

WHAT KIND OF KING IS THIS?
LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JOHN 18:33-37
SUN NOV 22, '15

³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” ³⁵ Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?” ³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

If you listen to politicians talk, one phrase you hear over & over is “at the end of the day.” That means the final result.

They will make lot of compromises and accept a lot of things as long as at the end of the day they accomplish a goal.

Today we are not just thinking about the end of the day but the end of all things, the last day.

At the end of all things and at the end of the day every day, no matter what, Jesus is king and accomplishes his purpose.

But What kind of king is Jesus?

Arrogant kind who always demands his own way?

Selfish kind who lives in luxury while peasants do work?

Or the modern kind? Some countries today have royalty that are merely ceremonial figureheads.

People honor them sometimes out of tradition

but otherwise don't pay much attention to them.

That is the kind of king some apparently think Jesus is.

JESUS IS OUR KING WITH TOTAL AUTHORITY.

JESUS' KINGDOM COMES BY HIS TRUE WORD.

JESUS' COMING KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.

JESUS IS OUR KING WITH TOTAL AUTHORITY.

³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Pilate didn't want to deal with Jesus.

He knew good & well religious leaders' problem with Jesus was not really that he claimed to be typical kind of king

but that it was disagreements about religion.
But Pilate also knew from previous experience
what chaos can be caused by religious differences
because they are such strongly held part of core
of who people are.
He knew to preserve peace he had to minimize religious tension
& if that meant getting rid of one source of tension, so be it.
Pilate was not first or last government leader to recognize that
religious loyalties & tensions are factors
in public division & conflict.
This is why communist countries & some others do their best
to stamp out all religion and replace it
with loyalty to the state over all things.
I don't have to tell you how much fighting in world today
comes from religious radicalism,
people thinking their religion is most important thing in world
and they must use every power they can to promote it.
Those wanting peace often say problem is religious extremism,
those who think they are completely right
so others are totally wrong.
Solution proposed is accepting validity of other's religions,
that it is personal opinion and not worth fighting about.
I let you follow your religion and you let me follow mine
and everything will be fine.
I, however, am a religious extremist. I believe Christianity
is totally true and every other religion is false.
I believe what Jesus says,
"Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."
and what Paul wrote, "If anyone is preaching
a different gospel, let him be eternally cursed."
In fact, I don't think any religion that doesn't insist
that it is exclusively true is not even worth respecting
or paying attention to.
If you are not even confident what you teach is certainly true,
why should I even bother to pay attention to you?
I do have some respect for those of other religions
that have the integrity to insist they are totally true
even though I completely disagree with them.
As a religious extremist, I think faith in Christianity
is more important than anything else in the world.
What is profit of gaining whole world but forfeiting soul?

Jesus' kingdom is not of this world
because it is not limited to this world.
Jesus is king of the entire universe and more besides.
So I believe Jesus is king with total authority over all things,
both church & state,
although they are two very different kinds of kingdoms
and he controls and uses them in very different ways.
Jesus rules not only over those who are citizens of his kingdom
but over those who are aliens living within it,
including those who are in rebellion against it.
What Jesus wants and says always happens.
Those who are citizens and servants in his kingdom
willingly do as he says and receive its blessings.
Those who don't willingly do as he says
still have everything they try to do used by him
for his purposes even when they don't realize it,
although they forfeit all the blessings through unbelief.
just as the unjust condemnation of Jesus by Pilate
& Jewish leaders was used in God's plan of redemption.
Difference between me and some other religious extremists is,
I don't think fact that Christianity is totally true
and everything to the contrary is false
means that violence, force, threats or coercion
should be used to promote Christianity.
In fact it is impossible to promote true faith with these means.
One reason is that the true religion is not violent or harmful.
Another reason is that it is impossible to force faith.
Sometimes when people talk about different religions
they refer to them as different beliefs.
This is a misunderstanding. Christianity is a belief.
What makes you a Christian is what you believe
because we are saved through faith.
Many other religions, such as Islam,
do not require belief so much as behavior.
Being a Muslim requires doing certain things
such as the ritual prayers, pilgrimage to Mecca, etc.
What makes you a Muslim is what you do, because in Islam,
as well as every other religion but genuine Christianity,
you are saved by what you yourself must do.
So, you can force one to convert to Islam with sword or gun
because you can force someone to do things

but it is impossible to convert someone to Christianity
this way because you can't force one to believe anything.
And, unlike every other religion,
being Christian isn't matter of what we do
but trusting completely in what Jesus has done for us.
So, what does cause one to be a Christian, to believe in Jesus?
It is the powerful truth of God's word.

JESUS' KINGDOM COMES BY HIS TRUE WORD.

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born
and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the
truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

The big political question of today is what force can we use
to combat threats of terrorism, death and destruction
that result from of false religion and ideology.

Problem is force cannot do this.

No matter how much force you use
to stop people from doing evil things,
you can't force people to stop being evil.

There is no way to make or enforce enough laws
to stop every possible way of doing wrong.

Only way to stop people from being evil is to change heart.

Jesus came not to destroy enemies but to destroy error & evil
and so to turn his enemies into disciples.

If Jesus' kingdom were of this world it would not be able
to do anything more than kingdoms of this world
which are powerless to change the heart.

But Jesus' truth does change the heart.

Our words are often weak no matter how we shout or curse
because they come from people who too often
don't know what they are talking about.

Jesus' words are powerful because they come from him
who is the truth and the life, who always does what is true.

Jesus' powerful word of truth is like soap that cleans
by both loosening filth and carrying it away.

Jesus truth is both law & gospel which always work together.

The law reveals our sin in light of what is true and right.

It warns of the disaster & death sin always leads to
and so it shakes loose our ignorant grip on it.

But it is always and only the gospel that takes it away,
and gives us something to hold on to instead.

The gospel doesn't just excuse or ignore our sin
but takes it away with Jesus' authoritative forgiveness.
It takes away both its punishment & its addictive power.
The authority of Jesus' word of forgiveness comes from
the fact that he himself has kept every law in our place
and has suffered all the punishment our sins deserve
Which he was able to do only because he is
both true God and true man at the same time.

JESUS' COMING KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.

³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."

Jesus' kingdom is not from this world.

It comes to us in this world

but it comes from heaven and brings into heaven.

Jesus' kingdom does not come from inside of us.

We don't find it by looking for what is good in our heart.

It comes from Jesus' word which always comes from outside us
but comes into us like a seed planted in the ground.

And so his kingdom, which works inside us is always hidden.

Jesus before Pilate didn't look like a king.

He didn't look like a king either when he was

smuggled into the world as a baby in manger

or sleeping in back of a boat in a storm, but he truly was.

He didn't look like a king when he was hanging on the cross
but that is where he fought & defeated our enemy.

He didn't look like a king when he was smuggled into hell
through a tomb, but there he declared his total victory.

Water being poured on a baby doesn't look like a kingdom.

People receiving bread & wine doesn't look like kingdom
but God's kingdom comes by his word

hidden in these things.

People praying around person in casket being put in ground
doesn't look like a kingdom but it is there by his promise.

Jesus' kingdom comes differently, not by our struggle or fighting
but by his suffering, which absorbed all the power of evil.

It comes to others not by our fighting against them

but by speaking God's word, smuggled in acts of love.

And Jesus' kingdom ends differently - it doesn't.

but today God's word reminds us one day it will appear.
By pointing out the purpose for which he was born,
Jesus reveals that he has always existed
and he became incarnate in the flesh on purpose.
He also rose to life again in the flesh
& ascended into heaven with the same visible body
and will return again to fully complete his purpose
of fully revealing his kingdom to us and all the earth.
No human king was ever so humble on earth
but no other king will ever be as glorious forever.
and no king will ever be so generous to his servants.

JESUS IS OUR KING WITH TOTAL AUTHORITY.

Nothing in this world is more important than his will for us
and nothing will stop him from accomplishing it.

JESUS' KINGDOM COMES BY HIS TRUE WORD

which is only power which can work inside to change hearts
and remove the evil there by his word of forgiveness.

JESUS' COMING KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD

It comes from his divine eternity and works in hidden ways
to bring us finally to the revelation of his divine glory.