

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

November 24, 2024

Old Testament Reading; Daniel 7: 9-10, 13-14

Responsive Reading: Psalm 93

Epistle Reading; Revelation 1: 4-8

Gospel Reading: John 18: 33-37

## **Sermon: God's Glory Revealed**

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: God is too great not to be revealed.

A few weeks ago, Don preceded his message by saying that he was going to deviate from his usual message by starting with a testimonial. This week it is my turn.

Until I read the scripture lessons for this week, I had never given the proper state of reverence to the glory of heaven. As a matter of fact, until I read these scriptures in a new light I did not even like the duet Jackie and I sang, I Can Only Imagine.

Although I had read these passages many times before, they simply did not resonate with me and the song was not

something I would do. Why would I waste my time trying to imagine something that was beyond my realm of imagination? And those scriptures in Daniel and Revelation and in our call to worship in Ezekiel were pretty but I saw them as just eloquent attempts to set the stage for an attitude of worship. I could not accept the picture given because I had a different picture locked in my head.

The picture locked in my head was the one painted by Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. In that picture is God looking very much like some old man wearing a cloth to protect His dignity touching the finger of Adam looking very much like God. The only difference was God lived on the ceiling with a bunch of angels around Him in a prettier house.

I liked the “safe” image on the Sistine Chapel. Although I thought the descriptions of Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation were pretty, I felt safer thinking of God in less glowing terms. I found it easier to relate to a God that looked like me even in Heaven. My bad.

At least three times Heaven is described as unbelievably awesome, and at least two of these were in the Old Testament. The Apostle Paul would have been familiar with Ezekiel and Daniel.

In 2 Corinthians 12: 2 Paul describes being “caught up to the third heaven” and he will not describe heaven. Paul even says

that he hears “inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” Paul knew the words of the previous prophets, but Paul says, “Nope, I’m not going to blaspheme God by inadequately describing heaven and there are NO words that will do the job.”

While Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation describe Heaven, our Psalm 93 points out the difference between awesome Heaven and the limitation of a worldly world.

The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The Lord is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. Surely the world is established from of old; You are from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O Lord, The floods have lifted up their voice; (the voice of the nonbelievers) The floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters. Than the mighty waves of the sea. Your testimonies are very sure; Holiness adorns your house, O Lord, forever.

The psalmist says that world is established but, God’s throne is established from before that, from “everlasting”. i.e. You ain’t seen nothing yet!

In our gospel lesson Pilate says to Jesus, “Are you a king then?” And Jesus answers,” You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come int the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is for the truth hears My voice.” To this Pilate asks, “What is truth?”

The truth is that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it...He came to His own and His own did not receive Him.”

This is the truth and the significance of this truth is that God did not descend from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, God descended from the glory of the prophets visions.

This glory becomes imperative the week before the beginning of Advent.

It is not just “man God” showing up in His form on Earth. It is the indescribable “Power and Glory” stooping down to be the most helpless offspring in the entire Earthly existence.

A calf can stand and walk within minutes of being born. A whale is born swimming, but a human baby is totally helpless at birth and for several years. A human baby cannot feed himself or protect himself or even clean himself up after natural human body functions.

Jesus became a baby, son of a teenage girl and a commoner father.

The awesome Glory of God must be revealed to show the unimaginable love of God to stoop to becoming a human baby.

I Can Only Imagine, how I will react but, I cannot even start to imagine the Glory that will be revealed to me and how this Glory and this Son of Man can be one and the same for me and for my eternal salvation.

**BUT HEAR THIS!** It will be revealed and that is my testimonial.  
Hallelujah and Amen!