

November 23, 2003
Christ the King

"Your King Jesus Is in Control"

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.

I am holding in my hand a simple little tool that can be used to open boxes, called a box cutter. Tools similar to this were used to overcome the passengers and crew of four large airplanes filled with fuel. Two of them hit the twin towers of the World Trade Center and one hit the Pentagon. Buildings collapsed from the impact and the heat generated by the burning fuel. Along with the collapse of the towers came a major down turn in the economy. People lost billions of dollars in the stock market. Even in your wildest dreams would you ever imagine that a simple little tool such as this box cutter could wreak such havoc and destruction?

Speaking about wild dreams. Chapter 7 of Daniel tells us about a dream or vision that he had from the Lord that was worse than the scariest movie you have ever seen. He saw the four winds of heaven churning up the sea. Out of the tempestuous sea came four hideous beasts. The first was a lion with wings, a symbol of ancient Babylon. The second was a bear with three rib bones in its teeth, picturing the Assyrians who ravaged nations like a hungry bear. The third was a leopard with wings of a bird that pictured the Greeks under Alexander who conquered the world in only ten short years of time. The fourth was a frightening beast with iron teeth and ten horns, the Roman Empire. One horn had eyes like a man and a mouth that spoke ugly and nasty things about God. Daniel was deeply troubled and pale in his face. This was not a nightmare that would go away or a scary movie that you can turn off with the flick of a button. It was destined to come true.

One part of that vision was not scary, and that is the part that we just read to you. Daniel saw Jesus, the Son of Man, entering into the presence of the mighty God, the Ancient of Days and setting up a kingdom that lasts forever, that will not be shaken or moved by bombs, or bullets, or even a small box cutter. Whatever comes in your life this week, or next week, or ten years from now, even when your world completely collapses around you, you can be sure **"Your King Jesus Is in Control."**

1) Jesus has complete control of your eternal destiny

Jesus has complete control of your future. I am not just talking about tomorrow and the next day, but the far distant future when you find yourself facing death and standing before God in the final judgment. Listen again to Daniel as he describes how he saw Jesus in total control. "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.”

Daniel saw someone who looked like “the Son of Man.” This Son of Man was Jesus. That’s how Jesus refers to himself over 70 times in the New Testament. He is the Son of Man, born of the Virgin Mary, the Word made flesh, with skin and bones and hair and eyes and ears and bodily parts similar to ours. By calling himself the Son of Man, Jesus wants us to think of the way he emptied himself, became a servant, and took our sin upon himself. Jesus said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.”

Daniel did not see Jesus carrying a cross to the place of his execution. He did not see him spending endless hours in prayer to his heavenly Father, or eating the food we eat, talking to people, or being tempted as we are and always living the perfect life we could never live. He saw Jesus in the clouds. He was not coming down to this earth for judgment, but riding those clouds in glory as he entered into the presence of the heavenly Father, the Ancient of Days. Could anything be more beautiful? Jesus rides the clouds in glory. Enters into the presence of the Ancient of Days, the mighty God, his heavenly Father. Approaches him without fear, because the job to gain our salvation for us was completed perfectly. When Jesus ascended into heaven it says in Acts 1 that he was taken up in a cloud. He took his seat on the right hand of the heavenly Father bearing on his hands the marks left over from the pain and suffering endured for our sin.

Have you ever seen a football player do a special dance in the end zone? I think they could produce a whole video of the different styles football players have used to demonstrate the excitement after scoring a touch down. When Jesus enters into the presence of the heavenly Father, he was celebrating a victory, riding the clouds of glory, not finishing up the final details of suffering for us. It was a slam-dunk, a grand slam home run, a hole in one, three pointer from half court to win the game, a hat trick.

Listen to how this victory celebration is described in 2 Corinthians 2:14, “But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ, and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of him.” Or look at how this is described in Colossians 3, “But since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ appears, then you will also appear with him in glory.” Jesus, King Jesus, strides in the presence of the heavenly Father, the Ancient of Days, and carries with him the spoils of war, the trophies of battle, the people redeemed by his precious blood. Our faith and our baptism connect us to this death, this resurrection, this sitting at the right hand of God. Our life is hidden in Christ. It is protected. It is secure.

I don’t have a chance to stand before the Ancient of Days without Jesus. Listen how Daniel describes the mighty God in the previous verses of Daniel 7, “As I looked, thrones were 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. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him, then thousands times ten thousands stood before him. The court was seated and the books were opened.”

How scary it is to know that the books will be opened. Everything ever done in your life, even your secret sins will be revealed. There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed. That's scary. I cannot possibly even begin to get one record deleted from that book, even with a life of good deeds, or endless efforts to improve myself. My only hope is that Jesus has expunged my sins from the record, washed every page clean with his precious blood and also added into that book the perfect life he lived for me. With Jesus you can be secure, you can be sure of what is ahead of you when you die. You can live each day for him saying these words from Psalm 116 that Esther Moore wanted read at her funeral, "I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy."

2) Jesus has complete control of your every day problems

The 23rd Psalm tells us that "Goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." King Jesus is in control. The arms of the shepherd will not only hold you tight when your last hour comes, but they will also carry you through the difficult days that are ahead. King Jesus is in control of every moment of your life, 24/7 without blink of your eye that escapes his notice. Jesus is able to exercise such loving control because he is King of kings and Lord of lords. Listen to how our text describes his everlasting dominion. "He was given authority, glory and sovereign power, all peoples, nations, and men of every language worship him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."

Everlasting dominion, always in control, never out of the picture, that's our Jesus. Look at the picture on the front cover of your bulletin. I am sure that most of you sitting here today have had the chance to spend some time in Yosemite. How large the rocks of Half Dome and El Capitan loom above the valley floor. The valley changes as the seasons change, but the rocks remain secure in their foundations. Jesus never changes. His dominion is forever. He never grows weary of caring for his sheep, and carrying his sheep.

Don't you love that word "everlasting." It is used about 500 times in the Old Testament. Psalm 118 begins by saying, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for his good, and his mercy endures forever." What makes our King Jesus so good is that his mercy and his dominion never change, even though our lives may go through a drastic change. The Hebrew word for "mercy" is that beautiful word "chesed" which means a mercy and love that is always faithful, that will never leave you or abandon you.

We appreciate people who are faithful. We like people who make a promise and keep it, whether it is in business, or in marriages, or even in our church. People disappoint us when they fail to keep their promises. We find ourselves anguishing over the times we are not as faithful as we should be in our commitments, our Bible reading, our prayers and our zeal to serve the Lord. The Lord's dominion and love never change. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says, "May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then it goes on to say, "The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it." As the song says, "He who calls is faithful and Jesus is name."

In his book *Against the Night*, Charles Colson refers to a man named Armando Valladares who spent 20 years in prison under the Castro regime. After being released he wrote a book of the horrors that he experienced, including the sounds of people being taken out

of their prisons, lined up and shot in the middle of the night. The Christians in that prison had to have a rag stuffed into their mouths before they were put to death in addition to being blindfolded. The reason was their words before they died. Valladares wrote that you can tell who the Christians were as they faced death, because they always shouted out "Viva Christo Rey" -Long live Christ the King.

Whether facing death, or facing the grind of life this week we are privileged to shout out to each other, "Viva Christo Rey." Long lived Christ the King! My sermon has ended. Yours has just begun. Live your week to Christ your King! Amen.