

## Scripture Reading:

**Daniel 2: “19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. 22 He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. 23 "I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand."... [Daniel goes before the King]**

**26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?" 27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. 28 But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: ...31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all--you are this head of gold. 39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."”**

## **"Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations"**

We come this week to the end of ordinary or normal time in the Church calendar and we come to the final message of the five I am doing about Covenant Renewal Worship. Next week we begin our celebration of Advent, the coming of Christ and it is a season that should rightly remember that Jesus came in history as a man and that Jesus will come at the end of time as the Judge of all.

- So just as our Church calendar works its way each year through the ministry of Jesus and the growth of His Kingdom, so we have seen that the divine worship service has five movements as God renews His Covenant with His people each week as we gather on the Lord's Day:

- A Call to Worship our Triune God
- A Confession of our sins & forgiveness
- A time of Consecration of the Saints
- A Communion meal with our Savior
- A Commission to disciple the nations

This week we consider how and why we are commissioned: A portion of the service that gets little attention these days, but one that I would argue could be seen as the most important. Today, almost all worship services in American Churches have a benediction or blessing at the end of the service, but often without much thought as to what it means...

- Just as we can become familiar with the Great Commission and still give little thought to what it means.
- To see the importance of our commissioning it is important to step back and see the big picture:

I have included a copy of the worksheet on the covenantal patterns that we find in Scripture at the end of your order of worship and if you could turn there I want to focus on where things end up. On the left side is the covenantal pattern where God takes hold of something or someone, to change or reorder them, to speak instructions to them and bring about maturity. God then confirms the covenant with signs & seals [often a meal] and finally God looks to the future & the purpose for which He took hold of something or someone in the first place.

Looking across the bottom of the page we see that with creation and Adam the purpose was to have the earth full of Godly people who have become mature stewards of God's creation. With the calling of Abraham he was also to be fruitful and become a blessing to many nations. God's people were delivered out of Egypt so they could possess the Promised Land. The nation of Israel was restored after the Babylonian captivity so they could prepare for the coming of the Messiah who would bring a Kingdom that would fill the earth.

- The whole purpose of the New Covenant is given in the Great Commission, which is why we end our service with our commissioning and a blessing from God!

We have shown how our time of confession and forgiveness related to the sin offerings, that our time of worship and instruction related to the burnt offering or more properly the ascension offering and that our communion celebration related to the peace offering: This should bring a new richness to Leviticus 9:22 where we read: 22 "Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings. 23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people."

- We are told in Numbers chapter six how they were to bless the people:

And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying: 23 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: 24 "Jehovah bless you and keep you; 25 Jehovah make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; 26 Jehovah lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." 27 "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, & I will bless them."

So as with the Advent season, the commissioning portion of our service is both the end and the beginning...

It is the proper end of our Covenant Renewal Worship service...AND it is the beginning of our new week of service in the Kingdom of Jesus.

- We have gathered together in response to God's call
- We have remembered that we belong to Jesus, wearing His white robes of righteousness!

- We have matured in our faith as we have been instructed by God's Word and brought forth our worship, gifts and prayers.
- We have been given food and drink indeed as we partook of the body and blood of Jesus at His Table

And now God desires to bless us with much fruit in the work of His Kingdom.

- As we saw in the chart, God looks to the future!
- Our Covenant God has a plan and a purpose for us experiencing such renewal during the worship service!
- Through it we are properly prepared to serve His purposes!

This is why we do more than just say the benediction to end our service.

- After we have celebrated at the Lord's Table together we are reminded about how important our commission really is with another reading from the Scriptures...

Often it is the Great commission but we also use other references relating to the expansion of God's Kingdom. We read together and sing one of the Psalms or a Psalm along with one of the great hymns of the faith like A Mighty Fortress is Our God or Joy to the World focused on our commission.

- One last time we are allowing the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God to shape and mold our thinking as we prepare to go forth...
- It is important that we consider carefully what we are hearing and reading and that we once again sing heartily before our Covenant God...

We need to stay focused on what is being taught and not be distracted by thinking we need to get to the restroom or how really ready for lunch we are... As for you kids, it is a time to think about how you are going to live and obey ALL week rather than preparing to be first up here for the extra bread. Again, this is God's Word that we are reading, that powerful sword wielded by the very Spirit of God, and we are singing in the presence of God lifting up our right worship.

Then I pronounce the benediction, the blessing that Aaron gave to the people: I use Aaron's blessing or one of several New Testament passages w/ blessings.

- This is a blessing from God that we are to receive!

*[It is appropriate to have our hand or hands outstretched to receive such a blessing: Catching as opposed to throwing.]*

And finally, just as we always begin with the same song of adoration with O Worship the King, we end our service with the singing of Simeon's Song and the Doxology. While many of the songs that we sing in the service are far too difficult for our younger members, we provide various places where they can heartily sing along...

- Parents you should be diligent in making sure that they know these songs and that they participate.

Simeon's song is a fitting way to end our covenant renewal service:

- God had promised Simeon that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah...

So in Luke's account we read that [Simeon] took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

- We are to be prepared to go forth and serve Jesus with the same faith that Simeon had that this tiny baby would bring such momentous changes to a very needy world.

With our hands once again lifted up, we proclaim with Simeon's faith... "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever more shall be, world without end, AMEN.

- We join with the Saints who have gone before and the hosts of heaven in declaring the glory of God with the New Song believing that God has a plan and purpose for all of history!

Our commissioning is both the end and the beginning:

- We have concluded the divine worship service and are ready to begin our divine service to God throughout the week.
- This is why we were gathered together and this is why we are now commissioned to go forth.

As we have reviewed each portion of our worship service here at Church of the King, we have asked if we believe the reality of what is taking place.

-- We were challenged to believe that God REALLY calls us into His presence to renew covenant with us.

-- We were challenged to believe that Jesus REALLY came to save His people from their sins and that if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

-- We were challenged to believe that God REALLY changed us with the Word of God, the sword wielded by the Spirit of God to shape and mature us for right service, demonstrated with our singing, praying and giving.

-- We were challenged to believe that Jesus is REALLY present with us at His Table where we feast together with God receiving food and drink indeed!

- Now we are challenged to REALLY believe that God is moving in history and that He wants us to be a part of His work!

This is why I chose the long passage from Daniel chapter two as our morning text: We heard Daniel plainly explain that God had revealed secrets of His plan that spanned thousands of years of history. He outlines the history of the great empires, beginning with Babylon as the golden head, then the Persian Empire as the chest of silver, followed by the Greek conquests as the thighs of bronze & finally the early & later Roman empire as the legs of iron and mixed toes.

- As the King dreamed on, a stone cut without hands destroyed these Kingdoms leaving only chaff to blow in the wind.
- But that uncut stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

So there is no doubt about what this means, Daniel gives the interpretation of the dream:

Daniel 2:44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

As we approach the season of Advent, it is important that we understand all this, so let me ask the children to help us a little here:

- What was established when Jesus came? That's right a Kingdom!
- How big will this Kingdom become? That's right it will fill the whole earth.

Now there are many today in the church who argue that this is all stuff in the future, taking place in some future millennial reign of Jesus from a throne in Jerusalem. Their BIG problem is that it does not fit what is plainly taught in Scripture.

We know that God's command to Adam and Eve was to fill the earth and take dominion and that this mandate was spoiled by their sin. However, God shows that He has not given up on His plan to fill the earth with His Kingdom when He says again in blessing Noah after the flood,

- "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth."

We have often cited the promises to Abraham that his descendents would bless the nations of the earth. We know the promises to King David that His Son would rule the earth from his throne and how Jesus explained this could only be speaking of Him. In the Advent season we will often remember the words of the Prophet Isaiah as he spoke of that rock that was cut without hands telling us that His name would be called: "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

I would not have time this morning to review the many parables & teachings of Jesus during His earthly ministry where He explained the growth of His Kingdom and we have already spent almost forty weeks looking at the Book of Acts as the story of how the Spirit is carrying out the plan to have the Kingdom of Jesus fill the earth! And finally, lest there be any doubt still lingering from all the end-times madness that we have seen in the past few hundred years:

- The Apostle Paul explains to the Church at Corinth that what Daniel had said about the growth of the Kingdom, was in fact "certain and sure" just as he had said it was!

**I Corinthians 15:20** "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. **23** But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. **24** Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. **25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.** **26** The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."

- Both Daniel and Paul plainly teach that the Kingdom of Jesus began at His first coming which we celebrate in the coming weeks!

Jesus came to save His people from their sins, was raised in power and ascended to God's right hand as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Spirit was sent at Pentecost to comfort and empower us as the Body of Christ as we carry out the Great Commission that our Lord gave us:

**Matthew 28:19** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

- What a promise and what a commission!

So we are left with two important questions:

- Do we believe Daniel's dream to be certain & sure and that the Great Commission actually calls the Church to fill the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus?
- IF we do believe this, then what is our role?

I trust I have made the case from the Scriptures that the answer to the first question is a resounding YES!

So, how do we know what our role in God's great plan is going to be?

- The great commission is a tall order so I guess we need to start planning who we should run for President!
- We need to make sure we have lots and lots of millionaires in our midst to make sure we can pay for it all.

- We need to teach everyone in the world English so they can understand these great plans!

While we may chuckle at such thinking, the sad truth is that as the Church has wrestled with these truths down through the centuries we have often fallen into such traps, failed miserably and then begun to wonder about whether filling the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus is really God's plan.

- In our modern western Church we have simply moved everything off into the future so we don't really have to worry about it... Just go out and save a few more souls.

Now the saving of souls is certainly important because God is not planning on filling the earth with pagans, but rather filling it with His children!

We are to remember and believe the great promises of God and then we are to simply be those who trust & obey.

We are to believe that God really is taking history where He wants it to go, that the earth will be filled with the Kingdom of His Son and that He has a role for us to play in the advancement of that Kingdom!

Jesus rightly brought everything back to the two great commands:

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself.

The Ten Commandments explain what this means: We are to cast aside ALL idolatry and respect God's name, which represents His authority & power, as well as His Day, which represents His control of all history. Then we are to respect our parents as the earthly picture of God's rule and to respect and love those made in the image of God by not killing them, not committing sexual sins with them, stealing from them, bearing false witness against them nor coveting their possessions.

So how do we know if we are doing this right in the life we are living today? We look to the examples of our history in the Old Testament because Paul says they are there as OUR examples. We read and study the books of wisdom in the Old Testament, we learn & apply the many teachings that Jesus gave us during His earthly ministry Finally we are given more examples from history in the Book of Acts and we strive to follow the many commands given to us in the Epistles of the New Testament.

- In short, we need to know our Bibles well and to practice what we learn by faith!

-- God's Word teaches us how we are to grow and mature as young people.

-- God's Word teaches us how we are to faithfully serve God as single people or married couples.

-- God's Word teaches us about the joy and beauty the world should see in our marriages.

-- God's Word teaches us about the worth and importance of our calling in our homes and to the world.

-- God's Word teaches us about the wisdom of age & respect for our elders

-- God's Word teaches us about the importance of raising Godly children, both as their parents and their sponsors or examples.

-- God's Word teaches us about the priority of caring for widows & the poor among us.

-- God's Word teaches us about the importance of sharing the Good News with others, being those beautiful feet who bring the message of hope!

- And I hope we have learned in these past few weeks how God's Word teaches us to rightly worship our Triune God!

How we are to gather together as the Body of Christ so that God can renew this great covenant that He has made with His people.

How we can remember the great salvation that we have, knowing that our sins are forgiven & the joy of being clothed in the righteousness of Jesus.

**How we grow and mature each week as we are instructed by God's Word and feast at His Table.**

**And finally how we are commissioned go forth each week to serve our risen and reigning Savior: The One who was the stone cut without hands in the King's dream and the one on the white horse who is called faithful and true in the Revelation given to the Apostle John on the aisle of Patmos:**

**Revelation 19:11 "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."**

- **May we rightly worship and serve Him as the one true God all the days of our lives!**

**Communion Meditation: Psalm 110:**

**"Jehovah said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." 2 The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! 3 Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. 4 The Lord has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." 5 The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. 6 He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. 7 He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; Therefore He shall lift up the head.**