



1616 W. Mequon Road, Mequon WI 53092  
(262)241-3121 [www.stjohnsmequon.org](http://www.stjohnsmequon.org)  
Email: [office@stjohnsmequon.org](mailto:office@stjohnsmequon.org)  
**Pastor James Tiefel**  
**(262) 853-9723 (cell#)**  
Email: [pastortiefel@gmail.com](mailto:pastortiefel@gmail.com)

---

## The Last Sunday of the Church Year November 26, 2023

### As We Await the Savior's Coming We Are Hopeful

At the end of time the Savior of the world will return in splendor and glory to formally pronounce judgment on the living and the dead. All who rejected him in life will be condemned to an eternity in hell and all who believed him will receive an eternal crown of life. We are hopeful; more than that, we are confident and certain.

#### Sermon Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

**As I looked, 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.**

**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.**

Introduction – Life is full of questions. Some questions are tough because we don't know the answer. But some questions are easy because we know the answer before we ask the question, like: Does it snow in Wisconsin in the wintertime? Here's another one of those: Will I ever get back the energy I had when I was 21? I don't think so. Will I ever win a million-dollar lottery? I suppose I could if I played the lottery, but I don't play the lottery, so it's not going to happen. Will the Milwaukee Brewers ever win the World Series? Maybe, but I'm not ordering tickets.

Will God come back on Judgment Day? That's another one of those questions people think they know the answer to before they ask it. **The fool who says in his heart "There is no God"** doesn't believe there's a God to come back. Some people believe in God but aren't planning on his return. Peter talked about scoffers who say, **Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.** And then there are people—and maybe we're in this group—who believe the Lord will return but it's off in the future and we don't think about it too much.

Over the past twelve months we've remembered God's plan to undo what the devil did in the Garden of Eden. We've heard the words and works of Jesus as he carried out God's plan and we've listened to Bible writers apply that plan to our lives. There was nothing new in any of this. The Christian Church Year reviews these truths year in and year out. Just like always, the Holy Spirit works in us through Word and sacrament and deepens our faith and shores up our confidence.

And so today we come to the Last Sunday of the Church Year. Our attention moves to the last episode of God's plan. Jesus talked about that last great event in today's Gospel: **When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.** The Bible never budes from this truth, never moves an inch. David saw it in the psalms, the prophets saw it in their predictions, the apostles saw it in their letters, John saw it in his Revelation. The Lord is going to return at the end of time. Atheists can deny it, scoffers can doubt it, but you and I need to think about it.

### **We Will Stand in the Throne Room of God**

We know something about Daniel, don't we. He spent some time in a lions' den. Daniel was a teenager when he was forced to leave his home near Jerusalem and become a servant in Babylon. The Lord saw to it that he was much more than a servant; he became the Babylonian king's prime minister. What really impressed the king was that Daniel had a God-given ability to interpret dreams that forecast the future. That's what he was doing in the First Reading for today from Daniel 7.

This was really quite the vision! What Daniel saw in this dream was the entire history of the world: kings and kingdoms and people and places. He was looking back and he was looking ahead. He could see the globe's entire political panorama. And then he saw the grand finale, he saw the end of history: **As I looked, 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.** So who is this old man with white robes and white hair sitting on a throne? Daniel knew and so do we. This is God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and he is enthroned in the heavenly throne room.

Daniel saw that **his throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.** There is no kindly grandfather in this vision, no heavenly Santa Claus. This is a perfect God, a demanding God, a threatening God who expects his human creatures do what he commands and not do what he forbids. This old man is ready to punish: **A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him.** We heard Jesus predict that **all nations will be gathered before him** and Daniel saw the same sight: **Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.** At a certain point—Daniel saw that **the court was seated**—and then the evidence was produced: **and the books were opened.** Every thought, word, and action that is not what God commands and which is in fact what God forbids, every sin is written in the books. God is a detail God. He knows, he remembers, he punishes, he destroys. That's what Daniel saw. That's what Jesus saw. And that's what you and I will see.

To some people, this all seems like a horror movie or a science fiction thriller, something you'd see on Netflix at Halloween time. Trouble is people won't be able to press the pause button or change the channel. The tyrants who mocked God and the armies that murdered God's people will see the Ancient of Days on his throne. The fools who laughed about God and the scoffers who doubted God will hear their stupid ideas numbered and named. The casual who don't worry about such things and the seekers who worry about other things will smell the smoke and feel the flames. Every man, woman, and child, from Adam to the last baby born before the trumpet sounds, everyone **will stand in the throne room of God.** I'll be there, and so will you.

The Lord enabled Daniel to survey this spectacular scene. He saw the divine might and mayhem. He saw destruction and death. But then he saw something else: **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.** So who is this son of man coming with the clouds? You and I assume this is Jesus; we know him as the Son of Man. But there was no Jesus when Daniel dreamed his dream. The Son of God was there, of course, but he hadn't come to earth yet, he hadn't taken on human form, he hadn't been named Jesus. What Daniel saw was like a son of man, not the Son of Man.

**But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.** Daniel saw God's plan end, but he also saw God's plan unfold. In his dream he was looking ahead to what we look back at in the scriptures. The Son of Man who had no place to lay his head because he humbled himself for us; the Son of Man who would suffer many things and be killed to carry the punishment we had coming; the Son of man who did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many, yes for all; the Son of Man who has the authority to forgive sins, the sins of the world. This is the man Daniel saw being led into the throne room of God. The Son of Man had obeyed the commands, he paid the price, he conquered the devil, he delivered the captives. His work was done. **And so 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.** This is the Savior we will see, every one of us, when **we stand in the throne room of God.**

For numberless billions the throne room of God is going to be a place too horrible for human words. The books will be opened and our names are written in the books, too. I'd hate to see the long list that's written down after my name, and I'm sure you feel the same. And that's why we stand close to Jesus. With Jesus, my list is erased and my sins are deleted. With Jesus what I've done wrong is forgiven and forgotten. All that's left in the book is my name, James Tiefel, and I see your name close to mine. We don't wonder about the Last Day; we don't make other plans. **We will stand in the throne room of God.** And we don't worry about the Last Day because we will be standing there with Jesus. And so, until that day comes, whenever it comes, we'll stay with Jesus, we'll stick with Jesus. We'll hear his Word, we'll remember our baptisms, we'll receive his body and blood, we'll live for him and for others, and we'll be ready when the Son of Man comes in his glory and we'll get the glory, too. Amen.