

Are You A King?

John 18:37 ³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Sometimes your following instructions and things happen as they should. For example, the instructions say hold down the button 15 sec until the light blinks twice. It is a relief to see that light blink, you know that you are doing it correctly. Or the recipe says bake 15 minutes until golden brown, after 15 minutes the food looks golden brown. It is a relief to know you did it right. But sometimes you think your following the instructions and things don't look right and that is worrisome.

IS Jesus a king?

If we were left to guess based on the evidence, we would probably be very worried. It sure doesn't look like it. It didn't look like it to Pilate and it looks less like it today. The light is a steady red where we were expecting a blinking green. Is Jesus a king?

Yet this is not because Jesus' kingship, authority, or power is in doubt but because His rule is entirely different from what we expect. The problem is not with Jesus but with our expectations. We were expecting a blinking green and instead we have a steady red.

In Matthew 24:25 Jesus tells us **"See, I have told you beforehand."**

In the first part of Matthew 24 Jesus has been talking about wars, pestilence, famine, drought, earthquakes, hatred, false prophets, murder, and lawlessness. All these things seem wrong to us. Jesus can't be King. He can't be in control. This is not right. We are looking at the bread in the oven and its green instead of golden brown. But the recipe Jesus has given us has a note on the side. The bread will look green at this point. So that rather than being worried we can be confident. Jesus reigns. He is in control. This is what Jesus said the world will look like at this point.

He doesn't look like what we expect from a king but there is no doubt that He is a king.

The problem isn't with Jesus it is with Pilate's expectations. Jesus tells Pilate

"For this reason, I was born and for this reason I came into the world."

Its not hard to find someone who will be the kind of king that Pilate expects. But Jesus makes it clear that He is different.

It is easy to see those phrases as a repetition of the same thing. We sometimes use them to mean the same thing. I was born, I came into the world. But for Jesus they are not the same thing. One is a reference to His human nature. He was born of the virgin Mary, although actually the Greek refers to his conception not his birth. The other is His divine nature. He was not born but always was and then came into the world.

Jesus does not look like the king we expect because he is not the same. He is God and man. He is Immanuel.

“Our ways are not His ways.”

Why would we expect the God-man Immanuel to be the kind of king that other humans are?

He came for the purpose of being our king.

“to bear witness to the truth” –

Jesus must be confused here. Politicians and kings do not tell the truth. I’m pretty sure it’s impossible for a politician to be honest and still win the election. Moreover we all learn in our catechism that Jesus has three offices, prophet, priest and king. It is the office of prophet which speaks the truth not the office of King. Why then does Jesus describe His kingship as “speaking the truth?”

Yet Jesus reveals the incredible truth that it is through the truth that He reigns.

We saw this at the beginning of lent when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. His power is not the power of soldiers but of His word. He rules through the truth of His word.

The role of a king is to rule. He rules in our hearts through His truth.

Joh 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

The role of King is to destroy our enemies and keep us safe from those who seek us harm. Jesus accomplishes this through His word.

1 Peter 1:5⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Unlike any other king Jesus rules not by armies, but through the preaching of the truth. Jesus is unlike any other king. He is not what we expect. He rules through truth not might.

The real question is not, “is Jesus a king,” but is He your king?

When Pilate does crucify Jesus he insists on writing above him. Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews. In Latin Iēsus Nazarēnus, Rēx Iūdaeōrum, INRI. We often see these four Latin letters representing what Pilate wrote above Jesus, especially at the time of Lent.

Why did Pilate insist on writing that? Perhaps he was annoyed at the Jews, and he was simply being a little spiteful. Perhaps he at least partially believed it. But even if he partially believes it, it is a matter for

the Jews, not him. The one thing he didn't write was Iēsus Nazarēnus, Rēx Meus, Jesus of Nazareth My King, INRM.

Pilate had no use for the truth.

His response to Jesus is "What is truth?"

He had no use for a king who ruled through truth. If we would desire Jesus as our King it must be through the truth.

"If you abide in my word" Jesus says. Jesus rules through truth.

Jesus our King does not demand that we are perfect. He doesn't throw us in prison or scream off with their heads if we fail Him. He died to forgive our sins. What He demands is truth, that we not hide from the truth, that we acknowledge that we are sinners and trust in His forgiveness.

Jesus our king does not ask us to learn the sword or the gun to defend his kingdom. He asks us to learn the truth, to speak the truth, to wield the truth.

Jesus our king does not ask us to die for Him, He died for us. He asks us to live in the truth.

Jesus is a king, but not what we would expect. He is Immanuel, the God-man who would be our king but would rule our hearts through the truth. Amen