

“Christ the King” | Rev. Brent Baker | November 21, 2021

from Isaiah 9

For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the trampling warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder...

from Revelation 1

...and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

from John 18

...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.”

Intro Questions

Since the US governs as a democratic republic, what do we miss when we name Jesus “King”? Consider what it meant to be called “King of the Jews” in Roman occupied Palestine. What do you know about Israel’s kings?

Background

The early Christians chose to include Pilate in the creed that espoused the trinitarian God of the Bible. Other than Jesus and Mary, Pilate is the only other human person there named. Like Psalm 2, the creed includes the character sketch of “the kings of the earth” who set themselves against Yahweh and his messiah. Consider the whole of Psalm 2 paying attention to how Yahweh responds.

Discuss:

If you were to ask someone close to you what orients, controls and demands your life energy, what might they say? Bob Dylan and David F Wallace make the same account of lordship: “We all worship something” and “You gotta serve somebody.” The poetry of Psalms and Isaiah uses strong language for how yahweh treats other gods and kings. He breaks “yoke, staff, rod” and “shatters them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

The philosopher Peter Kreeft often speaks of the Christian God as a surgeon or doctor. He breaks and cuts in order to heal. Jesus makes clear that God’s rule does not back down from the power of empire (Roman or otherwise) but operates in this world as one “not of this world.” He heals down into the unseen in order to bring new creation.

Jesus’ kingdom is redemptive like a seed that falls to the ground, dies, and is buried. Jesus and his kingdom are meek, liberative, rich in grace & mercy. He does not take for the sake of his own life. Instead he lays himself down, Jesus gives up his life to expand yours. This doctor gives a holy blood transfusion that costs his life. His for yours.

Questions and Prayer

- 1.) How do you think John, the author of the gospel and Revelation, thought best to serve Jesus as king?
- 2.) In view of Christian new year next week, how can you begin again in the faith that Jesus is king of the cosmos whether we confess or not? How will you practice kneeling all of yourself to his will?
- 3.) John’s gospel tells of Jesus’ crucifixion ending with a spear in his side that caused blood and water to flow. Consider how Jesus’ body connects to your baptism and the wine of the Lord’s Supper.

Eternal Father, we kneel to other gods we fear to name. Our imagination for your love to us smokes like a dying wick. The light and warmth of Jesus do not light our path. His story is not our story and we are bored with our Bibles. Unite my heart to fear your name. Let me hear joy and gladness, let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

By Isaac Banegas