

## TEXT – Daniel 7:13-14

Introduction: A book by Michael H. Hart lists the 100 most influential people in history. He ranks Muhammad as number one. Isaac Newton is listed as number two. Yes, Jesus Christ makes the list but he is at number three followed by Buddha and Confucius. Surprisingly St. Paul is there at number six. Other notables are Moses at 15 and Martin Luther at 25. I don't know the author's background, but there are probably many others who would come up with a similar list. Jesus would probably have difficulty cracking the top ten in other people's lists. As our Church Year comes to a close we focus on the only influential person there is, and therefore he is in a list all by himself. He is the only one who can save sinners from an eternal punishment in hell, the only true King and Ruler of all, the one who is to be worshiped and adored forever and ever. This is Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. As we consider the vision that Daniel is allowed to see the point is made that JESUS IS OUR ONE TRUE KING. We are reminded that 1) He is coming with the clouds of heaven, and that 2) His dominion is an everlasting dominion.

### I. He is coming with the clouds of heaven

- Daniel's vision in chapter seven began with four great beasts coming out of the sea. These beasts represented four kingdoms or world powers. The first beast was like a lion with wings of an eagle. It represented the Babylonian empire, which was the world power at the time of Daniel.
- The second beast was like a bear with three ribs in its mouth and between its teeth. This beast symbolized the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. The three ribs may be its three main conquests of Lydia, Babylon and Persia.
- The third beast was like a leopard with four wings like that of a bird and with four heads. This beast would be the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great with the four wings highlighting his speedy conquests. The four heads would probably refer to the four main divisions of his empire after his death.
- The final beast that Daniel saw was the most terrifying and frightening. It had large iron teeth and it crushed and devoured all its victims. This was a picture of the Roman Empire that dominated the ancient world and became the last true world empire.
- Along with these visions of world powers taking control, Daniel also sees the Ancient of Days, our God taking his seat with ten thousand times ten thousand attending him. This was a reminder to those troubled by these conquering world powers that God, the one true God was and is still in control of all history. His sovereign reign continues long after these kingdoms were destroyed.
- The wars in our world today are also under God's control. These wars and rumors of wars are all signs of the end. They are also reminders of the real war being fought – the spiritual battle for souls. The devil seeks to attack and destroy faith in Christ. He slowly starves the soul of spiritual nourishment keeping it away from its life-giving nourishment in Word and sacrament. It is a battle to continue to feed our faith and keep it healthy.
- But Daniel saw someone else. It was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. This Son of Man is the same Son of Man who first made his appearance during the reign of that fourth terrifying beast. The Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census. A virgin name Mary who was pregnant and about to deliver a child went with her husband Joseph to register in Bethlehem where the Son of Man was born.
- This child grew in wisdom and stature with God and men. This Son of Man taught and preached to the multitudes about another kingdom, a far greater kingdom, a kingdom of eternal glory in heaven, a kingdom of repentance and forgiveness of sins that God would establish through the Savior that was promised. The one who was preaching and teaching them was that Savior – Jesus Christ, the Son of Man and Son of God.
- The Apostle John testified of Jesus, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father full of grace and truth."
- The terrifying beast prompted by the Jewish religious leaders crucified this Son of Man, the Word made flesh, but by so doing God's plan was fulfilled namely to provide eternal salvation for sinners through the sacrifice of the Savior, his Son, whom he had sent.
- Now this Savior, the Son of Man and Son of God will return. Jesus who has ascended into heaven after his glorious resurrection and victory over death is coming again. He will return to earth riding on the clouds of heaven with all his holy angels to judge the living and the dead and establish the eternal kingdom of the almighty God.
- No one knows when Jesus is coming. Jesus said, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."
- Do you know when your next cold is coming? There are times when you are more prone to catching a cold but you still don't know when that will be. You suddenly come down with a cold. You weren't expecting it. It's just there.

- We do not know when Jesus is coming. No one has a clue. Even Jesus in his humiliation, living as true man, didn't know, though he knew as true God. The angels don't know. No one knows. All we know is that Jesus is coming soon and we want to be prepared with a faith that expects him at any time. It is our faith in Jesus alone that prepares us to welcome the one true King and Savior.

Transition: Jesus the one true King is now our resurrected and ascended Lord who has promised to come again and set up an eternal kingdom for his believers. In his vision Daniel sees that this King's dominion is an everlasting dominion.

## II. His dominion is an everlasting dominion

- Daniel relates in his vision that Jesus this Son of Man was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. Didn't Jesus already possess all authority, glory and power? Yes he did and always has as true God. But we can also say, as the Scriptures do, that Jesus received such authority, glory and power.
- As true man Jesus was given or received all the power, glory and authority that his divine nature already possessed. Through his exaltation, that is, his resurrection, his ascension, being seated in power at God's right hand, and his return to judge Jesus' human nature now shares in all the glory he has as true God.
- While on earth Jesus lived as a man, now he lives as God. There is no more suffering according to his human nature. Jesus lives in all glory, power and authority as true man and true God. No more suffering. Won't this also be true of us? No more suffering, only glory. Although we won't have all the glory of God, just sharing in a very small portion of that glory in heaven will be far, far, far beyond anything we can experience here on earth.
- Daniel in his vision saw Jesus receive this glorious dominion and rule. He also saw all the peoples and nations worshiping him as they should. Now, will all people really worship him? Paul says they will, but some will have to worship him to their everlasting shame because they did not believe in him. But all will see him when he returns.
- Paul writes in Philippians, "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
- Jesus the one true King with all authority, glory, and power will come to establish a kingdom that will never, ever end. It is an everlasting kingdom. Kingdoms rise and fall. We too have success in some things and at other times we fail. We do not live in a world of permanent and everlasting success and glory.
- In a sense God sets us up for failure in this life. The Lord wants us to realize amidst all the heartache, trouble, sorrow, and suffering that our time here is temporary. Whatever glory, success, joy, or happiness we experience is only temporary. The Lord creates in us a longing for a better home, a permanent one filled with blessings, glory, happiness, and perfection that will never end.
- Peter writes in his first epistle, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade – kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time."
- The kingdom Jesus has established for us in heaven is an everlasting home. His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. We lose sight of this important truth when we focus on the here and now. Would we really trade a few years even a few decades of temporary, worldly joy and happiness (if you can call it that) for the joys and brilliant splendor of eternity in heaven with Jesus? Would we jeopardize our faith for a few moments of earthly glory?
- Paul helps us keep our focus where it should be. He says in 2 Corinthians 4, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Conclusion: How can anyone possibly be more influential, more significant than Jesus? He is the one true King who is coming back to judge the world riding on the clouds of heaven. Through his perfect life and his innocent suffering and death on the cross, he has established an everlasting dominion, an eternal kingdom. Jesus is in a category by himself as the one true King, the only Savior of sinners who with his believers will reign forever and ever in perfect glory. John writes in chapter seven of Revelation, "Then one of the elders asked me, 'These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?' I answered, 'Sir, you know.' And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'" Amen.