

# 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2025

## The paper-version Service



**To Begin:** Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

**Opening Prayer:** Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Hymn:**

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
to his feet your tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored,  
forgiven,  
evermore his praises sing.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise him for his grace and favour  
to his people in distress.  
Praise him, still the same as ever,  
slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Glorious in his faithfulness!

Fatherlike he tends and spares us;  
well our feeble frame he knows.  
In his hand he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Widely yet his mercy flows!

Angels, help us to adore him;  
you behold him face to face.  
Sun and moon, bow down before  
him,  
dwellers all in time and space.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

## The Sermon by Timothy James

### Read Revelation 1:9-20 and John 1:1-14 – Introducing Jesus

John begins his book with a description of a person. With Revelation, is often hard to understand what John is describing, but last week Howard gave us two keys: this book is telling us about the hidden reality behind the things that we experience in our world; and it all leads up to a big wedding at the end.

In our culture, the most important person at a wedding is the bride, but not at a Jewish or Greek wedding in the 1st century: the groom was the one paraded through the streets by his friends to go to the bride's house to collect her. So this is our first introduction to the **bridegroom**.

The crucial question is, who is this person “**like a son of man**”? One key Bible passage to understand what John is describing is in the Old Testament prophecy of Daniel.

*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 Ancient of Days and was presented before [God]. 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. (Daniel 7, vv. 13 and 14)*

Originally, “son of man” just meant a human being, but Daniel’s use to describe this figure acquired special meaning: it became clear that this was a foreshadowing of the Messiah who would come to save God’s people, Israel.

Another Bible passage we need is in Mark’s Gospel, where Jesus makes sense of the destruction of the Temple in terms of Daniel’s vision:

*But in those days after that suffering, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see “**the Son of Man coming in clouds**” with great power and glory. Then he will send out his messengers and gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heaven. (Mark 13, v.24)*

When John wrote that the person he saw was “one like a son of man”, his readers will immediately have known whom he was describing: the Messiah of Israel, who they had come to understand was the man Jesus of Nazareth who had been crucified and who had been raised from the dead. The Son of Man was both this absolutely extraordinary and resplendent figure, who John was saying was God; but at the same time he was a “son of man”, a human being. God's Messiah was God himself come to us as a man.

And then in verse 17 something absolutely extraordinary happens. On seeing this resplendent, heavenly figure, John quite understandably fell down flat. But he reaches out and **touches** John. You won't find that in Daniel. There, the “son of man” is so distant, so far above humanity, that any notion of a direct contact between him and the person who has been granted sight of him is simply inconceivable. But now he is able to reach out and touch us, in a way that neither Daniel nor Jesus' disciples understood.

If this is the vision, the consequence for us now is that we can have

1. **Confidence in worship and prayer**, because our prayers reach the throne of heaven, but are also heard by Jesus who knows hunger, grief, betrayal, and death.
2. **Courage in suffering and uncertainty**, because our suffering is not wasted or overlooked: the power that holds galaxies together has already passed through Gethsemane and Golgotha, and will not abandon us.
3. **Hope for the future**, because John 1 tells us the Word became flesh, and Revelation 1 shows us the same Christ reigning in glory, so our own fragile bodies and fractured world are destined for renewal.

We can begin and end each day acknowledging Christ's rule, treat our everyday activities as service offered to the Lord who holds all things together, be intentional about being physically present with others, resist lesser allegiances, and turn suffering into prayer.

**14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity:** *Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

**The Lord's Prayer:** *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

**Blessing** to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

### **At the Church of the Good Shepherd**

- Tea and Praise for Harvest: Sunday October 5<sup>th</sup> at 3pm in Church.
- Tea and Chat and Bowls: and October 15<sup>th</sup> at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: September 24<sup>th</sup> and October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

### **For Further information:**

This paper and all parish details are on the website at  
<https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>