

Daniel 7:9-10 & 13-14

⁹"As I looked, "thrones were set 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. ¹⁰A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. ¹³"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. ¹⁴He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples 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.

Revelation 1:4-8

⁴John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. ⁷"Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him." So shall it be! Amen. ⁸"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the LORD God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

“ALL HAIL THE POWER OF JESUS’ NAME, LET ANGELS PROSTRATE FALL, BRING FORTH THE ROYAL DIADEM, AND CROWN HIM LORD OF ALL.

LET EVERY KINDRED, EVERY TRIBE ON THIS TERRESTRIAL BALL, TO HIM ALL MAJESTY ASCRIBE, AND CROWN HIM LORD OF ALL.”

TODAY IS CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY, WHICH IS THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR.

WE ARE REMINDED THAT CHRIST IS KING, RULER OF HIS CHURCH AND OF THE WORLD.

HE INDEED IS KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. THE ONLY PROBLEM IS SINFUL HUMANITY IS NOT REALLY ON BOARD WITH THIS.

AFTER ALL, EVEN THOSE OF US WHO BELIEVE AND PROCLAIM JESUS IS KING, HAVE DIFFICULTY REALLY ALLOWING HIM TO HAVE CONTROL OVER US AND OUR LIVES.

AND IF GOD’S SPIRIT SENT TO US IN HIS SON’S NAME DOES NOT CONTROL US, SIN OFTEN WILL HAVE POWER OVER US.

OF ALL OUR TEMPTATIONS IN LIFE, POWER, IN MANY WAYS, IS THE MOST ALLURING AND DANGEROUS.

THERE IS, OF COURSE, NOTHING WRONG WITH POWER IN AND OF ITSELF. POWER, AFTER ALL, IS NECESSARY FOR GROWTH IN LIFE.

IN FACT ONE OF THE WORST THINGS PEOPLE CAN EXPERIENCE OTHER THAN GREAT PAIN OR GRIEF, IS EITHER TO FEEL OR TO BE POWERLESS IN A SITUATION.

THINK OF IT THIS WAY, WE ARE BORN WITH NO REAL POWER, BECAUSE OF ALL OF GOD’S CREATURES, A HUMAN INFANT IS AMONG THE MOST HELPLESS AT BIRTH.

THUS ONE OF THE JOBS OF ADULTS IS TO ASSIST EVERY LITTLE PERSON, WHO IS ABLE-TO GROW, MATURE, AND GAIN SOME POWER OVER HIS OR HER LIFE.

THIS HAPPENS IN PART, AS A CHILD IS ABLE TO GAIN MORE CONTROL OVER HIS OR HER BODY BY BEING ABLE TO MOVE WITHOUT HELP, AND TO DRESS, MAKE CHOICES, ETC.

SO THE PROBLEM WITH POWER, LIKE WITH MANY OTHER THINGS THAT CAN LEAD US TO SIN, IS NOT THAT WE NEED IT OR HAVE IT, BUT HOW WE USE IT, AND HOW IT CAN USE US.

THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH POWER IN ALL HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS-IN FAMILY UNITS, IN THE CHURCH, IN TRIBE OR CLAN, COMMUNITY, THE WORK PLACE, IN THE NATION, AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THE ROOT OF THE DIFFICULTY IS THE DESIRE TO GET POWER, HOLD ONTO POWER, AND INCREASE OUR POWER. NOW IF WE ARE MERELY SPEAKING ABOUT ORDINARY POWER OVER SELF THAT IS NOT A PROBLEM.

THE TROUBLE ARISES WHEN PEOPLE WANT MORE POWER OR IMPOSE POWER OVER OTHERS TO A DEGREE THAT IT HARMS OR INHIBITS ANOTHER'S LIFE OR GROWTH.

NATURALLY, THOSE WHO SEEK MORE AND MORE POWER OVER OTHERS USUALLY SAY IT IS FOR THEIR OWN GOOD, OR FOR THE GOOD OF THE FAMILY, COMMUNITY, COMPANY, OR COUNTRY.

THIS IS WHERE ANOTHER PROBLEM ARISES-WE ARE SO TEMPTED TO GAIN, KEEP, OR INCREASE OUR POWER THAT IT CAN LEAD US TO DO OR SAY THINGS THAT DISPLEASE GOD.

THIS TEMPTATION IS MADE EVEN WORSE BY THE FACT PEOPLE DO NOT REALLY SEE THE PURSUIT OF POWER AS A TEMPTATION.

CONSEQUENTLY, EVEN CHRISTIANS DO NOT GUARD AGAINST IT, AS WE SHOULD.

IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL WE ENCOUNTER AN EXAMPLE OF POWER ON THE WORLD STAGE.

THE JEWISH PEOPLE WERE CAPTIVES LIVING UNDER A POWERFUL ENEMY.

AND WHILE THE DANIEL HAD A PLACE OF RELATIVE HONOR IN BABYLON THINGS WERE NOT GOOD FOR ALL OF ISRAEL.

TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, THE LORD GOD HAD GIVEN DANIEL A VISION OF FOUR OPPRESSIVE POWERS THAT WOULD GRIP MUCH OF THE WORLD.

IT WAS A TROUBLING MESSAGE TO RECEIVE, EVEN WHEN A LOT OF THE VISION TOOK PLACE IN THE DISTANT FUTURE.

TODAY'S READING FROM DANIEL IS PART OF A HOPEFUL VISION HE RECEIVED.

IT SHOWED HIM A GLIMPSE OF THE KINGDOM AND POWER AND GLORY OF GOD, AND THEREIN LIE THE HOPE FOR HIM, HIS PEOPLE, AND THE WHOLE WORLD.

DANIEL SEES THE ALMIGHTY GOD, ENTHRONED IN HEAVEN IN ALL POWER AND GLORY, BEGINNING TO JUDGE THE WORLD AND THOSE IN IT.

IN THE PART OF THE TEXT WE DID NOT READ, DANIEL SEES THE BEASTS, REPRESENTING SINFUL AND OPPRESSIVE WORLD POWERS DESTROYED.

TODAY'S READING SHOWS WHAT CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND IS A VISION OF JESUS, WHO IS CALLED A "SON OF MAN", OR ONE WHO IS LIKE A HUMAN BEING, BESIDE THE ALMIGHTY.

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 RELATES TO THE IMAGE DANIEL SAW. THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE DIVINE CHRIST BECOMING HUMAN SO HE MIGHT DIE ON THE CROSS FOR US.

THE PASSAGE ECHO'S THE POWER AND GLORY FOUND IN DANIEL'S VISION, WHICH SAYS THE SON OF MAN WILL BE GIVEN DOMINION AND GLORY AND KINGSHIP.

PHILIPPIANS SAYS : "THEREFORE GOD HIGHLY EXALTED HIM AND GAVE HIM A NAME ABOVE EVERY OTHER NAME, SO THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE WILL BEND, IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH...AND EVERY TONGUE CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER."

THE MESSAGE FOR DANIEL AND FOR ALL PEOPLE OF FAITH IS THAT GOD IS SECURE ON HIS THRONE, ALONG WITH JESUS HIS SON, OUR SAVIOR AND KING.

WHILE WORLDLY POWERS AND PRINCIPALITIES AND PEOPLE SEEK TO RULE FOR THEIR LITTLE MOMENTS IN TIME, OUR ETERNAL GOD WAS, IS, AND WILL REMAIN ALL POWERFUL.

THE CLOSING WORDS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER PROVIDES US WITH OUR TESTIMONY OF FAITH IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY: "FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND POWER, AND GLORY FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN"

FAITH CALLS US TO TRUST THAT GOD'S PLAN FOR THE HEALING OF SINFUL CREATION IS STILL ON SCHEDULE, EVEN THOUGH WE DO NOT KNOW WHEN ALL WILL BE FULFILLED.

THE READING FROM REVELATION OFFERS US MORE REASON FOR FAITH, AS IT CONFIRMS AND ENHANCES DANIEL'S MESSAGE.

IN JOHN'S VISION, THE TRIUNE GOD'S KINGDOM AND POWER AND GLORY IS CELEBRATED.

SO LET US LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT THE PASSAGE AND JOHN'S DESCRIPTION OF GOD- FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

GOD, THE FATHER IS SPOKEN OF AS THE "ONE WHO WAS AND IS AND IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY".

THIS IS A REFERENCE TO THE NAME GOD GAVE TO MOSES- YHWH OR "I AM WHO I AM, I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE."

NEXT, THE SEVEN SPIRITS IS JOHN'S WAY OF DESCRIBING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE NUMBER 7 REPRESENTS WHOLENESS OR COMPLETENESS, AND IT IS SURELY A WAY OF SPEAKING ABOUT THE SPIRIT'S POWER AND GLORY.

FINALLY JESUS IS DESCRIBED USING MULTIPLE IMAGES AND VARIOUS TITLES:

HE IS THE "FAITHFUL WITNESS". IN HIS LIFE JESUS WITNESSED TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD WHICH WAS FOUND IN HIS PERSON AND HIS TEACHINGS.

JESUS IS ALSO THE FIRST BORN FROM THE DEAD, WHICH IS A REFERENCE TO HIS PREEMINENCE, AND HIS RESURRECTION.

REMEMBER WHILE JESUS RAISED OTHERS FROM THE DEAD, LIKE: JARIUS' DAUGHTER, THE SON OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN, AND MOST FAMOUSLY HIS FRIEND LAZARUS-EACH OF THEM DIED AGAIN.

BUT JESUS' RESURRECTED BODY IS IMMORTAL, WHICH MAKES HIM THE FIRST BORN FROM THE DEAD.

HE IS ALSO FIRST BORN FROM THE DEAD BECAUSE BY HIS RESURRECTION JESUS RAISES TO NEW LIFE ALL WHO ARE SAVED BY HIM.

FINALLY, WE COME TO HIS ROYAL STATUS. NOTICE HOW JESUS' KINGLY TITLE CHANGED AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.

WHEN HE WAS CRUCIFIED JESUS WAS CALLED "KING OF THE JEWS", BUT FOLLOWING HIS RESURRECTION HIS IS THE RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH.

HIS NEW TITLE IS AN IMPORTANT ONE FOR TWO REASONS. THE FIRST IS THE RISEN CHRIST HAS SOVEREIGNTY OVER NOT JUST ISRAEL BUT THE WHOLE WORLD-EVERY NATION AND PEOPLE.

THE SECOND REASON THE TITLE IS SIGNIFICANT IS BECAUSE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE IT WOULD NORMALLY HAVE BEEN GIVEN ONLY TO CAESAR.

BUT JOHN PROCLAIMS JESUS AS THE TRUE AND ONLY ETERNAL KING OF THE WORLD.

HE IS ALSO THE ONE WHO LOVED AND CONTINUES TO LOVE US, AS REVEALED BY HIS DEATH FOR OUR SAKES, WHICH SAVES US FROM OUR SINS.

THEN IN VERSE SIX, CHRISTIANS ARE REMINDED, THAT UNTIL HIS PHYSICAL RETURN JESUS' REIGN IN THE WORLD IS REVEALED THROUGH US.

THIS MEANS UNTIL CHRIST'S PHYSICAL RETURN TO EARTH IN ALL POWER AND GLORY TO FULLY BRING THE KINGDOM OF GOD INTO THE WORLD, WE HAVE THE TASK OF PREPARING THE WORLD FOR THE RETURN OF THE KING OF KINGS.

THIS INVOLVES OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS THAT PROMOTE CHRIST AND HIS LOVE, AND THUS DRAWING OTHERS TO HIM.

FINALLY, IN VERSE SEVEN, JESUS IS CALLED THE ONE WHO WILL COME IN THE CLOUDS AND WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED EVEN BY THOSE WHO REJECTED AND KILLED HIM.

HERE AGAIN WE ARE REMINDED THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL, NO MATTER HOW MUCH PEOPLE AND CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE WORLD SAY OTHERWISE.

YET THIS DOES NOT MEAN CHRISTIANS SHOULD PASSIVELY ACCEPT THE MISUSE OR OUTRIGHT ABUSE OF POWER IF THERE IS SOMETHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.

JESUS CALLS US TO OPPOSE, AS MUCH AS WE ARE ABLE, OPPRESSIVE LEADERS AND LAWS THAT CAN MAKE LIFE MISERABLE, OR MAY DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY END LIFE.

CONSEQUENTLY FAITH IN GOD'S REIGN IN NO WAY SEEKS TO LESSEN THE REALITY OF THE HARM THAT CAN BE DONE BY POWER IN THE HANDS OF US SINNERS.

MUCH TO THE CONTRARY, CHRIST'S REIGN POINTS US TO LOOK TO PROMISE OF PEACE AND HEALING HE BRINGS.

LET US NEVER FORGET THE BIBLE NEVER TELLS PEOPLE OF FAITH: "DON'T WORRY BE HAPPY."

INSTEAD SCRIPTURE CALLS US TO TRUST IN THE LORD AND REJOICE THAT CHRIST IS KING.

THE SECOND VERSE OF A HYMN PUTS IT THIS WAY: "THIS IS MY FATHER'S WORLD; OH, LET ME NE'VE FORGET THAT THOUGH THE WRONG SEEMS OFT SO STRONG, GOD IS THE RULER YET."

"THIS IS MY FATHER'S WORLD; THE BATTLE IS NOT DONE; JESUS WHO DIED SHALL BE SATISFIED AND EARTH AND HEAVEN BE ONE."

AND SO TODAY WE REJOICE IN THE PROMISE OF GOD FULFILLED THROUGH JESUS, EVEN AS WE LOOK IN HOPE FOR HIS TRIUMPHANT RETURN.

LET US PRAY: YOU ARE HOLY, O GOD OF MAJESTY, AND BLESSED IS JESUS CHRIST, YOUR SON, OUR LORD.

BORN AS A KING IN DAVID'S LINE, HE LIVED WITH THE LOWLY AND CARED FOR THE LEAST OF YOUR CHILDREN. HIS POWER WAS REVEALED IN WEAKNESS, HIS MAJESTY IN MERCY.

HIS CAPTORS LOOKED UPON HIM, GIVING HIM BRUISES INSTEAD OF PRAISE, AND PIECING THORNS FOR A CROWN.

HIS ONLY EARTHLY THRONE WAS A CROSS ON WHICH TO DIE. EVEN THERE HIS ARMS STRETCHED OUT TO SHOW THE POWER OF LOVE.

YOU RAISED HIM FROM THE GRAVE TO YOUR RIGHT HAND WHERE HE RULES AGAIN FROM HEAVEN, OVER ALL NATIONS AND PEOPLES.

ALMIGHTY AND EVERLASTING GOD, WE REJOICE IN YOUR WILL TO RESTORE ALL THINGS IN YOUR BELOVED SON, OUR LORD AND KING.

GRANT, WE PRAY, THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH NOW DIVIDED AND ENSLAVED BY SIN, MAY BE FREED AND BROUGHT TOGETHER UNDER CHRIST'S GENTLE AND LOVING RULE.

ALL PRAISE AND GLORY BE TO JESUS, WHO LIVES AND REIGNS WITH YOU AND THE HOLY SPIRIT; ONE GOD, FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN

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