

# Kings and Priest

## The King in you!

For most people these days, it has an old-fashioned sound.

Yes, there is still some royalty left in the world. But few of today's royals have any real power. Today, the powerful people of the earth are called President, Prime Minister, or Premier—and in the business world, CEO or Chairman of the Board.

1. In the ancient Biblical world, if you took all those leaders, rolled them into one, and gave that person absolute power within the nation, that would be the king.

Common people would bow and tremble before the king, knowing that he held in his hands the power of life or death over them. One word from him, and their days on this earth would be over. A different word from him, and they and their family would be lifted up to prominence, wealth, and power.

For people in Bible times, “The King” stirred up deep and powerful feelings of pride or of fear, of safety from enemies and oppressors or of ruin and death for themselves and their families.

[https://leewoof.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/jesus\\_triumphal\\_entry\\_into\\_jerusalem.jpg](https://leewoof.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/jesus_triumphal_entry_into_jerusalem.jpg)

## 2. Jesus rides into Jerusalem

These and many more powerful thoughts and emotions ran through the heart and mind of the crowd as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a ceremonial donkey.

They were suffering under the oppressive yoke of Rome. Here was a King of Israel, a descendant of David their great king! Here was the Messiah, who would throw off that Roman yoke and rule over them with justice in their own independent, sovereign nation once again!

And so Jesus, jubilantly hailed by the crowd as a king upon his entry into Jerusalem, went directly to . . . the Temple?

## Wait a minute . . . Why is he going to the Temple?

3. Why would a king go to the Temple? Isn't that where the *priests* go? Shouldn't he be going to the palace instead? That's where a *king* belongs!

But day after day, Jesus kept going right back to . . . the *Temple*. He cleaned house. He taught. He healed people. And he taught some more.

Now the people were getting worried. This man just wasn't acting like a king!

4. Meanwhile, the priests and other religious leaders were getting angrier and angrier. How *dare* he come onto *their* turf and presume to school them? He was undermining their authority with the people! Something had to be done about him. As the week wore on, and Jesus showed no signs of seizing the reins of power and throwing off the hated Romans, it became easier and easier for the religious leaders to stir up the people against him with the charge that he was a false Messiah.

Unfortunately for them, under Roman rule the Jewish authorities no longer had the power to impose the death penalty. So to eliminate this pretender and blasphemer, they arrested him and handed him over to the Roman authorities. They had no coherent charges against him, but they accused him of stirring up trouble and setting himself up as a rival king. That set the stage for Jesus' conversation with Pilate in **John 18:33–38**.

### **Pilate Interrogates Jesus**

**“Upon hearing this, Pilate went back inside his palace and summoned Jesus. Looking him over, Pilate asked him, “Are you really the king of the Jews?” Jesus replied, “Are you asking because you really want to know, or are you only asking this because others have said it about me?” Pilate responded, “Only a Jew would care about this; do I look like a Jew? It’s your own people and your religious leaders that have handed you over to me. So tell me, Jesus, what have you done wrong?” Jesus looked at Pilate and said, “The royal power of my kingdom realm doesn’t come from this world. If it did, then my followers would be fighting to the end to defend me from the Jewish leaders. My kingdom realm authority is not from this realm.” Then Pilate responded, “Oh, so then you are a king?” “You are right.” Jesus said, “I was born a King, and I have come into this world to prove what truth really is. And everyone who loves the truth will receive my words.” Pilate looked at Jesus and said, “What is truth?” As silence filled the room, Pilate went back out to where the Jewish leaders were waiting and said to them, “He’s not guilty. I couldn’t even find one fault with him.”**

**John 18:33-38 TPT**

### **Jesus argues his case.**

5. In the first three Gospels, Jesus is tight-lipped when he is taken before Pilate. But in the Gospel of John, he makes masterful use of his brief audience with Pilate—the most powerful man in Judea—to plead his case.

Pilate, as the prefect of the Roman province of Judea, didn’t care about the Jews’ internal religious squabbles. His job was to keep order, impose Roman law, and make sure the people paid their taxes to Rome. His line of questioning was designed to determine whether Jesus posed a threat to Roman rule.

**If Jesus was claiming to be some sort of king, that could be a problem!**

“Are you the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked him. Pilate must have been aware of the Jews’ belief that one day a Messiah would set them free of foreign rule and set them up in their own sovereign kingdom.

6. If Jesus were setting himself up as that Messiah, he could gain a following and stage an insurrection against Roman rule.

With his reply, Jesus deftly sliced open a rift between Pilate and the Jews: **“Did you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?”**

Pilate quickly picked up on the cue. “Am I a Jew?” he asked. “Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?” Pilate’s job was to enforce Roman law, not Jewish law. If the Jews had an accusation against him, it would have to violate Roman laws in order to warrant a capital case.

7. Now the stage was set for Jesus to bring out his key argument and its supporting evidence: **“My kingdom is not from this world,”** he said. **“If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.”**

To Pilate, this Jesus was starting to sound like someone who was *not* a threat to Roman rule. His kingdom was “not from this world,” and his followers were not taking up arms.

8. But there was still that pesky word “**kingdom.**” Pilate had to be sure. “So you are a king?” Pilate asked.

“You say that I am a king,” Jesus replied—a standard rhetorical flourish meaning “Yes.” He continued on, **“For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”**

Pilate had heard all he needed to hear. This man was not a political threat. He was a **religious dreamer.** **“What is truth?”** Pilate snapped. Then he headed back outside to the crowd of Jews, and informed them that he had found no basis for a charge against Jesus.

9. In the end, Pilate condemned Jesus to death not because he was guilty of breaking any Roman law, but because the people were beginning to riot. For Pilate, the choice between killing some obscure and clearly controversial Jewish rabbi and dealing with a growing riot was an easy one. His job was to keep order, and life was cheap.

And so Pilate sent to his death a man that he considered innocent of any crime.

## **Is Jesus a king?**

1. In Hebrew, “Messiah” means “one who is anointed.” The word “Christ” means the same thing in Greek. So when we say “Jesus Christ,” it means “Jesus, the anointed one.” Priests and kings were anointed, and sometimes prophets also. The anointing was usually done with oil, but sometimes with ointment. In the New Testament, Jesus is called a king, a priest, and a prophet.

Was Jesus the anointed one? Was Jesus a king, the Messiah?

2. All four Gospels tell the story of a woman anointing Jesus with a costly perfumed oil in the week leading up to his crucifixion. But Jesus said that she had anointed him for his burial. That’s is not the same as anointing him to be a king.

**But in Acts 10:38 the apostle Peter says, “Jesus of Nazareth was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and with great power. He did wonderful things for others and divinely healed all who were under the tyranny of the devil, for God had anointed him.”**

**Acts 10:38 TPT**

From a worldly, material perspective, Jesus was a false Messiah. He was never literally anointed as a king. And he never ruled over any nation in this world.

Only when we look at Jesus from a spiritual perspective can we understand his statement to Pilate that he was born to be a king, although his kingdom was not from this world. That's because he was born, not to be a king in the material, political world of human beings, but to be a *spiritual* king anointed by God.

3. So the answer to the question of whether Jesus was and is a king depends on which eyes we are using. If we are using our physical eyes, he is *not* a king. But if we are using our spiritual eyes, he *is* a king.

### **What is a spiritual king, and kingdom?**

For Pilate, who was the political ruler of a territory on this earth, the only kingship that mattered was earthly kingship.

As soon as he deduced that Jesus had no aspirations to worldly, political power, he declared him innocent of any crime against Rome.

**And yet, Jesus declared that he did have a kingdom.**

When Pilate asked the follow-up question, about whether Jesus really was a king, Jesus replied, **“For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”**

**Jesus declared that his kingship was a kingship of *truth*.**

In saying this, he taught us the spiritual meaning of a king, and what it means to be a spiritual king.

4. A spiritual king is one who testifies to the truth. And that king's subjects, the citizens of his kingdom, are all the people who listen to the truth that he teaches. Of course, “listening” doesn't just mean hearing. It means taking to heart and obeying. As Jesus said to Pilate, his kingdom is not from this world. Instead, it comes from God, because it is the spiritual kingship of divine truth.

All people throughout the world who listen to Jesus' words and live by them are citizens of his kingdom. It does not matter whether they belong to any particular Christian church or organization. It only matters whether they listen to his voice. And all the angels in heaven are also citizens of that spiritual kingdom.

### **Does a spiritual kingdom have any power?**

5. Pilate didn't consider this sort of kingdom to be any threat. To his eyes, it had no power. He would never have believed that in a few short centuries, a religion founded in Jesus' name would take over the Roman Empire itself.

And yet, the worldly power that that religion wielded for many centuries was not the power of Jesus Christ's kingdom.

He said that his kingdom is *not* from this world, but is the kingdom of the truth.

Does that kingdom have any power in this world? Should we pay any attention to it?

The prophecy in **Daniel 2**, about Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue, says to Christians that the kingdom of Jesus will fill the whole world, and will have no end. And that kingdom, said Daniel, would crush all other kingdoms.

Is there any evidence for this bold claim?

I would suggest that there is.

### **Worldly kingdoms live and die**

6. Though some kingdoms and empires on this earth have lasted for many centuries, in time all have come to their end.

What brings a kingdom or empire to its end?

Politically speaking, there are many reasons. Wars, intrigues, corruption, coups, financial collapse. And yet, when we look at the various worldly and political kingdoms with a spiritual eye, there is a common thread running through their lives and their deaths.

**That common thread is the extent to which they are based on justice and judgment.**

**Justice** is the willingness to serve and uphold the good of all people equally.

**Judgment** is the exercise of truth in determining the laws and affairs of the nation.

Over time, any kingdom or nation that does not exercise justice and judgment, or that falls away from them, is doomed to fall into destruction.

That has been the fate of all of the kingdoms and nations of this earth so far.

In Scriptural terms, all human, worldly kingdoms have in time been crushed by the stone of divine truth when they violated that truth through injustice and corrupt judgment.

### **The kingdom of Jesus lasts forever**

7. If the kingdom of Jesus were a political kingdom, even it could hardly escape that fate. Perhaps Jesus as a worldly king could hold it together. But he would still have to deal with corrupt human beings who grasp for money and power.

However, the fact is that for two thousand years now, Jesus has made no move to establish a worldly kingdom. Many Christians believe that his kingdom is just around the corner. And yet, he said his kingdom is not from this world.

Another translation is that his kingdom is not *of* this world. If we take his words seriously, we have to question whether he will *ever* establish any worldly kingdom. My wager is that he will not.

**Why would he want to, when he has already established an eternal kingdom?**

For two thousand years now, that kingdom has endured. Yes, ecclesiastical and political kingdoms established in Christ's name have risen and fallen. They are subject to the same corruption as every other kingdom on this earth. That's because they are *human* and *earthly* kingdoms.

But the kingdom of Jesus Christ is a *spiritual* kingdom. It is the kingdom of all people throughout the earth who hear the words of Jesus Christ, take them to heart, and live by them every day.

It is a kingdom that rules, not in the halls of political and economic power, but in the hearts and minds of all people of faith and good will.

**And in time, as each one of us accepts Jesus Christ as our Lord, our King, our Priest, and our Prophet, that kingdom will fill the whole earth, and make all of our earthly kingdoms and nations a distant memory.**