

A Sermon preached by Lyn Jenkins for Christ the King

Give us a king to govern us' words of Israelites to Samuel

Pilate says to Jesus *'So, you are a king'*
Jesus replies *'You say that I am a king.'*

'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and for ever.' --- words from Book of Revelation

Today we are thinking especially of Christ the King.
But what do we mean by king?

In OT times when the people of Israel asked Samuel for a king they wanted someone all powerful, someone who would lead them to victory – someone who would conquer their enemies.

Other nations had a king, so why shouldn't they have one?

But there was one great difference between Israel and other nations --- other nations did not acknowledge God.

The people of Israel had God to lead them.

But that did not satisfy them.

No matter what Samuel said to the people they were not prepared to listen.

They believed that if they had a king like other nations, then they would be victorious in all they did.

Where was their trust?

Why reject the true God for an earthly king?

Maybe they did not like the way God was leading them.

He was not making them into an all powerful nation superior to all other people.

Samuel did not want to grant their request, but God told Samuel to listen to them.

So, if we read further we will find Saul becomes the first King of Israel.

We will also find that having a king, far from making things better for them, made things a lot worse.

For earthly kings cannot be relied upon to put their subjects first --- their priority is often to become more and more powerful, getting rid of anything or anyone that stands in their way.

If only the Israelites had regarded God as their king, instead of relying on human means, things might have been very different.

But God did not always fit into their way of thinking or behaving. Each tribe, each nation wanted to be more powerful than any other.

Things haven't changed, have they?

The tribes of Israel would turn to God when they thought he would be of use to them but soon turned away when he was no longer needed for their well being.

It seems that we today have not yet learned the lessons of the Bible. People today may turn to God to get them out of trouble but soon turn away when things go well.

We return to Christ the King --- how is Christ's kingdom different?

Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of love, of peace, --- a kingdom of sharing, equality, --- a kingdom in which it may be necessary to give up one's earthly desires.

That sort of kingdom would not have made sense to Pilate.

Pilate, being a Roman, did not understand the Jewish religion.

And he was certainly confused when Jesus began saying his kingdom was not of this world. Pilate thought of Jesus as king of the Jews, an earthly ruler, the sort of king the Israelites asked for.

When Pilate said the words *So, you are a king*' he didn't understand the significance of his words.

But Pilate is not alone.

There are many people today who do not understand.

The Kingdom of God finds no place in their lives.

So, what do we mean when we say Christ is our King?

He is certainly not the sort of king the Israelites were thinking of when they asked Samuel for one.

He is not the sort of king that Pilate meant.

He is not what most people regard as a king today.

Christ the King is neglected or ignored by so many people.

Some people are getting very concerned about the state of this planet.

Global warming is in the news much of the time.

The climate seems to be going haywire all over the world.

And the earth's resources are being stretched to the limit for we are always wanting more and more and refuse to give up what we have. And I believe there are too many people trying to play God – trying to outdo God – trying to act as if God does not exist (matter).

It's not only global warming – things like genetic engineering. I feel that too often God is ignored or by-passed. Man/woman knows best.

One day things will go seriously wrong – and then we will have only ourselves to blame.

With Christ as our King, we would not make those mistakes.

Even in our own lives I'm sure we can find examples where we have gone ahead without any reference to the Lord and found our plans have failed.

It is not enough to **say** 'Christ is our King'.

We must **acknowledge, trust and obey** him as King.

Jesus reigned from the cross.

Love poured down from the cross.

Jesus longs for us to be part of his kingdom of love.

But we must ask ourselves --- are we someone who worships Christ for what we can get out of it?

Or do we worship him in love?

When we worship in love, it includes love for our fellow beings --- wanting the best for others, wanting the best for the world --- being totally unselfish.

For Christ's Kingdom is a kingdom of love where there is no room for selfish desires.

Jesus is not a King who gives us what **we** want.

He is a King who gives us what **he** wants.

He will give us what **he** believes we **need**, but he will not fulfil our selfish wants.

Christ is a King who expects obedience – and trust.

If we wish him to be our King, then we must allow him to have complete control over our lives.

And that is where things become difficult.

We do not like losing control.

We are afraid to let go and 'Let God'.

For he might lead us along paths we do not want to go.

But we can't have it both ways --- if we proclaim Christ as our King, then we must accept and follow his leadership, whether we like it or not. We cannot go our own way, do our own thing, in the kingdom of God. 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done' --- I hope that is our daily prayer -- but we must mean it --- we must fervently believe and trust that unless Christ rules in our hearts, unless he is allowed to take over our lives, the problems of the world will never cease – in fact, they will increase.

But Christ is a loving King.—he understands our frailty and knows there are times when we slip up.

What greater King could anyone have?

Not a king who forces us to obey & serve him – but a King who gives everything for us – even his own life. – a king who serves his subjects – a Servant King.

Will we then acknowledge and serve Christ as our King?

Will we ask him to reign in our hearts?

Will we mean it when we say, 'Come to my heart, Lord Jesus. There is room in my heart for thee?'

'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and for ever.'

When these words from the Book of Revelation come true we will no longer need to pray 'Thy kingdom come' for it will then be here.

We will be able to say in complete trust that Our God Reigns --- that Christ is King --- and his reign will last for evermore.