

## Sermon Manuscript: Daniel 7:13-14

### Our King Is Coming Back

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of End Time – Christ the King (CWS-B) – November 25, 2012

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*"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. 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." [NIV]*

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Have you ever noticed that the sun and moon appear to be the same size when you see them up in the sky? Both of them can be covered with your thumb extended to arm's length. But in reality, they are not at all near the same size. The sun is just over 400 times greater in diameter than the moon. If they were equally distant from us you could stretch 400 moons across the face of the sun. The fact that they appear to be the same size to us is simply because the moon is so much closer to us than the sun. And not only is the sun much bigger than the moon, it also shines by its own light while the moon merely reflects the light of the sun.

This is like Daniel's vision in our text for today. Daniel sees the coming of Jesus. We know that Jesus comes into the world twice. Once he came to suffer, die and rise again. And we know that he will come again on the Last Day. But for Daniel, the two times Jesus will come seem like the same coming. For us who live in the "between time" of the New Testament between Jesus' first coming and his second coming, the view is different even though we are looking at the same thing as Daniel. Daniel saw his King coming. We see that **OUR KING IS COMING BACK**. When he comes he will return with an unconcealed glory. And he will reign over an unlimited kingdom.

#### **1. He Will Return with an Unconcealed Glory**

Daniel's vision is of a coronation. He sees Jesus coming into the throne room of heaven to take his place as the King of all. Daniel sees "one like a son of man." This is the designation that Jesus used for himself while he was on earth. When Jesus came into the world the first time, he came without glory. He was born in the lowest of humility and placed in the manger in Bethlehem. He lived his life without a place to lay his head.

As he comes before the Ancient of Days, Daniel sees him receiving all glory. He has earned this glory because he had first gone out of God's presence to take on his human nature. Like the moon, he would set aside his full glory as God and only reflect that glory in his human nature. He truly became a "son of man" when he was born of Mary. Throughout his ministry he referred to himself as the Son of Man. He said, *"The Son of*

*Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” [Matthew 20:28] and “The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” [Luke 19:10] He laid aside his divine power and glory to take on human flesh and blood and become one of us. As we confess in the Athanasian Creed: *We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Son, is both God and man. He is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father, and he is man, born in time from the nature of his mother, fully God, fully man, with rational soul and human flesh, equal to the Father as to his deity, less than the Father as to his humanity.* [Christian Worship, p. 133] He was the Creator who became the creature so that he could stand in our place. He became the perfectly sinless man that God requires from each of us. And he paid the justice of damnation for sin which each of us had earned before God. By his being both true God and true man and by his willingness to leave behind God’s presence he makes it possible for us to come into God’s presence. The writer to the Hebrews says: *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. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. 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.* [Hebrews 4:14-16] By his willing humiliation – his becoming one of us – he has won salvation for us all. For this he has earned all glory.*

When Daniel sees him approaching the Father, the Ancient of Days, Christ enters God’s presence as a victor. By his first coming into the world, he won the victory over sin, death and the devil. By his humiliation he has won our eternal salvation in heaven. For all these victories won by his perfect life and sacrificial death he earned the right to come into God’s presence as the victorious Son of Man. He deserves all glory! *God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.* [Philippians 2:9-11]

His victory for us makes it possible for us to come into God’s presence too. How can we come into God’s presence? This is the basic question that humanity must answer. We all must face God. But how can we do it as sinners? David says in Psalm 24: *The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters. Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.* [Psalm 24:1-4] Our sins bar us from coming before God because God cannot tolerate sin or sinners. No matter how good we might think we have been, our own goodness can never be enough. It’s like a little boy coming to his father and asking the father for some money

to buy the father a birthday present. It would be silly to think the boy paid for the gift himself. All we have is from God. We have nothing of our own to offer God in payment for our sins. In fact we only can bring the debt of our guilt. Only Jesus is the answer. It is his victory over sin that he won by setting aside his glory to redeem us that alone can bring us into God's holy presence.

Jesus came into this world the first time with his glory concealed. We have seen this in the Gospels. But when he comes the second time, he will come with his glory unconcealed. This is the way Daniel sees Christ in his vision. All will see the Son of Man as the victorious Savior of humanity. Christ's glory is because of his victory won for us. Let us join to praise him for that glory!

Many in this world do not praise him. But the day is coming when all people will give him the glory he deserves – either willingly or unwillingly – because he will reign over an unlimited kingdom.

## 2. He Will Reign over an Unlimited Kingdom

When the Son of Man comes into the presence of the Ancient of Days, Daniel sees that he receives authority, glory and sovereign power. From Daniel's point of view this is a new thing that the Son of Man is receiving. From our point of view, Jesus also already has this rule now before he comes in all his glory. He already rules in the hearts of believers by faith. Because we trust in him as our Savior, we have become his disciples and we follow him as his people. Jesus also rules over all things for the good of believers. He rules hearts and he rules all things already. So in one sense his rule is already unlimited. But there will be a difference when he comes again in his glory.

The difference when he comes again will be that all will acknowledge his reign. Not everyone recognizes or worships Jesus as God and King. Many people claim to worship a god. They might even give lip service to Jesus as a great teacher or example. But they make him small – a mere reflection of his true self like the moon compared to the sun. But Jesus says something different. *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."* [John 8:31] Holding to Jesus' teaching means to see him as the only hope of forgiveness and being able to come into the presence of the holy God. There will be many at Jesus' return to whom Jesus will say, *"I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!"* [Matthew 7:23] While this world stands people have the luxury of ignoring Jesus and who he truly is. They can pretend he is nobody. They can give him shallow lip service as a fawning friend who accepts our wickedness as if it's something to be smiled at and overlooked. They can acknowledge that he has some useful things to say and the world might be a better place if more people took his advice. But none of these ways of thinking renders him the glory he truly deserves as the world's only Lord and Savior.

For now the people of the world have this luxury but it won't last forever. When Jesus comes again it will be as Daniel sees in his vision. *All peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.* [v14] Those who know him as Savior will worship him in joy for they now see his full glory and rejoice in being able to see it and praise him. For those who ignored Jesus or held him as something less than their Savior, they will worship him in fear. As John tells us in our Epistle lesson today: *Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.* [Revelation 1:7]

How do you and I think of Jesus? Do we also pierce him with our apathy? Have we watered down our faith in him to the point that he is only a dim reflection of his true glory for us like a pale moon on a cloudy night? Does he offer only good advice and sentimental images of tolerant permissiveness concerning our sins? Or do we see the true cost of our guilt? Do we see the price he paid to truly earn the glory and dominion that he will possess for all eternity? Do we see his full splendor shining like a noontime sun over all that there is for all time? When he comes in his glory, will we be afraid or will we welcome him with joy? And that is the most glorious thing of all! He – and he alone – has made it possible for us to stand in his glorious sunshine cleaned of all sin and fear to live in his kingdom forever. As Luther says in his explanation of the Second Article: *That I should be his own and live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.*

It is most certainly true. And this is what Daniel sees in his vision. *His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.* It will be unlike any earthly kingdom or power. No one will be able to change it or overthrow it. It will never “wear out” or decline. It will never have any flaws like all the earthly kingdoms mankind has ever known. It won't be like the empires Daniel had seen in his other visions – Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. It will be better than them all. It will be perfect. And that too is to the glory of Christ.

He will return all things to the way God intended them from the beginning. And we will live there! So let us look forward to the return of our King. Don't settle for something less. Don't get distracted from following Jesus. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. And keep one eye on the sky. And Daniel says here: *The Son of Man is coming with the clouds of heaven.* The king is coming. See his glory and welcome it when he comes because it will mean our eternal citizenship in his kingdom. It will mean eternity lived in the bright and warm sunshine of his glory and grace. Amen.