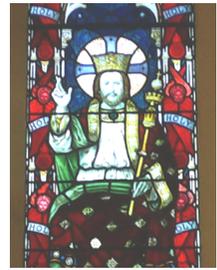


Sunday 25th November 2018

Christ the King

Red or Green



East Window
Gussage All Saints

Collect

Eternal Father, whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord and King: keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Ancient of Days Reigns

7⁹ “As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.
10 A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

The Son of Man Is Given Dominion

13 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

COMMENT: The scene in this vision of Daniel is the classic setting for judgment day. The description also had great influence in the early Christian visions of divine judgment at the end of time. “The Ancient One” (i.e. The LORD) takes the seat of judgment in the heavenly court. The books containing the lists of deeds, good and

evil, is opened for the assessors to examine. There are several other Old Testament and many intertestamental references to this scrutiny of human actions. (See Psalms 56:8; Isaiah 65:6; Malachi 3:16; Jubilees 30:22; Enoch 81:4; 89:61-64; 98:7-8; 104:7.) Suddenly the vision of Daniel changes. A new figure appears representing the beginning of a new era in human form. He comes from heaven, the place of orderliness, peace and purity replacing the old order of turmoil, chaos and evil. This new person is given divine authority, power and eternal sovereignty which will never pass away. It is not difficult to see why Jewish and Christian messianism and apocalypticism adopted this understanding of divine judgment that would completely displace the evil order of human affairs as it was experienced in actual history.

John 18:33-37 English Standard Version (ESV)

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

18³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”³⁵ Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

COMMENT: This exchange between Jesus and Pilate helps us understand the true nature of Jesus’ sovereignty. The interchange revolved around the meaning of the word “kingdom.” (Greek = *basileia*). The word occurs no less than six times, twice as many as “truth” (Greek = *aletheia*) on which so much expository and homiletic attention has been focused. As John narrated it, Jesus and Pilate talked right past each other. The meaning of the word “kingdom” was the key to what each of the two men said. Each had a totally different interpretation of it. For Pilate, “kingdom” had a purely political reference. As Roman governor, he recognised Herod

Antipas as one of two puppet kings, also known as tetrarchs, of the Jews. Philip, half brother of Antipas, was the other. Antipas had limited authority in Galilee; Philip in Transjordan. Luke added a complication to the trial of Jesus before Pilate passed sentence on him by having Pilate send Jesus to Herod (Luke 23:6-12). At most, Pilate must have been curious about this Galilean usurper of Herod's jurisdiction, little though it was under Roman imperial sovereignty. For Jesus, the meaning of "kingdom" was quite another matter. As Jesus exercised it, true sovereignty was spiritual, not political. Had it been political, he told Pilate, his followers would be fighting in the streets to keep him from being handed over to the Jews. Jesus had been brought before Pilate on a purely political charge. Jesus did not deny his kingship; he interpreted it on a level on which people of all nations and races could respond to it. Pilate was as puzzled about what that meant. The sovereignty of Jesus rests on the love of God he came to reveal. The anticipated response to that revelation of divine sovereignty is to make love dominant in all human relationships in obedience to the commandment to love as God loves us. (cf. John 15:12; 1 John 4:7-12) This humble truth was as far beyond Pilate's understanding as it still is for a great many of the six billion and more of us inhabiting this planet today. That may be an entirely spiritual sovereignty; but it certainly had and still has political implications. It is our calling as believers to implement this God's sovereign love in the myriad affairs of personal, national and international life.

Psalm 93 *Dominus regnavit* Grail Psalter

℟ The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed.

¹ The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed;
the Lord has robed himself with might,
he has girded himself with power. ℟

The world you made firm, not to be moved;
² your throne has stood firm from of old.
From all eternity, O Lord, you are. ℟

³ The waters have lifted up, O Lord,
the waters have lifted up their voice,
the waters have lifted up their thunder. ℟

⁴ Greater than the roar of mighty waters
more glorious than the surgings of the sea,
the Lord is glorious on high.

℟ The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed.

⁵ Truly your decrees are to be trusted.

Holiness is fitting to your house,

O Lord, until the end of time. **℟**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: As in several other psalms (24; 47; 68; 96-99) this one has the characteristics sung at the New Year celebrating the enthronement of the Lord as sovereign over the whole earth and its people. Kingship was the common political system of the times, so it was natural that divinity should be described in this image. This psalm describes how water in the form of floods from heavy rainstorms, recalling the primeval deep as in Genesis 1:1-2, assured that the providence of the Lord would continue throughout the coming year. This assurance derived from the Lord's holiness even as his holiness would remain forever.

Post Communion

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Blessing

Christ our King make you faithful and strong to do his will, that you may reign with him in glory; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**