



# HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Jesus The Lord and King

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John 18:28-38

Clint Pressley

*<sup>28</sup> Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. <sup>29</sup> So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" <sup>30</sup> They answered him, "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you." <sup>31</sup> Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death." <sup>32</sup> This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die. <sup>33</sup> So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" <sup>35</sup> Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" <sup>36</sup> 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." <sup>37</sup> Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." <sup>38</sup> Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"*

*After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him.*

*(Pastor prays)*

Every Sunday around the world, Christians in every nation recite in unison a confession known as The Apostles' Creed. And imbedded in that confession is a Christmas truth, and it reads in part like this: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus Christ His only son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary and suffered under Pontius Pilate." Pontius Pilate. Every Sunday for the last 1700 years, millions of people have said the names of Pontius Pilate and Jesus Christ in the same sentence. This man

Pontius Pilate is forever immortalized in the creed because of his complicit hand in the suffering of Jesus. But more than that, woven into this conversation in John 18, is the Lord Jesus Himself making a declaration of His purpose hours before He would be nailed to the cross as a substitute for sinners. It's appropriate at Christmas for us to stand at the cradle and look forward to the cross because Jesus stood at the cross and in this passage, pointed back to the cradle.

Let's set the stage.

In the passage, the cross is closing in. At this point in the story it's the early morning of Jesus' crucifixion. He hasn't slept. The night before He was betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter and abandoned by the rest of His disciples. All of this was preceded by His cry of agony in the Garden of Gethsemane as He took all the sin for His people. Now, after being handed back and forth between religious leaders, He stands in front of a Roman straw boss named Pontius Pilate. Pilate is a consummate politician and a ruthless killer, but even he knows Jesus is innocent. This passage is his interrogation of Jesus, and in this interrogation, Pilate asks Jesus five questions, three of which I want to use this morning to draw out how we are to see and know Jesus as the Savior.

Now, for those of you who are Christians, I want you to take comfort and confidence in this passage. For those who are not sure, I want you to honestly seek the answer as to who Jesus is. And if He is who He says He is, I'm asking you today to surrender your life to Jesus as Lord.

### **Christmas Means Jesus is Lord.**

I have three questions to ask you from the passage.

#### **Who's your King?**

Who rules you? In the passage, we join a story already in progress. It's the formal examination of Jesus by Pilate. It's right there in verse 33. See the hateful questions at the very end of the verse? "Are you the King of the Jews? You!" All four gospels have this as the very first question out of Pilate's mouth and the "You" is emphatic, as if to say, how could a haggard homeless man like you be King? Look at you! Here it is! Here's the confrontation for us all. This is between Caesar and Christ. This is between the fallen world and the exalted God. This is between self-indulgence and self-control. This is between pornography and sanctification. This

is between adultery and faithfulness. This is the question we all have to answer. Is he King? To be King means He is sovereign say over your life and love and future. Is he King? Because most of us, especially here in the land of the free, most of us like Jesus as a *convenient* savior but not as a *conquering* King who has absolute sway and say over every single part of our lives. So we raise our children to be happy in the world and not holy unto the Lord.

We are more like Pilate than we wish we were. And Pilate asks, You? The King who calls me to forgive and love and endure, are you King? We want a *warrior* king, a king to win all our battles, to answer all our prayers the way we want them answered, but instead Jesus comes as a *savior* King. He was born under a scandal, opposed to political power and died for His people.

Pilate will place a placard written in three languages onto the cross saying — Jesus Christ, King of the Jews. But for now, in the passage, he squirms because Jesus has turned the tables like He always does. Jesus asks Pilate a question in verse 34: Do you say this on your own or did others say it to you about me? Suddenly, it's not Jesus on trial anymore, it's Pilate. And we join him, on trial before Heaven and Earth, and it becomes personal. Pilate, did you come up with this question on your own or are you asking on the basis of hearsay? Do you really want to know or are you parroting what someone else said? Do you actually hunger for the truth or are you just a spiritual parrot, repeating what you heard?

What about you? Does your question, or questions, do they come from a searching conviction or are you just wanting to ease your conscience or alleviate some pain? Every time we come to Christ; we must ask the question: What is it I want?

Jesus is King. Is that a conviction for you? Do you believe He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, lived perfectly and then died for you on the cross and that now He rules over everything? *Somebody* is King. Christmas says Jesus is King and this King loves you and will save you and comfort you and protect and heal you and fill you with strength. It's the first question to answer for Christmas: Who is King?

### **What needs to be done?**

Back to the passage. When Jesus answers Pilate's question with His own question, Pilate instantly dismisses him like so many have. Look what Pilate says that leads into the second question in verse 35: Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief of priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done? Isn't that the question really? I mean I know that's not

what Pilate meant here but isn't that what the real question is? What has Jesus done for me? Because that's what I'm looking for, something to show. I want visible, tangible, seeable, touchable evidence. This is why the "prosperity gospel" is so popular and why Christmas gets hijacked by materialism and the Hallmark channel. Because we miss the point and in verse 36 Jesus gives the point. <sup>36</sup>*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."* I've come to establish a kingdom, He says, but my kingdom isn't like anything you know or can imagine. My kingdom is not of this world. My kingdom is *over* this world. If my kingdom were from this world, then I would rule by force and political might and by the paltry power here on Earth.

His birth announced it and the cross confirmed it: Jesus is an entirely different kind of King. What has this King done? He stepped off the throne and into humanity as a substitute. This is why the incarnation is a first order doctrine. The first man—Adam— took us into sin and Jesus, the second Adam, redeems us from it. He did that by becoming man to live here, to be tempted by sin, to hurt, to cry, to get hungry, to do all the things we do but do them perfectly, without sin. To do that for us, then to answer God's call for just judgment. Jesus willingly went to the cross to receive the full extent of God's judgment on sin and He did that in the place of sinners. On the third day, God raised Him from the dead and He ascended into Heaven where He intercedes for His people. That's what needed to be done. Has He done that for you? Have you put your faith in King Jesus? Who's your King? What needs to be done? He did what needs to be done.

### **What is this about?**

In the text, verse 36, Jesus claims a different kind of kingdom and Pilate misses the point. In verse 37 is where Jesus, on the day He was crucified, takes us back to the day he was born. <sup>37</sup>*Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."* There are parallel statements here using the words "born" and "come."

### **The singular uniqueness of Jesus**

Jesus did not originate at His birth. He existed before He was in a manger. It's why I have come into the world. Micah 5:2 says, *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

The miracle is not just a virgin birth. Jesus told the religious leaders in John 8, "before Abraham was, 'I am.'" And John himself told us in John 1:1, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And again, in John 1:14, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

The man unlike another will save and forgive unlike any other. That is the singular uniqueness of Jesus.

### **The singular purpose of Jesus**

Look again at verse 38. For *this* purpose, I was born. For *this* purpose, I came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. To bear witness to the truth, the truth about God. He's loving, kind, holy and just. And the truth about man, created by God but plagued by sin and separated from Heaven. And the truth about Himself. He is the way, the truth and the life. He came to seek and save the lost. The cross is about grace and forgiveness and reconciliation. And everyone who is of the truth hears the voice and listens to Jesus. Surely that's what Jesus meant in John 10:27 when He said, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* Have you heard His voice?

Are you following? Who's your King? Is He Jesus? What needs to be done? Is it finished? What's is all this about? Is about calling you to trust Jesus Christ as Lord. Christmas means Jesus is Lord.

*(Pastor prays)*