

**Christ the King – November 25, 2012
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church**

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Daniel 7:13-14

"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.

Dear friends in Christ:

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Jesus taught us to pray these words to conclude the prayer he taught us with the confidence that this prayer is acceptable to our Father in heaven and will be heard and answered by him. We call these words the Doxology – a song of praise directed to our gracious God. These words form a wonderful summary of our text for today in which we hear the Father granting authority over the nations to the Son.

Theme: Yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory

1. A word spoken to Jesus by his Father
2. A word spoken to Jesus by his church

The Last Sunday of the Church year is sometimes called Christ the King Sunday – surely there never has been or never will be a King like Christ Jesus – God's anointed one. Our text reports the closing scenes of a vision which the Lord had given to Daniel. In this vision Daniel saw four beasts which symbolized four great powers that would dominate the world for the next 500 years before the Christ would come. History has revealed those nations to us as the nation of Babylon which was in power at Daniel's time, the Medo-Persian empire, the Greek empire of Alexander the Great and the Roman empire which was in power when Christ was born. After describing the beasts he saw in his vision Daniel wrote:

"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."

There are several terms in this verse that are rich in meaning including the Ancient of Days. Who or what is the Ancient of Days, we might wonder? Previously Daniel had watched the following scene unfold in his vision: (Daniel 7:9-10 NIV) **"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.**

Ancient of Day's – that's a term that emphasizes the fact that God has been ruling from the very beginning of time and that his rule will continue into eternity as we are reminded in Psalm 90:2. **Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

The ancient of Days is God the Father and he is setting up court to judge the nations. If we listened carefully to this description we may have noticed that Daniel saw thrones being set up – there was one for the Ancient of Days but who was the other throne for. Daniel did not have to wait for the answer to that question. The throne would be for the one like a son of man who was given authority, glory and sovereign power.

Yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory – this is a word spoken to Jesus by his Father as we are told in our text. **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...**

The term, one like a son of man, is another term rich in Scriptural meaning. Son of man – in the NT this phrase is often applied to Christ – in fact it is Jesus favorite way of describing himself. It was a term Jesus used to emphasize his humanity and that fact that he had come as the seed of the women to destroy sin, death and the Devil. In our text for today the term seems to draw a contrast drawn between the beasts which Daniel had seen in his vision and this new “ruler”.

This ruler came with the clouds of heaven. Here we have another interesting phrase! Among the Jews, the Messiah was known as the “Cloudy One” or the Son of a Cloud. The OT frequently speaks of God as one who rides on the clouds. Consider for example Psalm 104: 3 **He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind** or Isaiah 19:1 **See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt.**

In the NT Jesus describes himself as the one who will return on the last day “coming on the clouds of the sky, with great power and great glory.” As we read in Mark 13:26 **"At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory."**

Psalm 2 is also an excellent commentary on the verses of our text. (Psalm 2:2-8) **The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. 3) "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." 4) The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. 5) Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, 6) "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." 7) I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. 8) Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.**

Yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory. This is a word spoken to Jesus by his Father.

The Scriptures are clear: The Father gives power and glory to the Son. But we might wonder how this can be since the Scriptures also describe the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as being true God from eternity and possessing equal power and begin worthy of equal glory.

The apostle Paul describes the fulfillment of the vision Daniel saw and answers those concerns in Philippians 2:4-11 **Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7) but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! 9) Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

When Jesus humbled himself and was made in human likeness he did not stop being God but he did empty himself of the use of his divine powers and nature – he made himself nothing. Upon his exaltation Jesus human nature also received the divine attributes which his divine nature enjoyed from all eternity. Now Jesus humanity shares in these characteristics. Speaking as a man, Jesus said, (Matthew 28:18 NIV) **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me..."**

While all this may be a bit puzzling for us to understand and difficult to comprehend – we can say quite simply why the Christ humbled himself to become one of us – can't we? He became one of us so that he could take our place under God's wrath and anger. He became one of us to rescue us from the curse of death that we earned with our sins. He allowed the scoffing Pontius Pilate and the unbelieving Jews to crucify him on the cross and to mock his claims to kingship. The people of Jesus day were like the people of Daniel's day and ours – a people who doubted the power and glory of the Lord's anointed one, a people who refuse to believe that he will come to judge, a people who refuse to humble themselves before the Lord and his anointed One.

The vision the Lord gave to Daniel shows us who is really in charge of the nations and the affairs of this world. It assures us that the kingdom of the Lord is an everlasting kingdom – one far superior to any of the kingdoms of this world as it shows **us all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipping him** and as it assures us that **His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.**

Yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory. This was a word spoken to Jesus by his Father and now it has also become a word spoken to Jesus by his church.

Each and every time we sing, *All Glory Laud and Honor to You Redeemer King*, we bring fulfillment to the vision that Daniel saw of people from all the nations worshipping the one who was led into the presence of the Ancient of Days and given power and glory.

All glory, laud, and honor To you, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children Made sweet hosannas ring.
You are the King of Israel And David's royal Son,
Now in the Lord's name coming, Our King and blessed one.

All glory, laud, and honor To you, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children Made sweet hosannas ring.
The people of the Hebrews With palms before you went;
Our praise and prayer and anthems Before you we present.

All glory, laud, and honor To you, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children Made sweet hosannas ring.
To you before your passion They sang their hymns of praise;
To you, now high exalted, Our melody we raise.

All glory, laud, and honor To you, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children Made sweet hosannas ring.
As you received their praises, Accept the prayers we bring,
O Source of ev'ry blessing, Our good and gracious King. (CW 131)

Now the churches praise of our King is imperfect and incomplete. But the day will come when together with the saints in heaven we will give this King joyful, unending, unrestrained worship and praise hailing him as Lord of all. Until that day it is our privilege to praise him before the nations of men as we proclaim to them that he is there Lord and Savior. Another hymn puts it nicely:

Sinners whose love can ne'er forget The wormwood and the gall,
Go, spread your trophies at his feet And crown him Lord of all.
Go, spread your trophies at his feet And crown him Lord of all.

Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe On this terrestrial ball
To him all majesty ascribe And crown him Lord of all.
To him all majesty ascribe And crown him Lord of all.

Oh, that with yonder sacred throng We at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song And crown him Lord of all.
We'll join the everlasting song And crown him Lord of all. (CW 370) Amen.