

Jesus is your royal connection

Text: Daniel 7:13-14 for 11/25/2018 by Pastor Bolwerk

Does anyone here have some connection to royalty? Maybe your third cousin, twice removed, on your dad's side of the family was related to someone who was a duke or a prince. So, does anyone here have any royalty in their family? If you do, what does having that royal connection get you? In today's world not much, except maybe bragging rights. But whether you have a connection to royalty in your family or not doesn't really matter, because today, through God's servant Daniel, we will hear that ...

Theme: Jesus is your royal connection.

- I. He connects you to royal authority.
- II. He makes you eternally royal.

Daniel was a Jewish man who was among the captives in Babylon. Daniel was a firm believer and follower of the one, true God of Israel. Daniel had a strong faith and served God faithfully even while he was in exile. Because of Daniel's faithful service to God, the Lord chose to give Daniel a picture of the future. It was a picture of things that would happen before the coming of the Messiah, and ultimately, before the end of the world. God gave Daniel a set of visions or dreams. Perhaps they could be better described as nightmares. In his visions Daniel saw four horrible beasts, each more powerful and terrifying than the one before. Each of those beasts represented a coming kingdom that would rule for a time in this world. Yet for as powerful as those kingdoms seemed to be, in the final vision, Daniel saw that God's Kingdom would ultimately conquer all worldly kingdoms.

In the final vision that Daniel was given God shows Daniel an image of Judgment Day. Daniel tells us, **"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. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power"** (vs. 13-14a). Daniel sees someone who is "like a son of man." This is a human being like himself. But this person comes on the clouds, approaches God and then is given great authority. How can a mere human being approach the holy and Almighty God? Why is this one man given so much power and authority? Because this is not just any man. This is "the Son of Man." This is the God-man, Jesus Christ.

But how do we know this is Jesus? Because Jesus describes his final return in the same way Daniel describes the Son of Man's coming in his vision. Jesus said of the Last Day, **"At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory"** (Mark 13:26). Jesus is not just a man. He is the eternal God and King who deserves all power and glory, and one day he will display his authority and ruling power to this entire world.

But until Jesus returns on Judgment Day, there are going to be many people in this world who only see Jesus as just a man. That shouldn't surprise us. When Christ lived on this earth he looked like everyone else. He ate, he drank, he worked, and slept. He did the things normal human being do, and that's why so many struggle when it comes to believing in Jesus as the all-powerful Savior God. The Pharisees saw Jesus as nothing more than the son of a carpenter. Christ's brothers, sisters, and neighbors could not understand how this man could be more than just, "Joseph's son." Even today, many see Jesus as nothing more than a man who taught people to be nice. Some say he was just a human prophet, and others say he was nothing more than a "good man." None of these people see Jesus as the all-powerful God that he is, the God who holds all power and authority over heaven and earth.

But that is certainly not us. We don't have a problem seeing Jesus as true God and true man with all power and authority. Our problem is acting like we don't see Jesus at all! When troubles come into our lives, too often we get so focused on what we have to do to fix those troubles that we don't see Jesus. We completely forget Jesus has the power to fix our troubles. Then there are the

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times when our pain causes us lose sight of the fact that Christ is using his royal power and authority to work out everything in this world for our good. Or because of the violence and chaos of this world, we allow worries to blind us to the fact that Jesus has complete authority over everything that happens in this world. Is Christ no longer the Prince of Peace? Did our Savior get knocked off his throne as the King of kings? Of course not! But sometimes we act like he did. There are even times when we close our eyes to Christ and do not allow him to rule supreme in our hearts and minds.

Let's not treat the truth of our sins lightly. A day is coming when the "Son of Man" is going return with all power and authority. On that day he will sit on his royal throne and judge every person who ever lived, and that includes us. On that day, all who did not acknowledge Jesus' royal authority in their lives will be cast into the eternal fires of hell. Have we always acknowledged Christ's authority over our lives? Has Jesus always been the King of our hearts? Or have we at times placed other kings first in our hearts?

Thankfully our divine King does not rule with an iron fist and a cold heart. No, his throne is built on grace, and his kingdom is founded on mercy. Our Lord rules with hands of love and a heart of forgiveness. Remember Jesus is the Son of Man. He lived in this sin-filled world and he understands the struggles, pains, and problems that we face, and he does not want us to face those things eternally. That's why Jesus did not come to judge the world, but to save it. Christ came to connect you to his royal authority. Jesus has authority over life and death, and he used that authority to save us. He said of his own life, **"I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again"** (John 10:18). Jesus laid down his life to pay for our sins. By his suffering and death Christ paid for all those times we did not recognize his authority in our lives as King. All of our sins were buried with Christ in his grave, never to rise again. But Jesus used his royal authority to take up his life again and walk out of that grave. Our King conquered death and the devil. And now, through faith he connects us to his royal robe of righteousness. Covered with Jesus' perfection we now have the authority to approach his heavenly Father in prayer, and we have the power to live a new life in service to our God and King. And as we wait for our Lord's return, we place ourselves under his royal authority, the authority he used to save us from sin, death, and hell. Jesus is your royal connection. He connects you to his saving, royal authority.

Daniel knew that the kingdoms he saw in his vision would not last forever. God had made it clear that he was going to come and destroy those kingdoms. Then the Lord would put in place his own eternal Kingdom. As the Son of Man, Jesus is your royal connection to that kingdom. Not only does Jesus connect you to his royal authority but he also makes you eternally royal.

In Daniel's vision it's clear that the Son of Man rules over more than just an earthly kingdom. We are told, **"He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men 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"** (v. 14). Jesus kingdom is eternal. He connects you to that eternal kingdom through his word. As true God, Jesus uses the words of Scripture to create faith in people's hearts. This faith trusts in Jesus' saving work. Faith covers a person with Christ's forgiveness and righteousness. Being made right with God through faith in Christ a person becomes a member of God's eternal kingdom.

In the past, a person became a member of a kingdom in one of two ways. Either they willingly submitted to a king's rule over their lives, or they were conquered by that king and made slaves and servants within his kingdom. Either way, becoming a member of a kingdom did not mean a person became royalty. Only the king and his family enjoyed the power and prestige of royalty.

But when you become a member of Jesus' kingdom you are not made a slave or a servant. Instead, by God's grace, you become royalty. The Apostle Peter shares this truth with us when he

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writes, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9). Through the amazing good news of what the Son of Man has done for us, God brings us out of the darkness of sin and into the light of eternal royalty. We will not just stand in the presence of royalty, we will be royalty. Peter tells us that we will be a royal priesthood.

Before Jesus came into this world only the priests could serve in God’s temple. Ordinary people, like you and I, were not allowed into the temple. Only the priests could offer sacrifices to God. Only the priests were allowed into the Holy Place of the temple. And only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place. But now that Jesus has fulfilled God’s plan of salvation all believers can serve before God. All believers can enter God’s temple and come into his holy presence. We serve God as his royal priests, not by offering animal sacrifices but by offering to God the sacrifice of our hearts. We strive to put God first in our hearts and minds. We show God our gratitude for his saving grace by praising his name and worship, by cheerfully giving our offerings to support the work of his kingdom, and by loving and caring for others just as our gracious God loves and cares for us.

And remember, as the royal priests of the Son of Man you have his royal authority to serve. You do not have to ask permission to love others, to care for others, or to show people kindness. Your Lord has already given you the authority to do that. And being filled with the love and forgiveness of Christ’s gospel, Jesus’ love will move our hearts to love others just as he loves us. True love is only found in connection with Jesus our King. By faith Jesus is your royal connection. He connects you to his royal authority, the authority to share is love and forgiveness. And the connection Jesus give you is an eternal one. Through him you can be certain that you are eternally royal. Amen.