

WGUMC November 25, 2012 "Some King"  
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 and John 18:33-37

The Hebrew Bible is ambivalent about kings. The people had no kings in the beginning. In the wilderness, they had Moses. When Moses died, they had judges, who were really military commanders. And these judges fought wars to defend the people against their rivals in the land of Canaan.

The last of these judges was the prophet Samuel. But when he got old and his no-good sons took over his job, the people demanded a king. Everyone else had a king, and they wanted to be like them. Samuel felt like a failure. But God told him not to feel bad. "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them." As punishment, God was prepared to give the people just what they asked for. Then God told Samuel: "warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

And so Samuel told the people: You can have a king, but I'm warning you that the king will draft your sons into his army

and conscript them into his workforce. They will fight his wars and plow his fields and harvest his crops. The king will take your daughters to serve in his house. He will take the best of your fields, your vineyards and orchards, and give them to his cronies. He will take your slaves, the choicest of your livestock, and tax you on anything you still manage to produce. In effect, you will become his slaves, and when you cry out because of this king you demanded, on that day, the Lord will not listen to you. [1 Samuel 8]

You want an earthly ruler rather than a divine one? Fine. And the rest of the Hebrew Bible is the sad saga of the Israelites getting what they asked for. Even the best of them, King David, was a murderer and an adulterer.

And yet, despite all the evidence to the contrary, the people never gave up thinking that there could be a leader, one of their own, who would solve all their problems, turn back all

their enemies, and usher in an age of peace and prosperity. In every age and place, people are always looking for a savior.

Almost a thousand years later, in the Book of Daniel, the people of Israel were suffering greatly under the rule of a Greek King, Antiochus Epiphanes. He had tried to force them to offer sacrifices to pagan gods. When they rebelled, he slaughtered many hundreds of Jews. In the aftermath of that revolt, he outlawed all Jewish religious practices. To enforce his decree, he built a citadel in Jerusalem and filled it with Syrian troops. Then he desecrated the temple by erecting an altar to Zeus, the Greek King of the Gods.

Regardless of the despicable actions of this king, the author of Daniel doesn't give up on the idea of monarchy. And he tries to comfort the persecuted with his vision of a coming king of glory. But this king would not be like the other earthly kings. He would be "like a human being," but he would come not on a war horse or in a chariot but with the clouds of

heaven. And to him would be given dominion and glory and kingship over all peoples, nations and languages. And his dominion would be everlasting. Unlike all the other kings of history, his dominion would not pass away, nor would his kingship ever be destroyed.

Fast forward about 160 years. Jesus was born in the days of Caesar Augustus. By that time, the Romans replaced the Greeks as the rulers of Palestine. The powers changed, but the kings stayed pretty much the same. The two Herods who were nominally kings of the Jews during the life of Jesus stayed in power only because they supported the absolute rule of Rome and threatened anyone who didn't.

So in the time of Jesus, people were still longing for a king, only a different kind of king. And Jesus certainly was a different kind of king. After all, kings have lots of rich friends. Jesus was anointed by the Spirit to bring good news to the poor. Kings live in lush palaces. The Son of Man had nowhere to

lay his head. Kings are waited upon by legions of servants. Jesus tied a towel around his waist and washed his disciples' feet. Kings will take your property, piece by piece. Jesus promised to give us peace. Kings are lauded for their military victories. Jesus is acclaimed for his humility. Kings are notorious for their self-serving schemes. Jesus is remembered for his suffering. In times of trouble, kings turn to various means of repression to secure their position. Jesus provided us with the means of grace to secure our salvation.

Some king. Pilate didn't know what to make of him. In John's Gospel, Jesus was dragged before the Roman procurator. Pilate asked him "Are you the King of the Jews?" not because he was looking for the truth, but because he was looking for evidence of treason.

Jesus did not answer Pilate's question. He said, "My kingdom is not from this world." You're telling me. There is not now nor has there ever been a king like Jesus. Because no

earthly king or dictator or president or prime minister has ever come into this world and into a position of power in order to testify to the truth. Earthly rulers learn how to play the game to stay in power. Kings live the lie in order to enlarge their kingdoms. Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" But Pilate wouldn't know truth if it was staring him in the face which, of course, it was.

Jesus didn't play Pilate's game. Jesus just stood there, exposing the lie about Pilate and all those earthly leaders. And because he was the truth, he was sent to die. But you know the ending of that story. Now he reigns forever and ever, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Christians are those who would go back to the days of Samuel and say, we don't need an earthly king, because we've got a heavenly one. Christians are those who refuse to bow down to any corrupt earthly authority because they can see, with Daniel, a vision of a righteous king coming in the clouds of

heaven whose dominion has no end. Christians are those who challenge the Pilate's of their own day, who expose all leaders who abuse their position, all governments that oppress the people, all systems that mistreat the poor. Christians are those who speak truth to power and have the courage to do so because their king and their kingdom is not of this world. Their Jesus is some king. The only question left to ask is: is this Jesus your king?

[What follows is a reading of "That's My King" by Dr. S.M. Lockridge, pastor of Calvary Baptist, San Diego, CA, 1953-1993]

## Reading for Christ the King Sunday

The Bible says

He's the King of the Jews

He's the King of Israel

He's the King of Righteousness.

He's the King of the Ages.

He's the King of Heaven.

He's the King of Glory.

He's the King of kings and He's the Lord of lords.

That's my King.

Well, I wonder do you know Him.

My King is a sovereign King - no means of measure can define  
His limitless love.

No farseeing telescope can bring into visibility the coastline of  
His shoreless supply.

No barrier can hinder Him from pouring out His blessings.

He's enduringly strong.

He's entirely sincere.

He's eternally steadfast.

He's immortally graceful.

He's imperially powerful.

He's impartially merciful.

Do you know Him?

He's the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the  
horizon of this world.

He's God's Son.

He's the sinner's Savior.

He's the centerpiece of civilization.

He stands in the solitude of himself.



He's august and He's unique.  
He's unparalleled; He's unprecedented.  
He is the loftiest idea in literature.  
He's the highest personality in philosophy.  
He is the supreme problem in higher criticism.  
He's the fundamental doctrine of true theology.  
He is the core and the necessity for spiritual religion.  
He's the miracle of the age.  
He's the superlative of everything good that you choose to call  
Him.  
He's the only one qualified to be an all-sufficient Savior.

I wonder if you know him today.

He supplies strength for the weak.  
He's available for the tempted and the tried.  
He sympathizes and He saves.  
He strengthens and sustains.  
He guards and He guides.  
He heals the sick.  
He cleansed the lepers.  
He forgives sinners.  
He discharges debtors.  
He delivers the captive.  
He defends the feeble.  
He blesses the young.  
He serves the unfortunate.  
He regards the aged.  
He rewards the diligent.  
And He beautifies the meek.

I wonder if you know Him?

Well, my King---  
He is the key to knowledge.  
He's the wellspring of wisdom.  
He's the doorway of deliverance.  
He's the pathway of peace.  
He's the roadway of righteousness.  
He's the highway of holiness.  
He's the gateway of glory.

Do you know Him?

Well, His office is manifold.  
His promise is sure.  
His life is matchless.  
His goodness is limitless.  
His mercy is everlasting.  
His love never changes.  
His Word is enough.  
His grace is sufficient.  
His reign is righteous and  
His yoke is easy and  
His burden is light.

I wish I could describe Him to you.  
But He's indescribable—yes He is!

He's God.  
He's indescribable.  
He's incomprehensible.  
He's invincible.  
He's irresistible.

You can't get Him out of your mind,  
You can't get Him off of your hand,  
You can't outlive Him,  
And you can't live without Him.

The Pharisees couldn't stand Him,  
But they found out they couldn't stop Him.  
Pilate couldn't find any fault in Him.  
Herod couldn't kill Him.  
Death couldn't handle Him  
And the grave couldn't hold Him. Yeah !  
THAT'S MY KING !  
THAT'S MY KING ! Yeah!

And Thine is the Kingdom the power and the glory forever  
And ever  
And ever and ever.  
And when you get through all the forever's, then  
Amen !

GOOD GOD ALMIGHTY ! AMEN ! AMEN !

[Dr. S. M. Lockridge, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church,  
San Diego, California, 1953-1993]

The choir now sings the end of "The Hallelujah Chorus."