

Thou art the King of glory, O Christ.

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

*When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man,
thou didst humble thyself to be born of a Virgin.*

*When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death,
thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.*

Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.

We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge.

*We therefore pray thee, help thy servants,
whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.*

*Make them to be numbered with thy saints,
in glory everlasting.*

In the name of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

One of my small delights during most Sundays comes during the preparation for one of my great Sunday delights. In the hour or so before each Sunday evening's offering of choral evensong, I usually get a chance to greet or possibly harangue our youth tech team, so ably led by Josh Corsaro. For many months, even during some of the warmer months, one of them has worn a hoodie sweatshirt that I know is styled like merchandise for possibly the most famous hip hop artist in the world, Kanye West. However, the hoodie doesn't actually have Kanye's face or anything like that on it. It actually has a depiction of Christ with the simple text: Jesus is King. That simple text is the title and message of

Kanye's 2019 record, but of course, is the title and message of today, The Last Sunday of Pentecost, which we often call Christ the King.

Anyway, as records go, I think that Kanye has done better (but not since like 2008) but it's fine. As sweatshirts go, I have to admit that I really admire it because it so readily and easily proclaims something that I will spend my whole life trying to communicate by word and deed, again, that Jesus is King. He is the King of my life, He is the King of the Church, He is the King of the Universe and all that is in it; after all it was all created through and for him. When we read through the Scriptures, we can't help but notice that the writers throughout the canon of the Old and New Testament acclaim the Lord as King; we can't help but notice that for the Biblical writers that the Kingship of God, is among His people's greatest hopes. After all, history ancient, modern, and in between is, a record of the...difficulty of human royalty and the discomfort of their subjects. That idea certainly animates today's reading from the seventh chapter of the book of the prophet Daniel. Daniel 7 is one of the most famous sections of that book, and one of the most studied texts of the Old Testament. Daniel was a prophet during the time of Israel's exile in Babylon, and he had a dream during the reign of the ancient Babylonian king Belshazzar. Now, given exile and having to deal with the wickedness of the Babylonians, the Israelite imagination, prophetic or otherwise, would have run a little dark and morose in this period. The divided kingdoms of Judea and Samaria had both fallen, the Davidic line was

suppressed, though not extinguished (Daniel actually claims Davidic ancestry which is something to nerd out about later). But perhaps most catastrophically to the ancient Israelite imagination was the razing and sacking of the Temple in Zion.

The questions on the mind of every Israelite seeking after God's covenant faithfulness would almost necessarily be: "Has that Covenant faithfulness run out? With everything that's happened, is God done with us?" Daniel's prophetic answer, the answer of the dream he had during the reign of King Belshazzar, is an emphatic "No. God is not done with us yet." While his dream is, like most ecstatic literature in the Scriptures, filled with signs and figures later readers find challenging, the excerpt of his dream that we read this morning contains the main idea, the main promise of his vision. We kind of receive this in two parts. One, Daniel sees God (here given the title the Ancient of Days) still seated on his throne, a guarantee that He is still in charge. Daniel sees fire and fury, a guarantee that God's power is very much still at work. He sees the multitudes coming to attend him, showing that God is still the God of all the nations. And Daniel sees the court of judgement; the book open to judge the nations, which are represented by terrible inhuman beasts in the earlier part of the chapter. Therefore, Daniel's vision is a comfort because its a revelation that God is still in charge.

But then, Daniel is introduced to a new idea, a new figure, which many Bible translations have called the Son of Man. If you've paid attention to so many lessons from the Gospels, that should sound really familiar as its Jesus' favorite way to describe himself. And this Son of Man figure in Daniel, actually fulfills the promise of Eden. It's a vision of humanity finally able to be with God in His Presence, to rule over creation while in full participation in God's goodness and justice, and to have a peaceable reign that never ends.

This is what we claim when we say that Christ is the King. Jesus drew on Daniel's ministry when he used that title for himself, and since the Bible scholars, priests, Sadducees, and Pharisees all knew Daniel's story really well it really upset them that Jesus would claim such an exalted title for himself as Son of Man. As Christians, we trust that all the things Daniel saw for the Son of Man, especially his eternal kingship, are true of Jesus.

And beyond that, we trust that Jesus is King *now*, sitting in judgement over all those things that are wrong, unjust, unrighteous, falling short of God's loving design in the world. And as King, Jesus rules in love, watches over us, and prays for us. He sends his graces, his Holy Spirit to guide us and comfort us as we do his work in the world that needs him very much. Perhaps the craziest thing he does as king is that he sends us, his rag tag cluster of a people to do his will out there. Even still, with all our various messes we can trust St. John the Divine when he offers tribute

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood,

and reminds us that Jesus has

made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father...

Beloved, our lives are meant to be emblazoned with the same mark as that sweatshirt: Jesus is King. We are citizens of Christ's kingdom, marked by his sacrifice for us, his love, and his abundant life. We are a kingdom of priests, offering our whole lives back to God so that He can use us to bring goodness, truth, beauty, blessing, health, and love to a world that so often reviles those things. As we head into the season of Advent, I pray that we would keep those things close at our hearts as we prepare ourselves for the coming of the King at the Nativity. Each Advent is an opportunity for us to participate in the ancient expectation of the coming of the Son of Man, the Messiah. I pray that He would enter into our ready hearts this season, delighted to dwell with us and give us what we need to thrive in his service. For we hope and pray that Jesus will be with us and expect with holy hope that

His dominion is an everlasting dominion

that shall not pass away,

and his kingship is one

that shall never be destroyed.

May we ever be his subjects.

To Christ who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.