

Emmanuel Ev. Lutheran Church—Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Christ the King Sunday

November 21, 2021

Sermon by Pastor Dan Pautz

***The fantastic future with the King***

*<sup>13</sup> I kept watching the night visions, and there, in the clouds of heaven, I saw one like a son of man<sup>[a]</sup> coming. He came to the Ancient of Days, and he was brought before him. <sup>14</sup> To him was given dominion, honor, and a kingdom. All peoples, nations, and languages will worship him. His dominion is an eternal dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.*

—Daniel 7:13-14

What would you say? What would you say to your brothers and sisters in faith who are toward the end of the number of days that God has allotted them? Most likely you know or will know someone close to you who is in a care facility or in a serious condition in the hospital, perhaps a family member, a friend. What would you say to that fellow believer in a care facility who has been disabled because of a stroke or other health conditions, and are sadden that they likely will never be able to go back to their home? I do not think you would simply say, “There, there, everything will be okay.” I am sure that you would have a strengthening and encouraging spiritual message for them. You would speak about God’s love for them. You might say a prayer with them along with the Lord’s Prayer. I can assure you that your fellow child of God would appreciate your visit. Now strange as it might seem, you could tell them the message that is contained in Daniel 7:13-14 which is our sermon text for this morning. You can tell them of the Fantastic Future with the King.

Likely, you know some things about the Book of Daniel such as how the Lord spared Daniel in the lions’ den, how he spared Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were thrown into the fiery furnace because they refused to bow down and worship the image of a false god that King Nebuchadnezzar had made. You might be familiar with the incident of the handwriting on the wall. Some of you might also know how God through Daniel spoke about four kingdoms and great powers succeeding one another. First, there was the Babylonian Empire which had smashed the dickens out of the nation of Judah, destroying the temple, and carrying off into captivity many of the Jews including Daniel. But the Babylonian Empire would not last for it would be replaced by the Medo-Persian Empire. Some of you might know from history the name Cyrus the Great. He was a Persian. But then came the Greeks with Alexander the Great which was the third Kingdom. The fourth Kingdom was the Roman Empire with their Caesars. But then God through Daniel said that during this fourth kingdom a great king would arise whose kingdom would never end. This was speaking about Jesus, the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. Luke tells us that Jesus was born at the time when the Roman Emperor was Caesar Augustus.

Now let’s look more closely at the words of our sermon text. Daniel is given a glimpse of heaven. It is the Last Day. Visualize the scene. Multitudes of people are present. Two persons are mentioned – The Ancient of Days and the Son of Man. The Ancient of Days is God Himself. He’s been around for a long time, from eternity and will be throughout all future time. Then there is the one called the Son of Man. This is Jesus. The expression “Son of Man” is used over 80 times in the New Testament – and always refers to Jesus. For example, Jesus said that He, the Son of Man, came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28)

Note what Daniel says in the vision God has given him, “There before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.” Clouds can be very interesting. Think of scattered fluffy clouds or the dark monsoon clouds off in the distance in the summer or the times you may have laid on your back looking at the clouds and imagining the shape of animals. As Jesus ascended, clouds hid Him from the disciples as they were gazing upward. Someday, the Lord will be coming from the sky in the clouds. Paul wrote these comforting words about the return of the King of Kings, “we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” John Lennon of the Beatles of the 1960 fame wrote and sang a song with the words, “There ain’t no Jesus gonna come from the sky.” He is going to be surprised, terribly surprised. Another John, the Apostle John, inspired by the Holy Spirit wrote in Revelation, **Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him,**

Something else about Jesus, the Son of Man: “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.” This is Jesus who is the Lord of lords and King of kings who has an everlasting Kingdom. Remember when Pontius Pilate said to Jesus, “You are a king then?” that Jesus answered. You are right in saying that I am a king. He also told Pilate, “My Kingdom is not of this world.” Christ’s Kingdom is a rule of hearts and minds. It is Christianity, the Holy Christian Church. We Christians hold dual citizenship. We are citizens of a nation such as the United States of America. But we are citizens of Christ’s Kingdom.

There are many, many unusual things about Christ's Kingdom. For one thing, it will never end. Do you know that probably every day you mention that Jesus' kingdom will never end? If you pray the Lord's Prayer, you do. You say in the last part of the prayer, "For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. In my freshman year at Northwestern College which had been our pastor training college before we went on to the seminary, our professor of ancient history and how it related to Bible times chartered a trip for our class to the Oriental Museum which is part of the University of Chicago. There we saw a lot of relics and artifacts of various kingdoms of old including the Egyptians, the Assyrians and the Babylonians, the Persians and the Greeks. Those kingdoms came and they're gone. Someday if the world lasts our beloved country of America may be only a part of past history. But Christ's Kingdom still exists. Leaders such as the Pharaohs, Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar are gone. They are dead. But our King, the Lord Jesus Christ is alive and still rules.

I heard this past Veterans Day that were 3,000 young Americans fighting for freedom lost their lives in just two days as forces invaded the beaches of Normandy and Omaha in World War 2. Over 400,000 military lost their lives in all the battles of World War 2. And in the Civil War as forces fought in connection with freedom for the slaves there were over 600,000 soldiers killed. We appreciate and honor the sacrifices of veterans who fought for our freedom and for all our veterans today. A Big Thank You! But to win our freedom from the worse enemies of all, sin and hell and eternal damnation, there also was death, the death of the one who is the Lord of lords and the King of kings, Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God. And we appreciate His sacrifice and from our hearts we say, Thousand, thousand thanks shall be Dearest Jesus unto Thee.

The reason the Son of Man died for us was because of His love for us. Let's remember that we are not loveable. Now and then I see a woman in our neighborhood walking her dog that is so loveable. You just cannot help but to pet that dog. We are not like that loveable dog! We are sinful, undeserving. We mean it when in our prayers we say to the Lord that because of our sins we deserve only His wrath and temporal and eternal punishment. We are in big trouble! But the Lord of lords and King of kings has had mercy upon us and has forgiven us. He shed His blood for us. The King of Kings redeemed us so that we are part of His royal family and Kingdom. Ahead of us in the fantastic future with the King.

So what are some of the things you can say to your Christian sister or brother who is going through difficult health issues, facing surgeries, perhaps even terminal illnesses? Many things! Here are some.

1. You can assure them that the King of Kings has taken away all their sins and that God is at peace with them.
2. Using the words of a hymn - you can hold the cross before their closing eyes.
3. You can point them to the comforting message of these verses from the Book of Daniel. You can show them that they are part of the eternal kingdom that will never perish.
4. You can also point out that they will be winners regardless of what happens. If God prolongs their days on earth, that is great. If life comes to an end, they will be victorious standing before the throne of God in great joy. Daniel put it this way, "All peoples, nations, and languages will worship him. His dominion is an eternal dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed."
5. You can tell them to look ahead for the best is yet to come. Paul wrote in Philippians, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." Our bodies may be worn out, disfigured by disease, old age, or by accidents, yet they will be made new to be like Christ's glorious body.

Another wonderful truth is that our problems, severe as they might be, are but for a while. Paul wrote in Romans 8:18, "**I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.**" **HANG IN THERE.**

Some of you have already heard me say the following but since it fits in well here, I will say in again. There are some sets of two questions that you would not think would have the same answer but they do. A survey was taken among Arizonians asking two questions, 1) "What do you like best about Arizona?" and 2) "What do you like least about Arizona?" The answer overwhelming given for both questions was the same. "The Weather!" Here is another set of two questions which have the same answer: 1) What's the worse a believer will ever experience? 2) What's the best an unbeliever will ever experience? The answer – this life. For the believer – this short life is as bad as it gets; then comes the fantastic future of the glories and joys of heaven. For the unbeliever life on earth is the best he will ever have it.

You have the fabulous future with the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ.