

Sunday, November 21, 2021

Revelation 1:4-8 John 1:29-34 John 18:33-37

Jesus Reigns

Queen Elizabeth II reigns as the monarch of the British Commonwealth and has done so since her coronation soon after the death of her father in 1953. For many people, Queen Elizabeth is seen as the Head of State, but does not make laws or process towards laws and decrees as this is the role of parliament and elected leaders. In recent days, there has been some press coverage over her health as she is now 95 and she has decreased her public engagements. The queen is respected and admired for her beliefs and as a woman of faith. At her coronation, the queen was presented a Bible. In receiving the Bible, she stated, "For me the teachings of Christ... provide a framework in which I try to lead my life." From these words, we realize that the Queen, the head of state of the countries within the British Commonwealth follows Jesus the ruler of all kings and queens and His teachings. Yes Queen Elizabeth II is the longest reigning monarch, but she believes in the King of all kings, Jesus.

Who is this King we call Jesus Christ? And how do we understand Him in our lives over two thousand years later? Today we recognize it to be the last Sunday after Pentecost and the last Sunday of the Christian Year. It is a transitional day which leads us directly to Advent, Christmas and the new Christian year. People are already thinking about Christmas, our American neighbours are gearing up for Thanksgiving and Black Friday and yet today our focus is on observing Christ the King which stressed the continuity between the celebration of the sovereignty, or reign of Jesus with the expectation that Jesus will come again. We have more than a baby to welcome at Christmas, we have a sovereign Christ. For we will sing: "Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King."

In John 1, John the Baptist is introducing Jesus to a group of people. He doesn't just say here's my cousin, Jesus. Or "Here's Jesus," no- John sees Jesus approaching and tells his listeners, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Then as an aside to those listening, this is the One I told you about-" After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me." I came before him and baptized with water so that he might become known. He was baptized and when the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, I knew that he was the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Then John states, "I have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

Wow- what an introduction! What if you were standing by John the Baptist in that moment when he saw Jesus coming down the road and heard these words? See that man—this is the Son of God? how might you respond? How did those listening answer? We do not what occurred then but as we continue to read through the gospel accounts of Jesus' life, this man the Son of God, changed the world by what he taught and did for others.

Jesus baptizes with the Spirit – of course he does! Jesus the Spirit and God the Creator/ Father are one! But did John the Baptist know that then? Or how?

Many of you have heard about Jesus for your entire lives. Some of you have not- but all of us are discovering more about Him as we continue to learn what he taught, said and did. But there are still many questions in our hearts as to why Jesus was arrested put on trial, crucified and buried. Yet what is most important is that death was not the end of Jesus- he rose from death because He is God's Son and the One sent to be the Saviour of all people.

At the time of Jesus' trial or should we say inquiry by Caiaphas and then Pilate these rulers were not clear of what they were going to do with him. Pilate asks, "What accusation do you have against him?" They responded, "He is a criminal otherwise we wouldn't have handed him over to you." Pilate then said, "Take him and judge him according to your law." But this is the key point here—the laws of the established religion could not put anyone to death, only Pilate and the rulers of the state could do so. The chief priests had already made their judgement—Jesus should die.

Pilate goes back to where Jesus is and asks him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Responding with a question, he asked, "Do you ask or did others tell you about me?" Where did Pilate get his information? Pilate responds, "Look, I'm not Jewish, it is your nation, and chief priests who brought you here. What did you do? Pilate is caught—is this man guilty of a crime punishable by death? What should he do? Release him? If he does not have him killed, what will happen – all the Jewish nation will be against him and demand his life.

It is in Jesus' response that Pilate's struggle continues. "My kingdom is not from here." With Jesus using the word "kingdom," Pilate reacts—so you are a king?

Jesus answers, "You say I am—I was born for this and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice. "What was Jesus stating? Did he make Pilate's task easier? Jesus knew that in order to redeem / save sinners from death he was born to live out his purpose by dying for truth. And what is the truth? That God is the one in charge, the creator- Christ and Spirit all in one. God is the one who knew that this needed to happen? But what does this mean for us? What is the truth about Jesus?

As Christians we have statements of belief about whom we follow and in whom we place our faith and trust and hope. But are we willing to risk it all when we consider that Jesus sacrificed everything for us as individuals and as people called to be

Who is Jesus? This poem by Dr James Allen Francis describes Jesus- One Solitary Life

He was born in an obscure village, The child of a peasant woman.

He grew up in still another village, Where he worked in a carpenter shop

Until he was thirty.

Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office.

He never had a family or owned a house.

He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city.

He never traveled two hundred miles From the place where he was born.

He did none of the things one usually associates with greatnes.

He had no credentials but himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him.

His friends ran away.

He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial.

He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.

While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property he had on Earth.

When he was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race, and the leader of mankind's progress.

All the armies that ever marched, All the navies that ever sailed,

All the parliament that ever sat, All the kings that ever reigned,

Put together have not affected The life of man on Earth

As much as that One Solitary Life.

As we lift up the name of Jesus and offer praise to him let us rejoice that He came to live, die and rise again for our sakes. Let us offer praise and thanksgiving to Christ as He is the Alpha and Omega, who is, who was and who is to come. Jesus is the Son of God who with the Spirit lives for all of eternity in the hearts of all who believe. Praise be to God let us sing! Jesus Shall Reign!