



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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November 12, 2023

Pastor James Enderle

2nd Sunday of End Time: Last Judgment

First Lesson/Sermon Text: [Daniel 7:9-10](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 90

Second Lesson: [1 Thessalonians 5:1-11](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 25:31-46](#)

Lord, Keep Us Mindful of The Judgment! The Judge of Righteousness

1. Put _____ in its proper _____
2. There is a _____
3. He gives you _____
4. This _____ brings a new _____:

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

This week came and went and it maybe wasn't as exciting or stressful of a week as what next year is going to be like at this same time. You might know what I'm talking about. There was an election day on Tuesday. There are some elections and for some states/places there were some big things on the ballot, but in a year, and soon, we are going to start seeing all the advertisements, all of the ads that say this about that candidate and that about this candidate. We are going to be overwhelmed with the politics. I'm thankful that this year we didn't have to deal with that so much, but with those politics and things of the government, there is nothing new.

We are going to see that in Daniel as he talks about his vision and then finally the end of his vision, but we are going to see how we can put governments and politics in the right place because we know that there is something more. There is something greater than that and something for us to put our hope in instead of these things that are temporary. Today we are going to see how there is a **Judge of Righteousness** and what that means for us day in and day out in this life.

For Daniel, life was not always easy. He was a Jewish person who was taken into exile. He was serving foreign kings. He was serving governments. But he and a few of his countrymen showed great knowledge and wisdom and were trustworthy, so they gained

great power. They gained influence and were respected by the king and the people of the land. While Daniel was there, he also received a few visions/dreams. This is actually the second of his dreams that really speak to the same thing.

When you think about having a dream, you maybe have had a weird dream that comes and goes. But if you have that same dream over and over again, then you might start to think, *maybe something is going on. Maybe my mind/God is trying to tell me something.* That's kind of what happens here with Daniel. He has one dream about a statue and different parts of the statue representing different world powers. Then he has a very similar dream that speaks about different beasts/animals that are going to come. That's what happens here in [Chapter 7](#).

Before the text that we read is that vision/dream. He has these four interesting animals. The first one comes out of the sea. It's a winged lion. This represents Babylon, the nation that took them into captivity, but this nation would soon be coming to an end. There was a picture of a bear and that bear represented the Medes and Persians that were about to come into power. After them we see that they would be overtaken and the creature/animal that represented the next nation was a leopard with two sets of wings. This leopard would move swiftly. What did that represent? It represented the Greeks and Alexander the Great, who, by the age of 30, had conquered most of the known world. But shortly after that, he died. The two sets of wings represent the four leaders/people that would take over power and split his nation into parts. Then finally, there was this fierce beast/animal that he couldn't even describe what it looked like. It had these amazing, sharp teeth, and that represented Rome, this nation that would be even greater than the Greeks and have such fierce power. All of these nations/things were shown to tell the Jewish people (who were in exile and wondering "What is next? What is going to happen to us?") understand that these dreams were telling Daniel and the Jewish people that God has this. God knows what is going to happen.

Next is what we get in our text: the man, the Ancient of Days, who was seated and comes wearing white. This Ancient of Days has power over all of these beasts. I think the important reminder for this is for us to *put politics in its proper place* and to see what the truth is about these governments/world powers. We can stress so much. We can put so much energy into politics and debates and watch the news and worry and worry and stress about what is going to happen. We can get so excited when our person gets into power or it seems like our way is going right. We can get so worried when it seems like things are falling apart. You can look at the world and think it looks like the world is falling apart and this power and that power are all fighting, so what's next?

The vision that Daniel has helps us to understand that these things are all temporary. These things can cause us so much stress and worry, but God knows what is going to happen and he is over all of them. It's important to see that our God, who is greater

than the greatest strengths that our world might see, the greatest military powers, the greatest political powers, they all fall short of God.

Then what do we see? We see a Judge where ***“thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.”*** We see here (above all of these nations and the things of time and history) that a Judge will come.

What will this Judge be like? He will be a righteous Judge. We know that *there is a righteous Judge*. He's described as "white as snow," and then that fierce look as His throne is on fire and He has these crazy wheels. It's kind of hard to imagine what this all would look like. But what does Daniel see and what is God showing Daniel through all of this? *There is a righteous Judge*. In that picture, it should strike a little bit of fear because it's over all of these terrible beasts. And in the dream about the statue, all of those strong pieces of statue were demolished by something greater.

This Judge is righteous, so we have to see what the means for us. What does it mean that we have a righteous Judge? The truth is that many people don't even want to think about the fact that we have a righteous Judge. They get caught up in this world and it's day after day of the things that they feel are so important, and what happens? Before you know it, you get caught up in the daily things and you lose sight of the end and what is coming and that there is a God and that there is a righteous Judge that says our faith matters. A lot of people want to do away with God. They want to do away with morality because then, "If I do away with God and morality, what can I make good and right? Whatever I can do, the things that I think are right, and if I don't think it's wrong or if I have trouble doing that, let's just get rid of that." And if there is no God, then who is God? Either all of the things that you begin to worship: money, your possessions, your job, your name—we can worship all sorts of things but in the end, who really becomes God is yourself as you say what is right and wrong and you make it all about what you think is right. I hear this often, "My god wouldn't do this. The god I want to believe in wouldn't say or do these things." What is that other than making you yourself God? So God reminds us that there is a righteous God and He is coming back. In [1st Thessalonians](#) it describes it as birth pains.

I have a two-week old baby (I think she came two weeks ago; it's kind of a blur). What happens when you get pregnant and you know the end is coming? You know that the baby is going to come, but when? That due date comes and as you get closer, it might come earlier. Or, like ours, it came a couple days later. You are kind of on edge waiting for that baby to come, but you don't really get to choose. You know it's going to come but when those birth/labor pains come, is there any holding back? Can you stop it and

say "Okay, no"? You can't do it. You know it's coming, you what is happening, and that's what it is for the end of time (when Jesus will come). But we are lulled into thinking it's never going to happen. We've had so much time and people are lulled into thinking that God isn't coming back. Jesus isn't going to return and end this thing. But He says He is and we should be prepared for that. How can we be prepared?

In the vision, we see this righteous Judge that opens up some books. He opens up the books and what is in these books? What are these books? It reminds me of when Jesus sent the disciples out and said to go and share about Him. They were given power to heal people and even demons submitted to them. They come back rejoicing. What does Jesus say? "Don't rejoice in these things, the things you've accomplished. Rejoice that your name is written in the Book of Life." What does that mean?

In Revelation, we see similar words to what we have written here. We see that it talks about our Savior and that He sits on this throne. We see that a scroll will be taken out. It says these words in Revelation: ***"Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."*** [\(Revelation 5:9-10\)](#) ***"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"*** [\(Revelation 5:12\)](#) ***"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"*** [\(Revelation 5:13\)](#) What do you notice that the righteous Judge is called? He is called the Lamb; the Lamb who was slain. The Lamb who was slain to do what? He was slain to give you righteousness. So we know our names are written in that Book of Life because *He gives you righteousness*.

We know we fall short, just like in the Gospel Lesson as Jesus is talking about those on the right and they say, "We don't feel we've done the right thing. We don't feel we've done enough." But we know through faith in Christ (who died for us), it means that we have righteousness. In Romans it says that while we were still sinners, what happened? Christ died for us. It's not about when we become righteous enough or when we do a good enough job and then Jesus says "Okay, check, you're righteous." It says, ***While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*** [\(Romans 5:8\)](#) We take our sins and give them to Him so that He, who had no sins, became sin for us so that we might have the righteousness of God. [\(2 Corinthians 5:21\)](#) So we can boast in what? Not in ourselves or our own righteousness or our name or all the things that we've done, but we can boast in Christ, the righteous Judge who sacrificed Himself. He's not a judge that does nothing. He is a judge who came and took the penalty for us. We deserve punishment. We know we fall short. We know how we treat others and how we lie and deceive. Just go down the checklist of the Ten Commandments. We fall short. Our Lord has redeemed us. That righteous Judge gives you His righteousness.

So then what does that mean as we look to the end as we are in End Times that doesn't always feel like we're in End Times, because we wonder "When is that end coming?" As we look at that vision, Daniel wrote this: ***"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."*** [\(Daniel 7:13-14\)](#) You notice the difference between those beasts and the nations we talked about.

The whole picture of the beast is that one is there and he looks fierce, but his time is short. His time will come to an end. What do we hear here? That He has an everlasting dominion that will not pass away and His kingdom will not be destroyed. But there is the end coming, so what does this mean for us? *This end brings a new beginning: Eternity.* It means that all the pain, the sadness, the weeping, and the suffering that we experience in this life will come to an end. So is death sad? Is death bad? Of course, because we know Jesus, at the tomb of Lazarus, wept with Mary and Martha. As we see the effects of death, it is surely sad for us as we lose a loved one in this life. But then what do we see? We see that they are with their Lord and in eternity.

While we get to serve here and to enjoy the blessings He has for us here, we know that the end brings something even greater. The end is not the end but the beginning to eternity and peace with Jesus forever. So what a blessing it is that we look forward to Judgment Day, not in fear, not worrying if I'm good enough, or at the end of our life worrying and counting up the big sins but to look to the Baptismal Font, as we looked and remember today in the Gathering Rite. As the second service will have a Baptism. As we are washed from our sins and given faith, we know that we are clothed in Christ. Our sins are washed away and forgiven. Yet we struggle with that in this life, but in heaven, it will be gone. That peace, that joy, that forgiveness, that hope that we taste and experience day in and day out here but in part, where when Jesus returns, we'll really be clothed in white and look just like that Judge, clothed in righteousness; not our righteousness but the righteousness of our Savior.

As we look at what we face in this world, it's so easy to get caught up in the day-to-day things and to stress about what is next or who is in power, if our way is going to win out or not. What can you know? You can know that God's way wins. God is with you and is helping you through the midst of the difficulties and the hardships. He is with you today and will be with you forever and will bring you to be with Him by His side for eternity. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.