

One Like a Son of Man

Daniel 7:13-14:

"I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.
And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and men of every language
Might serve Him
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed." (NAS)

Before Daniel received the above vision, he received a vision of four horrific beasts coming up out of the sea. According to the interpretation of this vision in Daniel, the four beasts represented four human kingdoms (most likely the kingdoms of the Babylonians, Medes, Persians, and Greeks). Each of these great ancient human kingdoms established their empires through violence and warfare. However, Daniel then saw a very different vision, and in this vision, he saw "one like a son of man" to whom God gives all dominion and authority. In the Gospels, Jesus used the phrase "son of man" in reference to his own ministry. So what did he mean when he used this phrase? A hint might be found within the context of Daniel 7.

After Daniel was told that the four beasts are four human kingdoms, Daniel was then told that "the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One." According to this text, it appears that the "one like a son of man" was interpreted as "the saints." Given that Jesus sought to empower his followers to be the "light" and the "salt" of the earth (Matthew 5), it is not surprising that Jesus perhaps chose this phrase on which to build his understanding of the Kingdom of God. According to the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus believed the Kingdom of God was not to be pursued by means of violence, but rather by means of love. Jesus taught that his followers should love even their enemies, because in so doing they would truly be the children of God. While our culture often celebrates violence and victory by force, Daniel's vision deconstructs such a view of life. Rather, Daniel indicates that human kingdoms built on the abuse of others will one day pass away.

SSC

Point for Prayer:

How can you be a part of generating more peace and love in our violent culture?