

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in End Times - Christ the King Sunday  
Year B, November 22, 2009  
Faith, Radcliff, KY  
Daniel 7:13,14  
Pastor Paul Horn

Who will approach the Ancient of Days?

<sup>13</sup> *“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. <sup>14</sup> 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.*

Have this ever happened to you? You wake up in the morning, go about your day, but then you pause and think, “Wow, that was a weird dream last night!” Later on in the day, because the dream was so vivid, you pause again and think, “Did that really happen or was I dreaming?”

I can only imagine those were the thoughts running through Daniel’s mind as we study his vision this morning. In the Old Testament the LORD chose to speak to his people through dreams and visions and revelations. The prophet Daniel saw an amazing visual picture of our King in his vision, recorded for us in chapter 7. Through visions, the LORD chose to share his divine will with his people. In this instance, the people of Israel had been taken captive into Babylon, and Daniel was one of the captives. God wanted his people to know that although the governments of the earth appeared to be in control, God was still in charge. He would use these unfortunate circumstances to work for the good of his Church; all believers. This vision was meant to comfort the captives of Israel. This vision also carries a message of encouragement for us today.

Before we get to our lesson, vs13,14, I want to read the first part of Daniel’s vision so that you have a better understanding of what Daniel was seeing. 7:9-11, **“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. <sup>10</sup> 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.”** Truly an amazing picture of our Father in heaven! We need to have these facts of the dream in our minds to understand the importance of our lesson.

As we come to our lesson, vs13,14, we see another character introduced in Daniel’s vision, **vs13, In my vision I looked and there before me was one like a son of man.”** In the Old Testament the Son of Man was pictured as a heavenly figure who in the end times would be entrusted by God with authority, glory and sovereign power, and he would rule the nations of the world. Several hundred years later, Jesus applied this title to himself. He often referred to himself as the Son of Man. He was telling the people and his disciples, “I am the one whom the prophets foretold. I am the Son of Man!”

I can imagine the people, the Pharisees and the disciples scratching their heads and saying, “This doesn’t look like the Son of Man described by the prophets!” Jesus had come from Nazareth, a

backwoods town, born in poverty, he conducted himself with humility and gentleness not power and great glory. This was not the picture of the King. Especially when he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected and that he must be killed and after three days rise again." Mk 8:31 As the disciples and Pharisees heard Jesus call himself the Son of Man again and again, they may have recalled this passage from Daniel, and asked themselves, "Could this Jesus of Nazareth approach God himself in heaven?"

**Vs13 [The Son of Man] approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.**

Daniel sees the courtroom of God Almighty. He sees his Savior approach the throne of his Father. What is he doing there? He sees thousands upon thousands of people. What are they doing there? They are waiting for the judgment by the court.

How would you feel if you have dreamt this last night? Daniel confessed in vs15, 28, "**I was troubled in spirit and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me and my face turned pale.**" Anytime God appeared to his people, in person or in a dream, the individual was frightened and wanted to die. Why is that? Because at that moment they recognized who they were; sinners standing in the presence of a just God, a God who demands holiness and perfection, a God who will not allow wickedness to stand in his presence. Daniel was frightened, and for good reason. He saw his day in court, your day in court, when you will be summoned to stand before the Ancient of Days and give an account for all of your actions, all of your words, and all of your thoughts. What will you say? How will you approach the King?

Jesus once told a story about a king who was throwing a wedding party. He invited many people and when the banquet hall was full, the king came in to greet his guests. He noticed a man sitting at the table who was not wearing the wedding clothes; he did not have the proper attire on. The king approached the man and asked, "Friend, how did you get in here? You don't have the proper wedding clothes." The man was speechless. So the king said to his servants, "Throw him out! He will not enjoy my wedding feast." How does the Ancient of Days see us? Will we be wearing the proper clothing?

Today we are celebrating Christ the King Sunday. We are talking about God's kingdom. God's kingdom is his rule in our hearts. He rules in our hearts through his Word. His Word directs us how to live. His Word tells us how he wants to bless us through obeying his Word.

If you were to look back on your life, maybe even evaluate your life right now, you could think back to times when you did not think too much about God's kingdom, but more so about your own little kingdom, and how you ought to direct your life. You thought you had control over everything because life was going ok, and you were not going to listen to anyone else but you.

Think back to that time, when you thought more about your kingdom than God's kingdom. Your attitude said, "I don't need to listen to God and His Word. I don't need this worship every Sunday and Bible study. I don't need to take the Lord's Supper every time it's offered. I don't need to lead my family in prayer and devotion time in God's Word. Besides, I don't have the time." When you had that attitude, did you notice that when your relationship with God was absent, your relationships with your spouse, your children, and your coworkers suffered? You thought you had control, but you lost it...

You think back to that time when you thought more about your kingdom than God's kingdom. You said, "God doesn't need to rule in my heart when it comes to finances, my time and possessions. I don't need to listen to him on how I ought to manage my money. I will do what I want with it. And this idea of his that I ought to give him firstfruits, and then what I have leftover is mine to live on, whatever!" Did you notice that when you began skimping on God, that he became a little less generous to you? And you suddenly found yourself in financial trouble, stressing about it to the point of illness? You thought you had control, but you lost it...

Or when you thought to try and go it alone when you hardships in your life. You decided to fix problems by yourself. You failed to approach the Ancient of Days who says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble. Ask. Seek. Knock. All you who are weary and burden come to me. I will give rest." But you didn't need that. You didn't seek his Word or Lord's Supper for strength. But did you notice what happened to your life? You messed up your life and the life of those around you. More importantly, you hindered your relationship with your God.

How do these attitudes and actions make your wedding banquet garments look? Pretty tattered and torn and filthy dirty. Are ready to approach the Ancient of Days wearing that? All he would see is your pride and selfishness. We are not worthy to approach the Ancient of Days. How was the Son of Man able to approach the throne of his Father? The writer to the Hebrews tells us, "**Christ entered heaven itself, to appear for us in God's presence, not again and again, as a priest enters the Most Holy Place to offer blood that's not his own. Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people.**" (9:24-28)

This is why we sing with the hymn writer, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to your cross I cling."

Immediately after he died on the cross, Christ Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God, entered the courtroom of heaven and approached his Father's throne and he said, "Here's what you demand from all humankind; a righteous life, free from any kind of sin – here's my life! And you demanded that all sinners must die for their sins, that they must be punished – here's my blood in their place. I am paying for them!"

Let's say you called your bank for a payoff on your automobile loan and they say you owe \$9,000. You walk into the bank and you write a check for \$8,999 and say, "Here you go! She's all paid off!" They'd laugh you right out of the bank! You still owe money! In the same way, we cannot offer our works to our Father. We cannot say, "I tried hard. I worked hard." It's not enough. We've fallen short. Especially when we look at our sins of pride, our sins of ignoring God's Word, sins of thinking we can handle life all by ourselves. But Jesus came and paid off all of the debt of those sins. Nothing more can be offered by us, nothing more needs to be offered. No sacrifice can be made. For Christ paid it all, and we know he did when he said, "It is finished!"

And we know God accepted that offering as paid in full because of something Daniel saw in his dream. After Jesus approached the Ancient of Days, he **was led into his presence**. God accepted the payment as sufficient. In the same way, when we pay off our car loan, we've paid the money in full. But it's not complete until the bank stamps that note and notarizes it. God approved of Jesus' sacrifice and proved that he was happy with it by raising Jesus from the dead

– His stamp of approval.

The great news is that your day in court has already happened. Because Jesus has already entered the courtroom of heaven for you, made the case on your behalf, as your defense attorney, you will approach the Ancient of Days on the Last Day of Judgment, and he will lead you into his presence. You know this to be true because of what Daniel saw in his vision later on. He asked an angel, “What does all of this mean?” The angel replied, “The court has made its decision. It has declared the saints not guilty.”

We again go back to the man who was discovered at the wedding banquet not wearing wedding clothes. That will not be you and me. For you and I were baptized into Christ Jesus. At our baptism we were covered with Jesus’ righteousness, his good works, the blood of his death, his victory over death by his resurrection, the verdict of “not guilty,” all covered over us at our washing with water and the Word – like a white robe, with not a spot to be found on it. This robe doesn’t just hide the sin, it completely covers over it, your sins are gone, washed away through baptismal waters.

This is the reason why you and I will no longer say, “I’m going to do this on my own. I don’t need God’s kingdom.” Instead, our attitude will be, “Christ rules in my heart. I will listen and follow through with what he tells me. I will go to him and seek his direction for my life.” This is the reason why we will daily approach the throne of the Ancient of Days through prayer, as dear children approach their dear Father and cry out, “Thy kingdom come!” To which he replies, “Yes, I am coming soon!” When the King comes, he will approach us on the Last Day, and he will say, “Come! For all things are now prepared!” To which we say again, “Come quickly Lord Jesus! Take us home to be with you! Where we will reign with you and all the saints forever and ever. Amen!”