

Gospel: John 18:33-37    Reign of Christ (Christ the King) November 21, 2021

**33**Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” **34**Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” **35**Pilate replied, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?” **36**Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. 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.” **37**Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. 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.”

Last Sunday of the church year; Reign of Christ (Christ the King); context of this text is the trial of Jesus before Pilate; Pilate moves between “the Jews” and Jesus in seven scenes that occur inside or outside the praetorium; this back and forth is followed by the ironic mock coronation of Jesus as king (also in Mt and Mk); in the synoptics, Pilate asks Jesus only if he is the king of the Jews, and Jesus answers cryptically, “You say so.”

Roman praetorium is Antonia fortress, on north end of the temple complex.

Jewish leaders want Pilate to condemn Jesus; he senses their lack of clarity regarding the charge; attempts to persuade “the Jews” to issue their own judgment, but they refuse.

“King” is loaded with political – insurrectional – meaning for the Romans; Jesus does not answer the question, but challenges Pilate with a question of his own, asking the source and motivation of Pilate’s inquiry.

Pilate asserts his Gentile status and reveals no personal interest in Jesus’ status among the Jews; Pilate’s response suggests that Jesus’ suspicion of a conspiracy against him is well-founded.

“What have you done?” – once again Jesus evades the question; claims twice that his kingdom is not of this world; Jesus asserts that his kingdom presents no threat to Roman rule and power.

However, Jesus’ rule and kingdom are profoundly subversive to any worldly authority that demands allegiance over loyalty to God.

It is the kingdom of God that Jesus has been proclaiming and revealing.

He claims that his kingdom is also present – in part – upon the earth. The reign and rule of Jesus are present wherever anyone accepts the truth of his identity and witness.

Truth?

Jesus is the judge and king.

Pilate's goal – keep the peace; do what needs to be done politically to keep Rome happy.

In what ways is the Reign of Christ evident in 2021?

In what ways does the Reign of Christ affect your lifestyle? Relationships? Decision-making?