

What King Is This?

Intro. Something didn't feel right to Pilate. The religious leaders betrayed one of their own and suddenly wanted his help. His main concern was whether the Lord was a threat to him and to King Herod. If he discovered he *was* a king, then Pilate would end the threat immediately. Sensing there was no truth to the accusation, he was suspicious.

I. The Lord didn't answer Pilate's question, putting the interrogation back on him; challenging him to make up his own mind or admit someone was manipulating him. Pilate was no good guy by a long shot; he had a reputation for cruelty. He suspected the betrayal was *good* for the religious leaders and *bad* for him. Pilate knew only one definition of king: authoritative; able to quell resistance quickly

and, harshly, if necessary; generous to friends and supporters. He couldn't understand a king who gave up without a fight as it seemed the Lord did. The prophecies about the Messiah connected him to the great King David, a revered leader in Jewish history.

The Lord never claimed to be a king. Over many years of persecution and oppression, the idea developed that the Messiah would come with great power, liberate the Israelites and all would be well again. For some of the religious leaders the Lord just did not fit this hope. He was certainly powerful in word and deed, but he showed no inclination to drive the Romans from power. It is ironic that to get rid of him, some religious leaders accused him of being a king – a king with poor fishermen, a tax collector, and some sinners as his “army.”

Concl. We always end the church year with the feast of Christ the King. But not in an elegant palace where earthly royalty are usually found. Rather, it is a court of judgment which will lead to a place of suffering and a cross, a symbol to most of failure. That's what happens to earthly kingdoms – they usually fall. Think of the Babylonian, Aztec and Roman empires. Because the kingdom of God does not belong *to* this world, as the Lord tells Pilate, doesn't mean his kingdom does not belong *in* this world. [*Living Liturgy*, 2021, Liturgical Press, p.252] His certainly *can* be a threat to earthly kingdoms because the truth *always* threatens some. As **present-day disciples of this “king,” it can be difficult to *hear and listen* to his voice over the drumming of selfishness, greed or complacency of earthly kingdoms. It is vital we be able to filter**

out the *untruth* and hear the voice of the shepherd, calling us back to the *truth*: that Christ is king of both heaven *and* earth.

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