

November 25, 2012
Christ the King

"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.

He had a bad nightmare that woke him up at 3:00 AM in the morning. It seemed so real. He was held hostage in a house by a very evil man. The man had three large, vicious dogs that were ready to attack him and tear him to pieces if he made even the least move to try and escape. Why do we have nightmares such as this? We don't let our children see scary movies because we do not want them to have nightmares.

In this seventh chapter of Daniel we read about dreams that the Lord gave to Daniel of things that were to come in the future history of the world. You might even call them nightmares. He sees the four winds of heaven churning up the sea. Out of the sea come four great beasts. The first was like a lion that had the wings of an eagle. The second beast looked like a bear with three ribs inside of its mouth. The third beast was a leopard with four wings on its back like a bird. The fourth beast had large iron teeth that crushed and devoured its victims. It also had ten horns. The scariest part of this nightmare was the a little horn that had the eyes of a man and spoke boastfully.

These four beasts represented four great kingdoms or empires that would rise to power. We can look back in history and see the ferocious power of the Babylonian Empire that put God's people into captivity. We see the power of the Medo-Persian Empire that conquered the Babylonians and sent God's people home to Jerusalem. We see the Greeks conquer the world under Alexander the Great. And then there is Roman Empire represented by the beast with the iron teeth that crushed other countries and united the world. What is most frightening is the little horn that speaks boastfully against God. It represents the false teaching that rises up to challenge what God says in his word and destroys people eternally.

Daniel also saw something very comforting and reassuring. He saw Jesus the Son of Man, entering into the presence of the mighty God and setting up a kingdom that will last forever, a kingdom where his love and mercy will never fail us. Who knows what scary things might come to us in the future as a nation and also in our individual lives. On this Christ the King Sunday we want to celebrate that Jesus our King is always in control whatever the future might bring.

Jesus controls your eternal destiny

Jesus has complete control of your future. I am not just talking about the tomorrow, and

the next day, and the day after that. I am talking about those important times when you face death and you find yourself standing before God in the final judgment. The only safe place to be is in arms of Jesus.

Listen again to how Daniel tells us that Jesus is 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. In the New Testament Jesus refers to himself more than 70 times as the Son of Man. He was born of Mary, yet he is Lord and God. He is the Word made flesh with our skin and bones and hair yet he created the world in which we live. By calling himself the Son of Man Jesus calls our attention to the way he became one of us to suffer for our sin and to live the perfect life we could never live. In the gospel of Mark he says, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as ransom for many."

This past week we heard stories of people who spent time serving meals to other people who are less fortunate. We are thankful to those who serve our country and risk their lives to protect us from future terrorist attacks. Nothing can compare to how Jesus served you by taking your sin upon himself and going to the cross to die for you, so you could be forgiven.

Daniel sees Jesus coming on clouds of heaven. Here we think of Jesus' own words in Mark 14:62: "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." We live each day of our lives in eager anticipating of seeing King Jesus coming in clouds of glory. Jesus said when that day comes we can lift our heads in eager anticipation of sharing in his glory. Can anything be more beautiful? We see King Jesus riding on the clouds of heaven coming to take his people home.

Daniel sees the Son of Man, our Lord Jesus, approaching his heavenly Father's throne. "He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence." With the sin of the world on him, Jesus could not enter the presence of his heavenly Father until full payment was made. "He became sin for us." When the atonement was made, Jesus was able to enter into the presence of his heavenly Father, pure and holy. The book of Hebrews tell us "we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens."

How scary it would be to try to enter the presence of this Ancient of Days without this all atoning sacrifice of Jesus! It would be our worst nightmare. Here is how a previous verse in Daniel 7 describes this Ancient of Days, "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 of from before him. Thousand upon thousands attended him, thousands times ten thousands stood before him. The court was seated and the books were opened."

How scary it would be to have the books opened and not have Jesus. These are not story books that are opened to show the great things people have done in their lives. These are ledger books that record the sins that need to be judged and paid for completely.

God knows every key stroke on your computer and every text message sent on your cell phone. He knows the images that you have stored in your mind. Psalm 139 says that he is "thoroughly acquainted with all our ways." Every sin, even the smallest demands payment and must be punished by this Ancient of Days who is described as a consuming fire. Unkind words, outbursts of anger, failures to show kindness when we should. All is seen by God and will be judged. Without King Jesus to clear the record, there is no hope.

Jesus did enter the presence of this Ancient of Days and expunged from your record everything you did wrong. Colossians 2 tells us "He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations that was against us and stood opposed to us, he took it away, nailing it to the cross." The greatest day in your life will come on judgment day when you have your book opened and see no record of sin. Instead, with in that book you will see the perfect life Jesus lived for us. Because of King Jesus you can be sure of your eternal destiny.

Jesus controls your daily life

Because of King Jesus, you can be sure of what tomorrow brings, and the next day, and the day after that. You may not know what the future holds, but you know who holds the future. Here is what Daniel saw. "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."

Don't you love the word "everlasting?" It is used over 500 times in the Old Testament and often refers to God's love that never changes. "O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good and his mercy endures forever." What makes our King so special is his love and mercy that never change. The Hebrew word for "mercy" is chesed which has the thought of a love and loyalty that never changes. Lamentations 3 tells us, "Your mercies are new to us every morning, great is your faithfulness." Life is full of changes. There are so many ups and downs. The control of King Jesus over your life is everlasting. It never changes. Romans 8 says that nothing will ever separate you from his love.

Our Lord Jesus taught us how his dominion and control of our lives is always there for us with the wonderful picture of the faithful shepherd taking care of his sheep. He tells us in John 10 "My sheep listen to my voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand." As a young shepherd boy King David saved his sheep from a bear and lion. As an older king he was not always to his people as he should have been. Jesus will never be unfaithful to you. 1 Thessalonians 5 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."

In his book *Against the Night* Charles Colson refers to a man named Amando Valladares who spent twenty years in prison for his Christian faith under the Castro regime. After being released from prison he wrote a book about the horrors he experienced, but also the victories he saw for those who were kept safe by Jesus their King. He wrote about the sounds of prisoners taken out of their prisons in the middle of the night and then being shot to death. The Christians in that prison had to have rags stuffed into their mouths in

addition to being blindfolded. You see, the Christians would shout something before they died that inspired other prisoners. They were fond of saying to each other, "Viva Christo Rey" which means "Long live! Christ the King." They also shouted these words "Viva Christo Rey" as they faced death. Whether we face death or life we can say to ourselves "Viva Christo Rey!" Long live Christ the King. King Jesus is always in control and always on his throne. Amen.