

“Here is your king...”

What kind of king is this?

Pilate has just questioned Jesus about his kingship, and Jesus has owned it: You are right in saying I am a king.

But what kind of king is Jesus?

The Roman soldiers think they know. He is a fake king. Pilate gives the order for Jesus to be flogged and they subject him to a brutal beating with whips. But that’s not all. They have heard the talk about Jesus being a king and they can’t help themselves. They take it on themselves to show what they think of his claim to be a king. They treat him like a fake, a pretender. They give him a crown, but not just any crown. It’s a fake crown, a crown made of vicious thorns and they jam it on his head. Pain, humiliation.

And they pay homage to him. They address him as a king, but their voices are full of mockery and contempt. “Hail, king of the Jews!” as they slap him in the face.

Jesus is a fake king. He is a pretender to the glory that belongs to Caesar, and so they treat him with scorn and violence.

What kind of king is Jesus?

The Jewish leaders think they know. He is a blasphemous king. “He claimed to be the Son of God.” That is a massive claim to kingship! If the God of the Jews is the creator and lord of all, then his son is his heir and owns everything with him! Together, they must sustain the whole universe with their mighty hand! And if that is true, what does that mean for his chosen people, the Jews? What does this mean for the Jewish leaders, the Chief priests, the officials? Surely, it means they would bow down before him and offer their complete and utter devotion! But they don’t. They don’t ratify his claim, in spite of all the signs, in spite of all the fulfillment of prophecy. The Son of God in their midst is just not convenient. Their power will be gone!

And so they disown him. He’s not what he says he is. He’s a liar. He’s a fraud. He’s a blasphemer. And our law says blasphemers must die. They would rather swear allegiance to the Roman emperor than see Jesus go free.

What kind of king is Jesus?

Pilate is sure he does not know! He has been trying everything he can to get out of killing Jesus! He has heard Jesus’ claim to be king and he is deeply unsettled by it. This is a governor of the Roman empire. This man knows Caesar. This man knows what power looks like! And even now, with Jesus bloodied, belittled, betrayed and alone, Pilate recognises power. “I find no basis for a charge against him. Here is your king!”

Pilate sees in Jesus real kingly authority. And if it doesn’t come from his own people, where does it come from? His own leaders hate him and reject him. They are crying out for his blood! So where does his authority come from? Jesus knows. “My kingdom is not of this world. You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.”

What if this despised Jew is telling the truth? What if his authority comes directly from his God? What if killing him is a really bad idea? And yet, faced with that or causing a Jewish riot, he takes the easy way out. He gives the order for his death.

What kind of king is Jesus?

We know. We know because John has told us from the start. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. And in wrapping up his work, he says this: These things are written that you may know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

Jesus is the word of God, eternally with him, who made us.

Jesus is the Christ, God's great king, who rules on the throne forever.

Jesus is the son of God, not just any king, but the divine king, who deserves and expects the devotion of everybody on the planet.

Jesus is the servant king, who would accept such suffering, such disgrace, such a vile death, that you and I might live forever with him.

What kind of king is Jesus? Do YOU know?

Is he YOUR king?