii} Jesus our, dear brother, has the kingdom, and the power and the glory now, and will use it to bring us to himself forever.

Part Two: Jesus will rule into time eternal.

Daniel writes: *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.*

All people will worship Jesus. “What?” you might be wondering, “How about those who deny him? Will everyone be converted at the end of time?” No, sadly the vast majority of the human race will deny Jesus all their way into hell - but they will still have to worship him. At the end of time, when Jesus comes from the clouds with the angels of God, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is LORD. The difference will be that the believers will do it in joy, whereas the unbelievers will do it in terror. Nevertheless, all nations will worship him.

But it does not stop there. When Christ comes again, he will bring with him the new heavens and new earth that he is even now preparing for us: the perfect paradise of God. On this new

heaven and new earth there will be no more crying or pain, nor more sin or death – because the old order of things will have passed away. There will only be praise of God – and complete and utter joy for those who believed in him and his work of saving us.

And all nations will be represented there. St. John’s Revelation tells us that the people in heaven will consist of a multitude that no one can count from every tribe, people and language. Throughout time, God has called, gathered and enlightened his elect from every nation on earth; and they are a large number. And all of us who believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin will see this sight. We will remain under his gracious reign forever: eating at his table and enjoying his presence without any fear.

Jesus is our King into eternity. What a comfort this is for us as we suffer under the “beasts” that arise in this world. What a hope to cling to, as the devil, world and our own sinful natures try their best to drag us away from our faith in the LORD. We know the man in charge, trust in his total love for us, and look forward to the day when he will appear to deliver us from this earth. And as we wait for that day, we trust that Christ is in control, working in all things for our benefit. For this, let us thank our Savior. For thine, dear Jesus, is the Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory – forever and ever. Amen.

ⁱ Daniel 7:17–18, NIV84

ⁱⁱ Hebrews 4:15 NIV84

ⁱⁱⁱ Hebrews 4:14–16 NIV84

^{iv} Cf. Ephesians 2:18 NIV84

^v Romans 7:24 NIV84

^{vi} Romans 8:34 NIV84

^{vii} Romans 8:28 NIV84