

## **SERMON: Daniel 7.9-10, 13-14; Rev 12.7-12a; John 1.45-51: Who is the Son of Man and How Should We Respond to Him?**

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord my rock and redeemer” Amen

Today we are once again celebrating the name day of our church St Michael’s and All Angels. No doubt you have heard many sermons on these same texts over the years. In preparation for today I reread my own St Michael’s Day sermon from 2022. It was entitled: “Are We Prepared for Spiritual War?” And part of me was sorely tempted to simply deliver it again and see how many of you would remember it! But one aspect of sermon writing that fascinates me is the way the Holy Spirit guides the preacher to different messages on the same texts. I have found that this can reflect both the circumstances of the preacher as well as the needs of the people hearing the message. And so as I prayed into the readings I found myself dwelling on a very different question. This time it is: “Who is the Son of Man and how are we meant to respond to Him?” You see each of our texts in one way or another talk about the Son of Man. So let’s explore what they say about this person and what He may mean for the way we live our life of faith.

### **Daniel 7.7-9, 13-14**

In his vision the prophet Daniel describes this Son of Man as

<sup>13</sup> ... *one like a human being (or a Son of man)*  
*coming with the clouds of heaven.*

*And he came to the Ancient One*  
*and was presented before him.*

While this person appears to be like a human being or man, his coming with the clouds of heaven is a common Jewish reference to the divine. This person being presented to the Ancient One, Yahweh was much more than mere appearances would suggest. This is underscored by the role God gives to this Son of Man. Verse 14 tells us:

<sup>14</sup> *To him was given dominion*  
*and glory and kingship,*  
*that all peoples, nations, and languages*  
*should serve him.*  
*His dominion is an everlasting dominion*  
*that shall not pass away,*  
*and his kingship is one*  
*that shall never be destroyed.*

Daniel wrote at a time of great Jewish persecution, when many suffered martyrdom. Most commentators suggest that the purpose of his writings was to encourage them to be courageous and loyal to their God who would deliver them from hardship. This encouragement was fortified by the promise of an eternal kingship of this Son of Man over not just the Jews but all nations.

### **John 1. 45-51**

For us, as followers of Jesus, these same messages ring true today. Which leads us to our gospel reading. Nathanael has a revelation that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, the King of Israel and in John 1 verse 51 Jesus responds by declaring: <sup>51</sup> ... *‘Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.’*

Within the bible Jesus is referred to many times as the Son of God but he often describes himself as the Son of Man. These terms together remind us that he is both human and divine. In this verse we see a coming together of these two characteristics. Jesus poignantly teaches Nathanael that in Him heaven and earth meet. As R Tasker puts it:

*“He now learns that Jesus is the real ladder by which the gulf between earth and heaven is bridged. In Him the glory of heaven has come down to earth, made visible in one who is Himself a man; and through contact with Him earthbound man is lifted up to heaven.”*

The same Son of Man prophesied by Daniel to be the divine King of all peoples has been revealed to Nathanael in this profound encounter. And just like the Jewish people, all followers of Jesus in every age are called to be courageous and loyal to our Lord in the face of any adversity. We too are given the hope of eternal life with the Son of Man as our king. We too are reminded that all history is under God’s sovereign will and he has a plan for our salvation.

### **Revelation 12.7-12a**

And we learn more of this plan in the Book of Revelation. Again, just like Daniel was written to help the Jewish people endure great hardship, so to Revelation was written to a church that faced persecution and sorely needed inspiration to continue fighting the good fight. And today’s reading from Chapter 12 is a great source of this inspiration.

We learn that Satan is a deceiver and an accuser, who fought fiercely against Michael and all his angels to control heaven. If that was the end of the story we would all be in deep trouble. But praise God, it isn’t. Satan was defeated and as a result Verse 10 proclaims: *“Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our*

*comrades has been thrown down, who accuse them day and night before our God.”*

Let those words of truth seep in. Salvation, power, God’s kingdom and our Messiah’s authority! No being created by God can ever thwart His plan to restore us all to an intimate loving relationship with Himself. When Jesus, the Son of Man, returns then this eternal kingdom will be established. Until then we have been given the power to defeat the Devil through the authority of Jesus. Leon Morris put it well:

*“The evil one has been cast out of heaven. His power on earth is, to be sure, terrifyingly real to believers. But this is not because he is triumphant. It is because he knows that he is defeated and has but a short time. Let the church then take heart. She will have her martyrs, but ultimately triumph is sure.”*

### **How Should We Respond to Him?**

With this sure and certain hope the question remains: “How should we respond to the Son of Man in the here and now?” There are of course many possible answers to this question. I am going to frame mine using the metaphor from Revelation 12 of us a God’s warriors. Just like St Michael we are part of God’s army. We are called to fight against the Devil and his angels wherever we encounter evil and deception in this world. Verse 11 tells us that followers of Jesus have conquered the devil *“by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.”*

This kind of response takes courage and certainly can’t be done under our own power. It is only the power of the fully human and fully divine Christ being sacrificed on the Cross, the giving, for our sakes, of the blood of the Lamb, that enables us to engage in the spiritual warfare around us. When we, like Michael and all the angels, stand firm for God; when we like Nathanael hold fast to our God given revelation that Jesus is the Son of God, our King; when we like Daniel trust that God does indeed have a plan to restore His kingdom and to grant eternal salvation for us all; when we hold fast to all these unalterable truths then our natural response is to share our testimony so that the sources of evil in our own world may be challenged and defeated.

Let me finish in prayer.

Beloved Father, thank you for revealing to the world the true identity of your Son, Jesus. Grant to us the courage to fight in His name, against that which is evil in this world so that our testimony may bring people both near and far to Him. Amen.