

SERMON

Daniel 7:9,10,13,14

The Day of Judgement

Nunawading and Waverley, 21-11-21

Dear friends in Christ,

Accountability is necessary in all human relationships. God made us responsible human beings as seen in his command to Adam and Eve **to not eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil**, through to the Ten Commandments and Christ's radical commandment **to love one another**, even one's enemies. We are responsible to the Lord and to others. There is much less accountability in society, today, because it has gone down the route of absolute freedom so that it is hard to convict perpetrators or fire bad performing workers or hold politicians to a line.

Not so with the Lord. God judges and so does his Son. We say in our creed, Christ 'will come to judge the living and dead.' Before the high priest he declared: **from now on, you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.** Christ is coming with the sovereign power to judge and to rule.

God's judgements occur today as they have, throughout history. Discerning his acts of judgement is not always easy but when a nation invades another and there is a counter attack, God has judged. God's judgement occurs where his clear laws are broken, when criminals are incarcerated. **Governing authorities bear the sword** as Romans 13 tells us. Exploitation, abuse and sometimes genocidal attacks on indigenous people by colonists led to reprisals, raids, then later in time, reparations, payouts and the return of lands. We see the same thing in the Israel of the Bible. God judged Pharaoh and freed the Hebrew slaves. When settled, Israel chased foreign gods, its society splintered into political groups, its tribal unity was lost, it made stupid alliances, got caught up between superpowers and was destroyed. Judgement, once again.

There are many times when people get away with abusing power and atrocious things happen. Where is God's judgement there? Some conclude, then, that there is no God and we are subjects of fate. Most people follow this route. No, the silence of God is his judgement. His passivity is an act of judgement for **he is giving people over to their devices and plans** as the apostle Paul says. As people go their own way, great evils occur because of poor management, poor health care, poor politics, poor policing, poor economic policies. The Lord is there to help the suffering to rise up and fight against evil.

For Christians, history has a purpose. The God who is in control is our Father. Already we are **written in the book of life**, indeed, from eternity our Father has destined us for life with him. Overlaying this world and its stupidities and injustices is his redemption. God the Father gave the world his Son so that every event, no matter how evil, will be forced to serve his purpose of love. Therefore,

everything has meaning and is flowing towards an end-point, our meeting with God.

An awesome scene is pictured in Daniel's dream: there **are thrones** for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and their **court**. God, dressed **in white**, is awesome in his righteousness and purity. He is awesome in his tremendous power portrayed by a flaming throne and a river of fire flowing over the world of nations. Nothing wrong can endure in his presence; it will be consumed. No ugly thought, no raised voice, no shout or anger, no act of selfishness, no omission due to weakness, laziness, lack of commitment or cowardice. No immorality. Then a frightening event takes place: **books are opened**. All the thoughts, words and deeds of every person are laid bare in plain language; a record of all history.

One like a Son of Man comes. He can come right up to God the Father because, because he is without sin and he has overcome the hatred and the evil of the world by his own flesh. Therefore, he takes up his throne and rules with the Father and the Spirit and **his kingdom is eternal**.

Myriads will stand before him and those who have lived in their independence, by their own limited wisdom, their desires, dismissing failures as though they meant nothing, they will be removed and consigned to hell, separated from God forever. Those who had the same problem of living by their own self-centred approach but then fell at the foot of the cross will be glorified at the resurrection will be made fit for this kingdom and be able to stand before the thrones without fear.

There is a final accountability but more importantly, a judge who releases us from it.