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End Times 4*

Daniel 7:13-14
Know your Kings

Grace and peace to you from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come! Amen.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Raise your hand if you think it is great fun to memorize all the names and dates of our nation's presidents. Go ahead, hold them high. That's about what I thought. Then I think I can safely guess that like me, you're glad you didn't grow up in England and have to learn all their kings and queens.

But even if you care less about the difference between King Nebuchadnezzar and King George the Third, a look at our first lesson urges us to know our kings. For we need to understand a few

things about the **kings of this world** in order to see how marvelous it is that Jesus Christ is our King.

Our reading is the last part of a dream God gave the prophet Daniel some 500 years before Jesus' birth. In the first part of the dream before our reading begins, God showed Daniel a vision of four beasts, each representing a powerful kingdom that would rule for a time: First the Babylonian Empire that was later conquered by the Persians, who were then defeated by the Greeks who in turn were swallowed up by Rome.

When is the last time you heard a news story about our president meeting with the Persian King or holding a conference with the Roman Emperor? Never of course, for those once mighty empires have all disappeared. All their might and majesty has crumbled to ruins. **Know your kings: the kings of this world** don't last!

80 years ago Adolph Hitler set up a Reich he said would last for 1,000 years. It only made it about 12. Many of us here lived through the

collapse of the Soviet Union in our lifetimes, something few would have imagined just 40 years ago! So it goes with the **kings** and **kingdoms** of **this world**. Nations rise and fall. People become famous and powerful, and then they die and are eventually forgotten by those who follow. **The kings of this world** pass away.

But so what? How do a bunch of hard to pronounce names and places matter to me today? It matters, because it's a needed reminder of what Psalm 90 tells us: **The length of our days is seventy years or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.**

If the Caesars of Rome and Pharaoh's of Egypt all died, so will you and I. If the mighty and famous all turn to dust and are forgotten, how much more the rest of us?

O fellow sinners, do not think you are different than all went before! If you want to put your trust and your meaning in the things of this world:

human strength or wisdom, youth, beauty or power, riches, possessions, or relationships, understand that all these things will wear out and pass away like the kingdoms of old. **Know the kings of this world** and all they offer, passes away.

So thank God we know of another King, the One who said: **My kingdom is not of this world.** Listen to what Daniel saw about this King above all kings:

There, in the clouds of heaven, I saw one like a son of man coming... 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.

Many kings tried to conquer the whole world, but none have succeeded. But this King Daniel sees has power no other can claim, ruling over **all peoples, nations and languages.**

Though He is a **son of man**, a human being, yet He is **coming in the clouds of heaven**. That is Bible imagery that describes God alone, for He made the heavens and rules over all things.

This King is of course Jesus Christ, the Son of God. With the Father, the Ancient of Days and the Holy Spirit, He is the One true eternal God—three distinct persons, each one fully God and yet only one God.

This is the same Son of God who also became **son of man**. As God and man in one person, Christ not only has all **power** and **authority**, but He will *always* have all **power and authority**. For **his kingdom...will not pass away**.

How refreshingly different is Christ the King! The British Empire once had a world-wide empire where the sun was always shining. But Jesus will still be king of all even when the sun no longer shines when this old world comes to an end. **Know your kings**, Jesus is **the King of kings** who lasts forever!

But there is something a bit unsettling we need to talk about as we consider this King whose power is absolute and unending. What if we are on the wrong side of this king? Then to say the very least we are in awful trouble.

The terrifying truth is that every single sin earns us a place with the King's enemies. The old sinful part of us would like us to just think of our sins as nothing more than a little mistake, a harmless boo-boo here and there.

But the reality is, one of the Bible's words that describes our imperfection is the word **rebellion**. At its very core, every single way we break any of God's commands is an act of rebellion against the King of kings where we try to claim His crown as our own.

For example, the Lord tells us 'do not worry, for I am in control, ruling all for your good, trust in me'. But then we try to put His crown on ourselves as we fear and fret because we are relying on our own abilities to get things done, or putting our

trust in money or the things of this world that so often fail and pass away.

The Lord of heaven and earth tells us “be content for I am your greatest treasure.” But then we try to take the crown off of His brow and put it on the world’s ideal that to be happy you need to have the most and the best and the newest and all at the best prices too, then you’ll *really* be happy.

See how horrible even every sinful thought is, for we are essentially saying to the King of kings, what I want is more important than what you say! Our sin has rightly earned us a place in hell, reserved for rebels like the devil and his demons.

So how could we ever be on the *right* side of this king? Only because of these most amazing words: **I saw one like a son of man coming.**

Son of man means this great King loves us with an undeserved love. **Son of man** tells us how this great King has saved us. For **son of man** means He is a human being. He has mother,

he has flesh and blood, body and soul, skin and teeth, just like you and me.

And why would the Son of God, the Great King become **the son of Man**? Let Jesus tell you in His own words: **the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.**

Our sinful rebellion meant we were eternally lost, and we could never get on the right side of this King. So God's wondrous love led Christ to come to this world, to come to our side to **save** us.

Just think, His love for you is so great, that He whom the prophet saw **in the clouds of heaven** once lay in **manger** as a newborn baby born in your place, to keep the commands we have all broken. To save us from every time in our sin we tried to take God's crown for our own, Jesus willing put aside the crown of his glory and wore a crown of thorns, and then shame and death as He suffered the price of all our **rebellion** on the cross.

As the King who came to **save** us, Jesus even fought and won the battle against death on Easter morning as He rose triumphant from the grave. Above all **know the King of kings** is your **Savior!**

Just think what this means for the first problem we talked about: how the kings and things of this world will all pass away. But Jesus' **kingdom will not be destroyed.** And our second lesson tells us the most amazing thing! Jesus **has freed us from our sins by his own blood and made us a kingdom.** He has made us a *kingdom!*

In Baptism, Jesus planted His flag of the cross upon you and made you part of his Kingdom. Through Spirit worked faith, you are part of Jesus' **kingdom that will not pass away.** He who rules all does so for your eternal good. Even when your body dies you will live on in His presence. And at the last day He will raise your body up from the dust of death to live and reign with him in His everlasting kingdom!

Worship this King of love with all you are and all you have, for you **know Jesus is the King of Kings *your King, your*** Savior. Amen.

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." Amen.