



*Christ the King – Last Sunday in Ordinary Time Biv
Excerpts From Daniel 7, Apocalypse 1 & John 18*

Jesus is King!

The Bible tells the story of how God became King in Jesus. We are called to give him our allegiance and to share in his royal reign.
Fr David King – 21st November 2021

Please look at the First Reading before reading this (Daniel 7.13-14)

1. Elizabeth

Well, I have now watched all four series of *The Crown*, and I have to say I thoroughly enjoyed it. I know I'm five years behind everyone else, but it was definitely worth the wait. It's great entertainment, and it really does give you a behind-the-scenes look into the royal family. How accurate that is, well I guess that is up for debate, but like it or loathe it, royalty is an intensely fascinating thing. And it's interesting because sometimes the Queen gets it right, she lives up to what that role demands & sometimes she gets it wrong.

- One episode sticks in my mind from series three concerning all of this. A lot of you will be old enough to remember the Aberfan disaster of 1966. For those of you who don't remember that, or who haven't seen *The Crown*, in 1966 an utterly tragic event occurred in a little village called 'Aberfan' in South Wales. There was a coal mine that sat on the mountain top above the little village, and a huge pile of coal waste material had been allowed to build up on the site.
- But a period of heavy rain began to de-stabilise this mountain of coal waste, and on 21st October 1966 this avalanche of slurry came hurtling down the mountain destroying everything in its path. It was an absolutely tragedy. To make it even more wretched, a primary school bore the brunt of the impact and 116 children were killed that day.
- But interestingly, at first, the Queen chose not to visit the sight. On the episode it's clear that she didn't think it was a top priority of hers. But after a while, the public mood begins to shift and there's a lot of anger and frustration that she hasn't visited. And soon there's a full on public outcry. Eventually, she bows to the public pressure and makes a visit to the traumatised village.
- And, predictably, when she gets there, she is very moved by the suffering and devastation she sees and she instantly regrets not having visited sooner. And, if I remember correctly, at the end of the episode, there was a little post-script saying that this was one thing she really regretted about those years of her reign. In an uncharacteristic moment of poor judgement, she got it wrong, it was important to go and see the suffering of her people, and she didn't, until it was untenable not to.
- In fairness to the Queen, usually she does make good judgements about those kinds of things, she takes her role very seriously. In fact, that's really my point, it is a constant theme through all four series that she believes this is almost a divine appointment, that this role, the crown, is a calling from on high, and is to be treated with due seriousness and concern.
- Now, in our day and age, presidents and prime ministers have, for all intents and purposes, replaced the monarchy and relegated it to a ceremonial role. But in the ancient world, Kings and Queens were much more like our presidents and prime ministers, and this is still the primary lens through which the biblical drama plays out. It's absolutely crucial to the whole thing. And funnily enough...

2. Daniel

- ...our first reading really draws that out. But to understand it we need a bit of context. In the book of Daniel (written several hundred years before Jesus) in chapter 2, King Nebuchadnezzar (the Babylonian King who destroyed Jerusalem and took a load of the people off into exile) has a dream. In his dream he sees this massive statue, towering over everyone. The head of the statue was made of gold, its chest and arms were made of silver, its middle of bronze, and its legs of iron, and its feet were made of clay. But then, out of nowhere, this mighty rock comes flying in and smashes the statue to smithereens.
- Nebuchadnezzar cannot work out what this dream is all about, and it's only Daniel, one of the young exiles from Jerusalem, who can interpret the dream. Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that this statue represents a train of Kingdoms following Babylon who will all fill the world with evil and violence. But, one day (this is the rock coming in) God's kingdom will come which will confront and humble the arrogant kingdoms of this world and fill the world with the healing justice of God's reign and rule. This is what the dream means says Daniel.
- And in chapter 7 (our reading!) Daniel speaks further about *how* this is going to happen. God is going to set up his throne through 'one like a Son of Man' says Daniel, who will bring about this victory and share in God's rule over the nations. Right! Now, we can make so much more sense of Jesus, and of the Gospel reading! 'Yes, I am a king' says Jesus, 'I was born for this, I came into the world for this'. Jesus is the fulfilment of everything Daniel was talking about. He even calls himself 'Son of Man' on a number of occasions referring to this passage, it all makes perfect sense now!
- But, there's one more thing you need to understand. You see, as any of you will know from Lord of the Rings, or Game of Thrones or any other story about kingdoms and realms, when one Kingdom confronts another Kingdom, well there is usually an almighty clash and battle. And again, that is *exactly* what you see in the biblical story. Jesus' Kingdom *does* clash with the powers and rulers of this world and they throw everything they've got at him. That's what his passion and death is all about! It's the final battle. It's Jesus confronting the arrogant kingdoms of this world with his sacrifice of love. And at the end of Matthew's Gospel we see the victorious risen Jesus say "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me" - that's a royal claim, he's claiming victory, the risen King Jesus is victorious and he now reigns over the whole of creation – this is the good news!

3. David

- Right, now, in the remaining time, let's just quickly reflect on what that means for us. First off, last week we were celebrating Jesus as Lord, this week we are celebrating Jesus as King. This is what the entire liturgical year has been building up to; this is the Good News! When everything is falling apart around us, let us remember that he is King, and that when he brings his kingdom *in its fullness*, all enemies will be put under his feet for the last time. Though there is a challenge in all that too, as giving King Jesus our allegiance entails living as his subject.
- But also, on a slightly deeper level, and this was the point of the story at the start, we are ultimately all called, not just the Queen but all of us, to participate in the royalty of Jesus. 'He has made us a line of kings' John says in the second reading. This is going very deep, but if you read Genesis, this is what we were made for, we were appointed to rule over creation on God's behalf as his royal living statues, kings and queens of creation. When we step into this role, when we share in Jesus' reign of love, then we are discovering what our humanity is all about.

Jesus, I choose you as my King / help me to live as your subject / and help me to share in your reign of love