

FIRST READING – B 34 CHRIST THE KING

A reading from the book of the prophet Daniel.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

I had a dream and visions as I lay in bed.
As I watched in the night visions,
I saw one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.
And he came to the One who is Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.
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.



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – B 34 CHRIST THE KING

A reading from the book of Revelation.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness,
the firstborn of the dead,
and the ruler of the kings of the earth.
To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood,
and made us to be a kingdom,
priests serving his God and Father,
to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
Look! He is coming with the clouds;
every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and on his account all the tribes of the earth will lament.
So it is to be. Amen.
“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God,
“who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Alpha = AL-fuh

Omega = oh-MAY-guh

or

Omega = oh-MEEG-uh

Pause for **THREE** seconds

then look up at the people

and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – B 34 CHRIST THE KING

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Pilate asked Jesus,

“Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus answered,

“Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?”

Pilate replied,

“I am not a Jew, am I?”

Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me.

What have you done?”

Jesus answered,

“My kingdom is not from this world.

If my kingdom were from this world,

my followers would be fighting

to keep me from being handed over to the Jews.

But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.”

Pilate asked him,

“So you are a king?”

Jesus answered,

“You say that I am a king.

For this I was born,

and for this I came into the world,

to testify to the truth.

Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

The feast of Christ the King, coming as it does at the end of the Church year, has acquired thereby an eschatological significance. Christ's enthronement at the ascension is the opening act of his final eschatological reign, and his continued heavenly rule between the ascension and his return marks the progressive defeat of the powers of evil.

Reading I: Daniel 7:13-14

As we noted last Sunday, the Son of man in Daniel stands for the people of the Lord, the saints of the Most High. We noted, too, that a development of this concept took place in Jewish apocalyptic, so that by the time of the New Testament the Son of man had become an individual, heavenly figure, the agent of final judgment and salvation.

It has been argued recently by a number of scholars that the New Testament, especially the Gospels (for example, Mark 14:62), finds the fulfillment of this prophecy in the ascension of our Lord. In other words, the coming is interpreted as a coming to the Ancient of Days and not from heaven. We reject this interpretation as far as the New Testament is concerned.

Christian faith must read Daniel 7, not as a prediction of what had already happened—that would be to ignore the “not yet” character of the Christ-event and make this passage more suitable for Ascension Day than for the last day of the Christian year; rather, we must read it as a proclamation (in mythological terms) of the final establishment of Christ's kingly rule.

For we do not yet see all things subdued under his feet. Not yet do all peoples, nations, and languages serve him. That they will do so at the End is an inalienable aspect of Christian hope.

Responsorial Psalm: 93:1,1-2, 5

Psalm 93 is one of the enthronement psalms. Two points need to be observed today. (1) The psalm originally spoke of YHWH's kingship, not predicting the kingly rule of Christ. (2) The kingdom of which it speaks is an eternal reality.

But for Christian interpretation, many texts of the Old Testament that speak of YHWH can be applied to Christ. It is through Christ, from the time of his ascension on, that the Father exercises his kingdom.

Indeed, following the precedent of Paul's interpretation of the Old Testament (that the rock was Christ), we may say that already in the Old Testament, in the perspective of Christian faith, God was exercising his kingly rule through Christ, if by Christ we here mean not Jesus of Nazareth but God going out toward the world and toward human beings in his revelatory and redemptive work.

Reading II: Revelation 1:5-8

By starting at verse 5 instead of at the beginning of the sentence, our reading obscures the fact that this passage comes from the epistolary address of the Apocalypse. It is a greeting from Jesus Christ as well as from the Father and the seven spirits, Then a triple doxology follows.

Point 1: Christ loves us—note the present tense: Christ’s love is perpetual and goes beyond the historical event of the redemption (Jerome Biblical Commentary).

Point 2: The historical event of the atonement, couched in a traditional creedal formula.

Point 3: The effect of the redemption is to set up a community that shares Christ’s kingly and priestly functions.

After the doxology there follows a proclamation of the imminent parousia, which is to be the theme of the whole apocalypse. This proclamation draws upon a combination of Old Testament testimonia, used elsewhere in the New Testament, from Daniel 7:13-14 (our first reading) and Zechariah 12:10.

The reading ends with a self-proclamation of YHWH under three titles: Alpha and Omega (a Hellenized expression of the Old Testament’s “first and last”); a second title asserting that God’s being comprises present, past, and future (a reflection on the meaning of “YHWH”?); and a third title, Pantocrator (a Greek rendering of Sabaoth, “hosts”).

Combined, the three titles look like a meditation on the meaning of Kyrios ho theos, YHWH ‘elohe sebaoth.

Gospel: Mark 12:38-44 (long form); 12:41-44 (short form)

It is beyond all doubt that Jesus was crucified on the charge of being a messianic pretender. This is established by the titulus on the cross, handed down in various forms but always agreeing on the essential core: “the King of the Jews” (“King” being the Roman equivalent of “Messiah”)

It is not certain precisely what attitude Jesus took toward this charge at the investigation before the Sanhedrin and at his trial before Pilate. Some traditions present him as preserving a stony silence (pleading the fifth amendment, as it were), while others present him as not rejecting the charge but as being at pains to correct it (the answer “You say that I am a king” would be equivalent to “It’s your word, not mine”).

In the Johannine version of the trial before Pilate, Jesus explicitly corrects the charge by offering a reinterpretation of what kingship means for him. This is done by his answers to three questions put to him by Pilate.

First, Pilate asks him if he is a king. Jesus—in a reply that may be traditional, for it is devoid of Johannine theology—asks where Pilate got his idea. This is to establish the terms of the debate: Are we debating a charge trumped up by the Jewish authorities that I am a messianic pretender? Pilate indicates that the charge originated with the Jewish authorities and asks the defendant what basis there is for his behavior.

Jesus' second reply is negative. He says what his kingship is not—it is not political in character (“of this world” is Johannine; “world” means human society organized on the basis of its unbelief).

But Jesus insists that in a certain sense, not as yet defined, he is a king. Pilate therefore repeats the first question, thus giving Jesus a chance to state his own definition of kingship. He has come into the world to be the bearer of the divine revelation.

Here, then, we have a complete redefinition of messiahship or kingship in terms of Johannine theology. “Truth” in Johannine thought means the reality of God as seen through his revelatory and redemptive action.

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