

The King

Many of you may know that I tend to follow the lectionary readings for my sermons. I do not follow them rigidly, but perhaps 80% of the time. This morning as I read through the suggested readings, I prayed for guidance and then I listened to the Gaithers sing “The King is Coming” and you can see where my mind went.

The chorus of that wonderful song tells me:

O the King is coming

The King is coming

I just heard the trumpets sounding

And now His face I see

O the King is coming

The King is coming

Praise God, He's coming for me.

(Songwriters: Charles Millhuff / Gloria Gaither / William J. Gaither © Capitol Christian Music Group)

The king is coming. What king? Why should that matter to me? On this particular Sunday, in this particular place, and before this particular group of people; what does it matter about a king?

Next week, we will celebrate the birthday of the church. Pentecost marks a special day for the church and all of us who are a part of the body of Christ. Until we can understand the place of Jesus the Christ in the context of the universe, we will never fully appreciate the significance of Pentecost, or the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

The interaction between earth and Jesus truly are very few. Yet, they are monumental in nature. First, Jesus was on hand and actively participated in the creation of the earth and all living things including humans.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (John 1:1-3 NASB) The 14th verse tells us that the word became flesh. Thus, we know that Jesus was active during the creation.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26 NASB)

There are many mentions of Jesus throughout the Old Testament (or Hebrew Bible). There is no direct interaction mentioned until a young girl from Nazareth gave birth to the Christ child in Bethlehem. We are all familiar with this event. This event is significant yet it was only noticed locally. The world at large did not know of this until much later. With this event, the creator came to the earth He had created. The irony of a helpless baby coming to live on the very planet He had created and to live in the form of the very creation He had created in His own image.

We can read through the gospel accounts to learn about the life of Jesus. With the exception of a brief incident when He was 12 years old, the information about Jesus jumps from his birth to His ministry. We go from the infant child to a 30-year-old man with little information. The next three years we only have spotty details. Again, much of what we learn of Jesus is that He was localized in His ministry. If we pause to consider, Jesus taught us that living a life that is in

harmony with God is more about how we seek to serve God, how treat others, and how we either allow our material possessions to be our servant or we become the servant of our things. The life of Jesus was taken by the Roman soldiers on a Friday and then on the following Sunday God raised Him from the dead. This is truly a monumental event. Yet, again, only a few people knew about this. The Bible reveals that only around 500 people saw Him after His resurrection. He walked with, talked with, and ate with His disciples for a period of 40 days after His resurrection.

This brings us to the last significant event that is in history. This creator now leaves His creation. God, who had come to earth as a baby, lived to adulthood, died and was raised, is leaving to return to His home in heaven.

The gospel accounts are very brief in their account of the ascension of Jesus. Matthew and John do not mention it at all. Mark (the oldest gospel) reveals the scene in one sentence: **So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.** (Mark 16:19 NASB)

Luke's gospel allows a little more information as we read: **And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising God.** (Luke 24:50-53 NASB)

Luke gives us a few more details as he opens his book of history. The book of Acts gives us information about the early days of the church and how rapidly it grew throughout the known civilized world. The history begins with the same image of the ascension.

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11 NASB)

We started our message this morning with a reference to the song "The King is Coming" with reason. In this passage from Acts, we are promised that Jesus will return in the same manner in which He left (in the clouds). When He returns, He will return as the king and not as a baby. In the book of Revelation, John tells us that Jesus is the ruler of the kings of earth (Revelation 1:5) and in verse 7 we read: **BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So, it is to be. Amen.** (Revelation 1:4-7 NASB)

What happened between the time that the disciples watched Jesus ascend into heaven and the yet to happen return? What was the scene in heaven when Jesus completed His mission on earth and returned to His home?

Daniel prophesied about that scene in the 7th chapter of his book. Let's read beginning with the 13th verse.

"I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. "And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14 NASB)

In the opening chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Paul expresses his prayer that the understanding of the Ephesians would be opened up so they could see the power of God at work in salvation. This is the power by and through which God made Jesus to be king over all things. ***I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:18-23 NASB)***

God has placed Jesus over everything. He (Jesus) is **above all rule and authority and power and dominion**. We read also **He (God) put all things in subjection under His (Jesus) feet**. Imagine the coronation that was celebrated in heaven when Jesus returned from His mission on earth. Jesus returned as a conquering hero after He defeated the ultimate weapon of Satan—death. Jesus paid the debt of sin that had been accruing interest since Adam and Eve. Jesus had shown Satan the awesome power of God and sealed our salvation.

The writer of the Hebrew letter also paints the picture of Jesus sitting on the throne with the full approval and blessing of God.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. (Hebrews 1:1-4 NASB)

So, what does it mean to us that Jesus is a (or the) king? Does this have anything to do with us now? It may at some future time but does it mean anything now? Paul writes to Timothy these words that indicate how we should live within the context of Jesus as king.

I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen. (1 Timothy 6:13-16 NASB)

The confession that Paul refers to is recorded in Matthew 27:11 when Jesus stood before Pilate and was asked: “Are You the King of the Jews?” And Jesus said to him, ***“It is as you say.”*** (Matthew 27:11 NASB)

Jesus confessed to be king, God received Him back to heaven as king and today we need to accept Him as the king and **keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ**. Jesus is sitting on His throne awaiting the proper time when He will come to claim His church. Are we ready?

Let us pray.