

Text: Daniel 7:13,14. Christ the King Sunday.

November 22, 2015.

Grace and peace are yours through Christ the King. Amen.

What kind of king is this? What kind of king is Jesus, really? If you had seen Jesus on earth, you almost certainly would not have thought he was a king. Pontius Pilate, in our Gospel reading for today, thought the same thing. Here's this guy, Jesus, this king, in shackles, beaten, bruised, bloodied, standing on trial before a midlevel politician. Where's the army? Where's the riches? Where's the popular support? You are a king then? Wait. That doesn't make sense. "My kingdom is not of this world." Oh, well, why didn't you say so? Now I get it. Or not. What kind of king are you?

God's people at the time of Daniel must have felt the same way. They had been taken captive, deported, almost seventy years earlier. Seventy years! That's a lifetime, literally, for almost everyone. God had promised deliverance. But they were still in this far away land. God had promised to bring them back to their homeland, but they were still waiting, for almost seventy years! God, what kind of king are you? God, are you really a king at all? Insert your problem here. Wayward children. God, I thought you promised that if I trained my children in the way they should go, they would not turn from it. They sure have turned. Things I never imagined possible. What about constant pain, morning, noon and night. Jesus, if you are the great physician of both body and soul, why are you letting my body hurt so much? Not much of a king if you ask me. What kind of king is this? What kind of king is Christ? Is he really a king at all? What kind of king is Christ?

Let's look with Daniel. Let's see what he saw in this night vision. Look! Behold! Pay attention! Daniel saw a person. One like a son of man. Just an ordinary person? No. This Son of Man is Christ himself! That's right. Jesus used this title, "Son of Man," to refer to himself more than any other title. No one else used this title to talk about Jesus, only Jesus himself used it. By using this title, Jesus was showing what kind of king he was. He was the king promised in the Bible. He was the Messiah, the Christ, the promised Savior, the one Daniel saw and spoke about. But that would only be apparent to someone who had really searched the Scriptures. You don't really find this title, "Son of Man," used to refer to Jesus very often in the Old Testament. You had to search, look, pray for wisdom. But for those who did, Jesus using this title, Son of Man, would scream loud and clear: "This Jesus is the Christ!"

There was another reason Jesus used this title, "Son of Man." He wanted to point out his humanity and humility. You see, the people alive when Jesus walked the earth were looking for an earthly king, a political savior who would rescue his people from the hands of the hated Romans. Just like many today are waiting for some political savior to rescue our nation from the hands of the hated Republicans, or Democrats. But Christ is not that kind of king. He's not an earthly king who comes with pomp and power and political aspirations. He the One who came to save us from our sins. He came to rescue us from this world and all its kingdoms. To be our

Savior, he had to be a human, one of us, Immanuel, God with us. What kind of king is this? He's the son of man, a human.

He's the son of man, a humble human. Christ came in humility to win us with his love. Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Jesus came as one of us, to approach us, not as God to scare us. He came as a son of man, a real human, a humble human.

But in this vision to Daniel the King showed not only his humanity and humility, he also showed his power and glory. Look at what kind of King Christ is. He is coming with the clouds. Maybe we picture the smoke machine before a basketball game, covering the players and making them more mysterious. Christ ain't coming with no smoke machine. His coming is literally with the clouds. What does that mean? What does that refer to? Maybe it doesn't have to be one thing. Didn't Jesus come from heaven before he came to this earth as the Son of Man? Could coming with the clouds refer to his coming to earth at Christmas? Why not? He was definitely a human and certainly humble. But one might think more and say, "When Jesus ascended back into heaven, he was lifted up before them and a cloud hid him from their sight." Is that what this is referring to? At the end of the world, Jesus said, "You will see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." That's Mark 14.62 if you want to check it out. Could this refer to Christ's final coming with the clouds? Why not all three, his first coming, his ascension, his second coming? What kind of king is this? A king who comes with the clouds.

A king who is God himself. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. The Ancient of Days is a title for God. It emphasizes his eternal nature. I know we hear Ancient and think something bad. A flip phone is ancient. Who has one of those? A person over sixty is ancient. Hand him a smart phone and you'll see how dumb he is. But ancient is used as a term of respect. This is someone who has been around for a while, in this case, forever. This is someone with experience, who knows what he's doing and what he's talking about. This is someone worthy of your honor. Don't look down on the Ancient of Days. Look up to him. That's the kind of king Christ is. And please, don't get confused or lost in the details when I refer to God the Father and Christ interchangeably. They are one. We'll leave discussion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit for another time. Right now just focus on the King, Christ.

Ok. Little breather. We've seen the kind of king Christ is in a few ways. Christ is the Son of Man, a human, humble, the promised Savior who took our place. He came with the clouds. Left with the clouds and is coming again with the clouds. He stands in God's presence as an equal. That's the king. But what is his kingdom like? Is it a kingdom you want to be part of? Do you want to have this king on your side, or is there a better king? Let's look at the three things Daniel saw in verse 14. This is a powerful kingdom, a universal kingdom and an eternal kingdom.

What kind of king is this? A king with a powerful kingdom. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power. It's interesting if you read the rest of Daniel chapter seven. There were other

kings who originated on the earth. Their power is taken away and given to this son of man who came from heaven. Kings of the earth have such limited authority, limited glory. Their power is not sovereign, not in any way the same as God. But this king, the son of man? All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him. That's exactly what Jesus said about himself. And that's exactly what God gave to him. This is a powerful kingdom.

It's a universal kingdom. All peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. Christ's kingdom is not confined to one location on the globe, or even a few scattered locations around the globe. Christ's kingdom is found all over the globe. There are people all over the world who worship Jesus as the Savior and King. That's some kingdom. And even those people who do not willingly worship Jesus now will have to at the end admit, "He was the king." Another part of the Bible, Philippians two verse ten says, "Every knee will bow and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This kingdom is universal.

And this kingdom is eternal. I can throw out the names of some famous kings from history, Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Nebuchadnezzar. Maybe you've heard of them. Maybe not. But are they still kings? Are their kingdoms still around? Even the United States of America. Over 200 years seems like forever, with no end in sight. But how much is 200 years in the span of thousands of years of world history? How much is 200 years compared to an everlasting dominion that will not pass away and a kingdom that will never be destroyed? Make you think of what Christ the King said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"?

Makes you think, doesn't it? What kingdom do you want to be a part of? What kingdom is really worth living for? That's a painful question to ask, because right here and now I know the right answer, but when I look at my life, would the answer be obvious? Three hours to show I'm part of the Packer kingdom? Sure, got that every week. But three minutes to read my Bible and let the king strengthen his rule in my heart? Maybe, maybe not. Forty hours or more every week to make sure my kingdom has enough money, but one more hour for Bible study? That's a little much, don't you think? What will your children, your family, your friends, really remember about you, how many vacations, how many dinners, how many memories, or how much Jesus you shared with them? We don't belong in this kingdom of Christ. We don't deserve to be there.

So the Son of Man came, from the clouds, to be a human and take our place. Imagine, the king lived in your place! He lived the perfect life you never could. He wore rags of your sin and let you trade them in for the perfect robe of his holiness. What king wears rags for his subjects? Christ the king does! Christ humbled himself, all the way to death on a cross, to pay the wages of your sin. What king pays the debt his servants owe him? Christ the King did! This king applied his word to you, a word that gives peace, a word that gives comfort, a word that rules in your heart. This king placed his word on your head, your heart and baptized you and said, "You are mine. You are a part of my kingdom. My peace will rule your heart. My love will cleanse you of

all sin. My comfort will wipe away all your tears. My kingdom within you will never pass away and never be destroyed.”

That’s a kingdom worth living for. That’s a king whose side you want to be on. That’s a king who shows you his power to assure you of his love, a king with a universal kingdom so you know you are part of it, a king with an eternal kingdom, so you know it can never be taken away or pass away or be destroyed. What kind of king is this? A king of power, yes, but best of all a king of love. Amen.