

**+ Daniel 7:13-14 + What a Glorious Sight! +
+ Last Sunday of End Time: Christ the King + 25 November 2012 +**

Some events in life simply take your breath away. Sometimes what you're witnessing is so amazing that it leaves you speechless. The sight might even bring tears to your eyes at the indescribable beauty, the jaw-dropping glory, or the sheer joy of the moment. Such a sight moves you emotionally and thrills you to the core.

Those moments are rare and unforgettable. In fact, such moments can make a lifelong impact on you. A husband-to-be catches the first glimpse of his beautifully dressed bride as she walks down the aisle, and nothing will remove the smile from his face. A child enters the world and all her parents can do is marvel at the miracle of life snuggled up in their arms. A military unit comes home from deployment and soldiers are reunited by the wide-open arms of their loved ones who just won't let them go. A congregation finally dedicates the church building they have spent years dreaming of, praying for, and working to build. At that moment, the music never sounded so sweet and the congregation so filled with joy. An individual finally reaches the destination he's always dreamed of visiting—the endless vistas of the Rocky Mountains, the deep blue of the Pacific Ocean, the home country of his ancestors, or the lush vegetation of the Amazon rain forest.

Moments like that are rare and unforgettable, because such breathtaking moments often happen purely because of God's grace or after years, even a lifetime of dreaming and saving and preparing. We don't always have the opportunity to be there in person to witness the moment. That means that sometimes we have to watch that glorious event on TV or have to hear about it from a friend or loved one, which just isn't the same.

Today, however, you and I have front-row seats at an event that will be more breathtaking, more glorious, and more beautiful than anything else experienced in this life. You and I have been personally invited by God himself to this event of all events—the formal coronation of Christ the King on the Last Day. It will take your breath away. It will bring tears of joy to your eyes. You'll want to shout and cheer, **"WHAT A GLORIOUS SIGHT!"**

Before this glorious experience begins, a familiar face guides us to our front-row seats. It's the Old Testament prophet Daniel. Yes, that Daniel, who had to spend a night in a den of hungry lions because he chose to obey the will of the holy God rather than the command of a very self-centered king. What we are about to see God had revealed to this prophet about 550 years before the birth of Christ. This was a vision among visions—an unforgettable experience Daniel made sure to record. The visions that night had been terrifying—beasts coming out of the sea, devouring countless people, dominating parts of the earth, and then being conquered or destroyed all symbolizing the rise and fall of nations, but what we're about to see is completely different. It will be thrilling. Daniel takes us to our seats before the grand coronation begins. Like TV commentary given during a major public event, the prophet provides his own commentary to explain what we're going to see.

Everything is set. The entire world, both the living and the dead, has gathered around the throne of, the holy, everlasting God, the **"Ancient of Days"**, in answer to the trumpet call of his final judgment. Already many tears are flowing—some out of sheer joy and expectation at what's about to happen, but many others out of terror and fear of what's coming. All rise in deference to the **"Ancient of Days"** as he takes his seat. Before long, the eyes of all lift heavenward, as Daniel explains, **"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven."** Everyone points to the sky as many cry out, **"See the glorious Son of man!"** What a glorious sight!

What's so glorious about seeing what looks like a regular human being? It's first realizing who that **"Son of man"** is. You see, this **"Son of man"** is no ordinary human being. This is Jesus Christ, the very Son of God. This Jesus had left his heavenly home once before to become the **"Man of sorrows"** for your sake and mine. This Jesus faced all the same ordinary human experiences that you and I face day in and day out, yet unlike us, Jesus was perfect in every thought, every word, and every action. Like us, Jesus endured the troubles and difficulties of this life, even the reality of death at the end of his life, yet unlike us, Jesus didn't have to face death as the wages of his own sin, but as payment for your sins and mine. In fact, if you look closer at the **"Son of man"**, you'll find nail marks in his hands and feet intentionally placed there to punish Jesus, yet by them we are healed.

Healed from what though? Healed from the deadly disease of sin. Perhaps up to this point, you've been wondering how you could possibly have front-row seats to Jesus' coronation on the Last Day. Front-row seats are usually reserved for special guests of honor, their families, and close friends, yet there you and I sit. If you somehow think you've earned those priceless seats, whether by living a good life or simply by being a faithful Christian, Christ's coming will prove that you're dead wrong. By nature, you deserve God's eternal

condemnation because not only have you fallen short of his required perfection, but you have also willfully disobeyed God's holy will. Christ's coming in glory would, then, prove to be a terrible sight.

In spite of your sin and mine, however, the **"Son of Man"** came once before as a lowly human being in the most humble of situations for a single purpose. His appearance as **"the lowliest of humans"** proved that he came not to frighten or overwhelm us by his glory, but **"to win us by his self-sacrificing love"**¹ and be the Savior we desperately need. That's what makes the appearance of the **"Son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven"** such a glorious sight for believers like you and me. Once before Jesus had come down from heaven in lowliness to be our substitute, but this time he comes in glory with a different purpose. He comes not from the sea like the terrifying beasts, nor does he stand on the ground like us, but he comes in glory from heaven to judge all nations and rescue you and me so we can be with him eternally.

The arrival of the **"Son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven"** is glorious in and of itself, but as soon as he arrives, the grand march begins. Jesus approaches **"the Ancient of Days"** and is led into his holy presence. The prophet practically leaps out of his seat as all stand for the most breathtaking of all processions. **"See the royal coronation!"**, Daniel shouts, but the pomp and circumstance of that procession are even beyond Daniel's words as he goes on to describe what power and authority the **"Son of man"** now receives as the King of kings.

As the royal crown is placed on his head and a royal scepter placed in his hands, Jesus is **"given authority, glory, and sovereign power..."** This isn't merely the limited rule of those who briefly strut on the stage of this world in all their royal finery only to disappear with the sands of time. This is a glorious, eternal, almighty rule that knows no limit and has no end. Every nation, tribe, language, and people fall under Christ's royal reign, and all nations bow before him to offer homage in service to the King of kings. The joyous songs of praise acknowledging Jesus as our Lord, our Savior, and our gracious King of kings not only outshine all other music, but prove to be as eternal as Christ's rule, which never fades, never declines, and never ends.

This glorious coronation proves to be extremely breathtaking. You see the King of kings receive unlimited power and authority because of what he accomplished as the **"Son of man"**, because of his victory over sin and Satan on the cross and over death by his glorious resurrection. You see every nation on earth humbly worship him, but it isn't just the glorious entrance of the **"Son of man"**, nor the glorious coronation of the King of kings that are so breathtaking. No, Daniel takes us to a point where we can see the most beautiful vista in all creation. **"His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."** My friends, **see the everlasting kingdom!**

That kingdom has been around long before the Last Day and will be long after it. After Christ rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven and even now sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty in the position of power and authority ruling all things for our good. That royal rule will become more clear and obvious to all on the Last Day, and will remain so forever and ever.

By faith, you and I are citizens of that everlasting kingdom. Now that's an amazing privilege that we have purely because of God's undeserved mercy. The Holy Spirit worked through the Gospel—through the hearing of the Word and through the waters of Holy Baptism—to create that faith and give each of us citizenship in Christ's eternal kingdom. Now your focus is on Jesus, and each day is an opportunity to serve him just as he served you.

As Daniel has showed us, someday Christ will take up his royal rule among the people whom he purchased with his own blood, and what a glorious sight that will be! The Apostle John gives us a glimpse of what that everlasting kingdom will look like. **"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with him and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'**" (Revelation 21:1-4) What a glorious sight that will be because Jesus is the King of kings, who will most certainly return in glory on the Last Day. Unlike those other moments in life, the sheer joy of this moment will never fade with time or gather dust in your memory. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, come quickly and bring your servants home! Amen.

¹ John Jeske, *The People's Bible: Daniel*. Northwestern Publishing House: Milwaukee, WI, 1985. 141.