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Jesus Is King!

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Jesus Is King!

“So Pilate went back into the governor’s residence, summoned Jesus, and asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’

“Jesus replied, ‘Are you saying this on your own initiative, or have others told you about me?’

“Pilate answered, ‘I am not a Jew, am I? Your own people and your chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?’” —John 18:33-34

Pilate has summoned Jesus into his palace in an effort to remove Him from the raucous of the rabble and ask his own questions. It is the perfect picture of Holiness himself being summoned into defilement. In some ways, that is also a description of what Jesus does every time He is asked to enter a heart at the point of salvation. The pure, holy, blameless, and set apart from sinners Savior enters into a heart blackened by sin and depravity—saving, cleansing, and empowering that heart to be like Him.

All four gospels record Pilate asking this same question: “Are you the king of the Jews?” He obviously had a true desire to know if Jesus was the king of this ancient people over whom he and his soldiers now ruled. Considering our Lord’s attire and humble appearance, Pilate surely assumed Jesus was merely a mock messiah—simply setting himself up over the masses. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record our Lord replying to Pilate with the same words: “You say so.”

“Then Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ Jesus said, ‘You say so.’” —Matthew 27:1

“Pilate asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ He replied, ‘You say so.’” —Mark 15:2

“So Pilate asked Jesus, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ He replied, ‘You say so.’” —Luke 23:3

A few verses later in John 18 we find similar words from Jesus, yet adding a stipulation for those willing to hear Him:

“Then Pilate said, ‘So you are a king!’ Jesus replied, ‘You say that I am a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world—to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.’” —John 18:37

Jesus answers Pilate with an affirmative. Indeed, Jesus was the king of the Jews, yet not a king in the way Pilate supposed Him to be. Jesus' kingdom was not a political kingdom to rival Rome. He was no threat to Roman rule. Jesus' kingdom is entirely unlike the kingdoms of the world. His realm is not dependent upon the world's power or arms or money. It is a kingdom with origins from heaven. It is far more glorious and incomprehensible than anything we can assemble or even imagine on earth. It is a spiritual kingdom over the heart and will and mind.

The question is: Are we willing to proclaim Jesus King?

Become More

“Whenever God rules over the human heart as King, there is the kingdom of God established.” —Paul W. Harrison

Further Reflections

“Jesus showed us what God really wants to cleanse and purify—our hearts. Christ's transforming work on the cross helps us to break free from desires that hold us in bondage. As we submit to God, we become like Christ, no longer wanting to offend God. Out of gratitude we obey Him from the inside out.” —Tremper Longman