

## Daniel 7:13-14

<sup>13</sup>I kept watching the night visions, and there, in the clouds of heaven, I saw one like a son of man 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.

## Eternal Dominion

### I.

Isn't it pathetic that God's people are so apathetic? The Kingdom of Israel had split in two in 931 B.C. The northern kingdom was still known as Israel. Governed by nothing but godless king after godless king, the Northern Kingdom lasted only 200 years after the split. Then the people had been conquered and carried into captivity, never to return.

The southern kingdom was known as Judah. Of the 19 kings that governed the nation, 8 were God-fearing kings. Jerusalem was part of the southern kingdom, with the temple of the Most High God, and the priesthood that served him in that temple.

Even with all the advantages of temple worship and God sending prophet after prophet to bring the people his specific instructions, the people often became apathetic. They persecuted the prophets. They disobeyed God's Word.

Finally God followed through on his judgment. Three times Babylon invaded Judah. Mayhem and destruction came along with the invasions. Armies were annihilated. Cities were destroyed. Thousands upon thousands of people were carried off into captivity in Babylon. Among the exiled captives was Daniel.

The pathetically apathetic people had failed to believe that God would follow through on his threats to punish their nation. Decades into their exile, the pathetically apathetic people did not believe that God would rescue them, or even that he had the *power* to save them.

God's apathetic people needed to know that he *does* have power, and he *is* able to do something about the powers that be in this world. Daniel chapter 7 begins the night visions Daniel was given which take up the rest of his book.

In the first part of chapter 7, Daniel sees four beasts. The beasts are four political powers. Over a 500 year period one would come after the other, each dominating the world. Each would seem to be indestructible.

"I continued to watch until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days was seated" (Daniel 7:9, EHV). A powerful figure enters the vision. Ancient of Days is the term Daniel uses for God. God's authority, God's power, God's control has existed long before beast after beast of world-dominating powers had ever come on the scene. God was, in fact, the *real* ruler, and would continue to exercise his ultimate authority and control after all these seemingly unconquerable empires were long gone.

### II.

Is God really in control? Wars and rumors of wars have continued ceaselessly from the time of Daniel onward. Jesus told us they would never stop—that *these* are the kinds of things that remind us we are living in the last days.

Is God really in control? It is pathetic how apathetic God's people have *always* seemed to be. The world around us seems to be spinning out of control. Society pressures us to accept all kinds of so-called scientific hypotheses as fact. It seems as though the world goes on as it always has. It seems that God is late in coming. Doubt begins to cloud our faith. We start to agree with unbelievers that there really isn't a God, or that he isn't coming back, or that he really doesn't have the power he claims to have.

The apathy clouds the church, too. There are divisions. False prophets combine God's Word with scientific theory trying to harmonize God's pure truth with the myths of science that the world insists are truth. Then, because human beings insist on applying human logic to a God who defies logic, false prophets distort and twist even God's teachings concerning these last days. Daniel's prophecy and the book of Revelation are twisted by false logicians into some sort of apocalyptic time line.

I guess it's easy to do. Daniel and John were seeing visions. As the vision progressed, each of them would say things like: "Then I saw," or "As I continued to watch, I saw." While that *sounds* like time must have passed, sometimes a vision is just looking at a different aspect of the same thing, or examining things from different perspectives.

### III.

Though Daniel's vision covered three world-dominating powers, he really saw only two periods of time: the Former Times and the Last Times. He and the others who had been exiled to Babylon were living in the Former Times. Those times would continue through two more world-power cycles. During the time of the fourth beast, the fourth world-power which was the Roman Empire, the Last Times would begin.

"I kept watching the night visions, and there, in the clouds of heaven, I saw one like a son of man coming" (Daniel 7:13, EHV). The Son of Man was coming in the clouds of heaven. Remember that God led his people out of Egypt by day in a pillar of cloud. Clouds and God figured prominently together in the Old Testament. Isaiah says: "See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt" (Isaiah 19:1, NIV84). Among the Jews the Messiah was known as "Son of a Cloud." Daniel saw Messiah coming.

"I kept watching the night visions, and there, in the clouds of heaven, I saw one like a son of man coming. He came to the Ancient of Days, and he was brought before him" (Daniel 7:13, EHV). Moses was the greatest prophet of the Old Testament, yet when God called Moses into service he said to him: "Do not come any closer. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5, EHV). At another time God told Moses: "You cannot see my face, for no human may see me and live" (Exodus 33:20, EHV).

Jesus is different. Jesus is greater even than the greatest Old Testament prophet, Moses. Jesus could enter into the presence of the Ancient of Days. He could see God and live, for he is God. Jesus came to do the work that no other prophet could do. He came to do the work no other High Priest could do.

As God, Jesus had all dominion and honor. But he came not only as fully God, Jesus came also as fully, 100% human. "To him was given dominion, honor, and a kingdom" (Daniel 7:14, EHV). The dominion and honor that were his according to Jesus' divine nature were given also to his human nature. Jesus is not only our prophet and high priest, he has also been given a kingdom. Jesus is our King.

Pilate didn't understand it in today's gospel. Jesus tried to explain: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36, EHV). Pilate didn't realize it, but he was carrying out the eternal plan of the Ancient of Days. Jesus came in all humility because he came to serve as the

sacrifice needed by all his apathetic people of every age and generation. Jesus came to die—hardly the thing most kings want to be known for. He wouldn't lie in state after his death so admirers and mourners could pass by and pay their respects. As soon as his execution was over, he was unceremoniously handed over to a few faithful followers and placed in a nearby tomb. Proper burial wasn't even done; the mourners had to hurry before the Sabbath began and they would be unable to complete the task.

But Jesus' unceremonious death and burial was far more than meets the eye. In the moment he said from the cross "It is finished," the work of paying for the sins of the world was complete. Jesus, as King, won the victory over sin by paying for all sin. Jesus won the victory over the devil, because the devil couldn't stop him from completing his work. When he rose again on the third day Jesus proved that our Great King had won the victory over death, as well. He promises us: "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19, EHV).

#### IV.

Christ is the King Daniel saw in his vision. "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, EHV).

It might seem as though many more world powers have dominated the scene through the centuries than just the four Daniel mentioned in his book of prophecy. It might seem as though God isn't in control. Not only do wars and rumors of wars continue, and nation rises against nation, but the church still seems to be rocked with strife and discord. The church still seems to have more than its share of false prophets and false christs, which Jesus said would come and deceive many.

When we have doubts, we turn back to look at the empty tomb yet again. We look to Daniel's prophecy and are reminded that *all* dominion and honor have been given to him in his kingdom. We are reminded that his kingdom will not pass away like all the world powers of the past. Jesus' kingdom will not even pass away when the world itself is destroyed at the very last day. Jesus' dominion is an eternal dominion. And we, as members of his kingdom, will not pass away, either. We will enter into his eternal glory to be with him. And because we are with him, we will not face the restrictions of even the great Moses in the Old Testament; we will be able to enter God's presence and see him face to face.

Christ is our King. We are his people. Though it doesn't always seem that God is in control, he is. Jesus has already defeated the powers of this world, the power of Satan, and even the power of death itself. Christ is King. To him be all glory and honor and power and might forever and ever. Amen.