**Reflections – 24 November 2024**

Daniel 7: 9-10, 13-14

**Begin with an opening prayer**

As we come together to worship King Jesus,    
we offer him all that we are,   
in honour and worship,   
praise and adoration   
of the King of kings.   
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

Daniel 7: 9-10, 13-14

**9**“As I looked,

“thrones were set in place,  
    and the Ancient of Days took his seat.  
His clothing was as white as snow;  
    the hair of his head was white like wool.  
His throne was flaming with fire,  
    and its wheels were all ablaze.  
**10**A river of fire was flowing,  
    coming out from before him.  
Thousands upon thousands attended him;  
    ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.  
The court was seated,  
    and the books were opened.

**13**“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Daniel%207&version=NIV#fen-NIV-21947a)] coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. **14**He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples 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.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**The Book of Daniel is set during Israel’s exile in Babylon (c597-538 BC), but was probably written for a later crisis around 160 BC that raised essentially the same issue: ‘How can we live faithfully as God’s people when the powers that govern the world are against us?’ This passage is part of Daniel’s first of four visions in the second half of the book. They all have much the same message. God’s victory over his people’s enemies is assured and will soon be entrusted to his faithful people.

 Daniel sees four terrifying beasts, symbolising four earthly rulers, emerging from the sea (Daniel 7:1-8). Then he sees the heavenly throne room, where God, ‘the Ancient One’, presides over the heavenly court (vv.9-10). Here is a picture of God who is beyond human imagination. God’s shining, fiery appearance symbolises everlasting power, glory and holiness, worthy of all worship. The fourth beast with its 10 horns is put to death (v.11), the other three lose their authority but still live. Then Daniel sees ‘one like a human being’ (some Bible versions translate this as ‘a son of man’) coming with clouds before God’s throne, and this figure is given universal and everlasting dominion (vv.13-14). Here is a picture of humans – ‘the holy ones of the Most High’ (vv.18,27), God’s people who, like Daniel, remain faithful despite oppression – who are promised a share in God’s victory over evil empires.

 Jesus reinterprets Daniel’s vision and applies it to himself, to show what it means to be God’s Messiah (see especially Mark 8:31-9:1; 14:62). Like Daniel, Jesus trusts in God’s promise to vindicate him and his faithful followers in the face of every evil.

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

Did anyone watch King Charles’ coronation in May 2023? I wonder what struck you from the service. There seemed to be a marked contrast between the symbols of power and authority in much of the service – the crown, the sword, the elaborate clothes, and the humility and simplicity of the anointing – with the King in just a simple white shirt and hidden from view by the Anointing Screen. Perhaps it was not what people were expecting? In the same way, Jesus was not necessarily the kind of king people were expecting. Did the reading from Daniel challenge some of the ways that you usually think of Jesus?

*You may wish to use the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

A crown of thorns over water

Description automatically generated

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus

we praise you for your kingship of all that is good and generous;   
we praise you for bearing witness to the truth;   
for bearing the burdens of those who are struggling;   
for bringing strength to those who admit their weakness;   
for bringing purpose to those who name their emptiness;   
for bringing hope to those who acknowledge their despair;   
for painting a picture of a kingdom where all are called   
and all belong, we praise you.    
**Amen.**