

◆ Dear fellow subjects of Christ the King,
The modern-day perception of monarchy differs widely from the views held by people who lived long ago. Today, monarchy tends to bring to mind the House of Windsor in Britain, the monarch little more than a mascot for the British people.

But the prophet Daniel had a much different view of monarchy. He'd been captured by one of the greatest kings of all time, Nebuchadnezzar. ◆ Nebuchadnezzar rose to power in the ancient Near East, near modern day Iraq, and quickly conquered the majority of the civilized world. After subduing the major political powers, he turned his armies toward Israel, and after capturing Jerusalem, he carried off the inhabitants into exile. Nebuchadnezzar herded the captives, including Daniel, back to his capital of Babylon. There Daniel entered into the king's service as a scholar.

While there Daniel saw Nebuchadnezzar's vast wealth and power. He walked the streets of the magnificent capitol city ◆ that Nebuchadnezzar had built—with its surrounding walls that were so wide that a 4 horse chariot could turn around on the top of the wall. He could see the colossal statues of bronze and gold that the great king had constructed; he could view one of the wonders of the ancient world: the hanging gardens of Babylon.

Yes, Daniel knew what real monarchy was like: in all its glory. But Daniel also knew what real monarchy was like in all its terror. Because, you see, this same Nebuchadnezzar was as ruthless as he was powerful. For instance, when the king of Judah rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar took the king's sons and killed them in their father's sight. He then blinded the Judean king so that the last image the king ever saw was that of the death of his sons.

Yes, Daniel had first-hand knowledge of one of the most powerful, most ruthless of kings. But Daniel also received visions from God about other great

kings and kingdoms. In the words that immediately precede our text, Daniel's vision describes the great kingdoms of the Medes and the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. These were to become the greatest kingdoms of the world, led by even greater kings. Pretty cool stuff! ◆

But then, with the words of our text, Daniel's vision shifts focus: ***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; 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.***

The king that Daniel saw was called the ***Son of Man***. We find a description of the ***Son of Man*** in John's Revelation ◆: ***[He was] dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance (1:13-16).*** Quite a description!

Listen to another description ◆: ***She gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*** These two descriptions may seem drastically different, but they describe the very same person: the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. Daniel had just described some of the greatest kings the world would ever know. And yet, the real focus of his vision was on a king the world could never have imagined... ◆ ...a King like no other. ◆ For our King is unique in his very person.

Daniel tells us that this king was "***like a son of man***"—in other words, he was human. He was born of a woman, born

in a barn, and was laid in a feeding trough for cattle, because his parents could find nowhere else to stay. He entered our world as a helpless infant, held in his mother's arms wearing strips of cloth for clothing. He grew up and lived subject to all the frailties of humanity—including death. ♦ Our King is truly a man, born in humble circumstances.

But our text tells us something else about this king's person. Daniel writes that he was *coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.* What does this tell us about our king? It tells us that he is a king like no other. He entered the presence of God, the Ancient of Days. God had told Moses in the desert, *You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.* But here the Son of Man enters into the very presence of God! How could he do this? Because the Son of Man is not merely a man. ♦ No, our King is also true God, from glorious majesty.

Just listen to him described in the Psalms, ♦ *Extol him who rides the clouds—his name is the Lord! (68:4) ♦ He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind! (104:3)* Jesus himself tells us, ♦ *You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven (Mt 26:64).*

Sometimes I think that artists have ruined this picture for us. When we read passages like this the image in our mind is that of Jesus floating on wispy white clouds, serene and peaceful - a lovely image. But is that the image that Scripture paints for us? No, Scripture's picture of Christ on the clouds is an image of divine power.

Have you ever sat outside in the late afternoon of a sticky August day? And then looked to the west and saw a line of thunderheads rolling in? As they surged toward you, the wind grows cold. The black clouds ringed with lightning surge higher and higher, growing darker and darker. The wind whips up, swirling faster and faster. ♦ *He makes the clouds his chariots and rides*

on the wings of the wind. That is the picture that Scripture gives us: Christ as God of the universe astride the storm, his presence looming closer and closer in his inevitable approach. ♦

This king we have is like no other. He is God Almighty who rides the thundering clouds. Yet he is the little baby born in a barn in Bethlehem. ♦ Truly this king is like no other.

And we dare never lose sight of either description. Because you see, our salvation depends on our king's unique person. Christ left his heavenly throne and came to earth as that infant only because of our shortcomings. Our heavenly king suffered at the hands of men only because of our sins. Our God Almighty died only because we were lost and bound for hell. He came as that infant, he became true man, only to suffer and die in our place. But because he was also true *God*, that suffering and death was enough to pay for the sins of the whole world. That makes our king not just unique in person. ♦ He is also unique in power.

Daniel served kings that held absolute power. They were nothing like the figurehead monarchs of today. They had singular control of their nations, and exercised their authority in any way that they saw fit, with absolute power over life and death, instilling fear and demanding obedience. Sounds rather intimidating, doesn't it? But take a look at Babylon today... ♦ ...nothing but ruins. Oh, those kings wielded a power, but it was a power that would soon fade and ultimately end in death.

Not so with the Son-of-Man-King in our text. Daniel saw a king who... *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.*

Christ's power has no bounds like the authority of earthly kings. I mean, what earthly king could say as Christ did ♦, *I am*

the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades (Rv 1:18). The Son of Man was crucified and died for us, but he also rose from the dead. He has conquered death on our behalf and now holds complete control over it. Only our king who conquered death can say to you **◆, *I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. (Jn 11:25)***

And it doesn't end there. Our king also has unique power over *this world*. Daniel tells us, ***He was given authority, glory and sovereign power*** and Christ told his disciples that this power had no limits. He said **◆, *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Mt 28:18)*** We're talking about calmed winds and waves on the Sea of Galilee; healed sick, blind and lame; thousands fed from a few loaves of bread and fish. **◆** And this King Like No Other is still doing it today **◆** as he rules all things, the entire universe, for our good.

But as impressive as that may be, it is even more important to recognize the uniqueness of our king's power in that he will judge all people, even the greatest of earthly kings, on the Last Day. **◆** Jesus said **◆, *The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the son just as they honor the Father. He has given him the authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. (Jn 5:22ff).*** And this exercise of Christ's power will cause two drastically different reactions on the part of man.

First, Christ will return to this earth. He has promised it; his inevitable approach on his chariot of the thunderstorm will be viewed by everyone. John writes **◆, *Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. (Rv 1:7)*** That sight will bring nothing but abject terror into the hearts of Christ's enemies. The sight of an all-powerful king rolling in with the storm, with judgment in

his wake, will be enough to terrify anyone with a guilty conscience.

◆ But this second coming of our powerful king on the Last Day, will cause nothing but pure joy in the hearts of believers. For this almighty judge-King is your dear Savior who loved you enough to die for you. This glorious sovereign has prepared a place in heaven for you and will return to take you to be with him. There is no fear in the judgment for us, because we don't rely on ourselves. We rely on the work the judge did on our behalf. **◆** Yes, our King's power is over all people and it is to our joy that we will one day return as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Oh, what an amazing king we have! A king as amazing as this certainly deserves amazing subjects, huh? So how about? What kind of subject are you? Amazing great? Amazing not-so-great? Amazing pathetic? No, my friends, as good subjects go, we don't measure up to what our King deserves. But here is where, once again, **◆** we have a King like no other, because our King is unique in one more way: **◆** he is unique in love.

Yes, he loves you enough to wash away your sin. He loves you enough to put in its place his righteousness. He loves you enough to be intimately involved with you, to **◆** lovingly rule in your heart each and every day of your life. In short, our amazing king takes you and me and transforms us from amazing pathetic, to amazing great! That is our King...

◆ ...a king like no other. He is unique in person. He is unique in power. He is unique in love. Such is our King who fills each of us with joyful anticipation as he declares **◆, *Behold, I am coming soon. (Rv 22:12)*** **◆** So shall it be. **◆** Amen. **◆**