

WGUMC November 25, 2018 "Some King"  
Daniel 7:13-14 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. Judges were really military commanders who fought wars 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 the same. 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."

To the people, God said, "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, kings who abused their power, confiscated property and enslaved people.

Despite all of this, 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 under the rule of a Greek King, Antiochus Epiphanes. He tried to force them to offer sacrifices to pagan gods. They rebelled, and he slaughtered hundreds of them. In the aftermath of that revolt, he outlawed all Jewish religious practices. To enforce the ban, he built a citadel in Jerusalem, filled it with Syrian troops, and desecrated the temple by erecting an altar to Zeus, the Greek King of the Gods.

As bad as this king was, the author of Daniel still didn't give up on the idea of monarchy. Instead, he tried to comfort the people 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 nations. 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 the same. The two Herods who were kings during the life of Jesus stayed in power only because they supported 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 rich friends. Jesus brought 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 to wash 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 for his humility. Kings are notorious for their self-serving schemes. Jesus is remembered for his suffering. Kings like to rule over us. Jesus rules by walking beside us.

Some king. Pilate didn't know what to make of him. In John's Gospel, Jesus was dragged before the Roman governor. 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. But don't take my word for it. Listen to the Rev. Dr. S.M. Lockridge, former pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in San Diego.

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, 1953-1993]

Rev. Lockridge died in 1993, but the question he poses lives on. Every person in every age has to answer it for themselves. You don't need to be a powerful preacher or have pretty words, but you need to know what it means to say that Jesus is your king.

A problem for most of us is that the word "king" doesn't have a very personal ring. Kings are far away in castles or up in the air somewhere. But think of this: "king" and "kin" come



from the very same word. Jesus is all the things that Lockridge said of him. Jesus is our king. But he is also our kin. So when we embrace him, we become his brothers and sisters. And that means that we, too, are sons and daughters of God. As members of God's royal family, we become everything that Christ is. We come to him with our humanity, and Christ fills it up with divinity. This is our dignity, our identity.

Christ lifts us up to his level and that is something that an earthly king would never do. That is the truth that Pilate could never accept. Though it would never occur to him, truth is not a principle or a politics or a claim to power. Christians take note: neither did Jesus ever say that truth is a religion or a scripture or a doctrine. No, Jesus said that truth is a person. He told Thomas, "I am the Truth."

To embrace Jesus as the truth of your life is to let him rule in your heart. To receive him as your king is to be received as his kin. As brothers and sisters of Christ, you are lifted up to

his level and filled up with God. Then you will not only know the truth about God, you will also discover the truth about you: your true self looks a lot like Jesus.

On Thanksgiving Day, some firefighters in Chico gave up well-earned time with their families to serve dinner to the victims of the Camp Fire. One of them, Jim Irving said, “I’d rather be here...helping other people...” Now I don’t know if Jim Irving is a Christian, but he’s sure looking like Christ to me. He and all the other firefighters and first responders and grief counselors and recovery workers and shelter volunteers are being the truth of God in person for a lot of people this season. When I see my sisters and brothers serving so selflessly, I can’t help but see Christ and say, “That’s my king.”