

**Sermon Notes of
Senior Pastor Glen Weber's Sermon on April 3, 2016
"Jesus and the Kingdom"
Part 1**

[In today's sermon, "Jesus and the Kingdom – Part 1", Senior Pastor Glen Weber shows that Jesus was proclaiming a kingdom, that wasn't to come 2,000 years later, but a kingdom that "is near".]

Notes:

Introduction:

- Each of you received a sheet in your bulletin with the Nicene Creed on one side and the Apostles' Creed on the other.
- Pastor Glen asks we take some time and read them slowly, and tell him if you notice anything interesting?
- Focus on what "is missing"
- Pastor Glen commented on this in a sermon six weeks or so ago!

The Creeds:

- Over the next couple sermons we will focus not just on the creeds but also on the message of the Gospels.
- Imagine that Jesus entire physical life is captured in a "comma" in the Apostles' Creed – "born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate".
- And a "semicolon" in the Nicene Creed – "And was made man: and was crucified also for us".
- The creeds, written after the Gospels, focused on who Jesus really is because that was being hotly debated.
- Sadly, many repeat the creeds every week in church, but have a limited understanding of what the Gospels were really trying to say to the church and to us today.

"When God Became King" – Bishop NT Wright – page 11

"My problem with this is that the canonical gospels and the creeds are not in fact presenting the same picture. This, actually, is a question that goes much wider and deeper than we have time to explore in this book, but at the heart of it we can sum up the problem like this. The great creeds, when they refer to Jesus, pass directly from his virgin birth to his suffering and death. The four gospels don't. Or, to put it the other way around, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all seem to think it's hugely important that they tell us a great deal about what Jesus did between the time of his birth and the time of his death. In particular, they tell us about what we might call his kingdom-inaugurating work: the deeds and words that declared that God's kingdom was coming then and there, in some sense or other, on earth as in heaven. They tell us a great deal about that; but the great creeds don't."

The Gospel writers:

- The Gospel writers were intent on telling the story of Israel and Israel's Messiah, coming to "restore all things."
- The Gnostics began to change the meaning of the kingdom – from God's kingdom on earth as in heaven, to more of a kingdom that was saving people "from" this world.
- The Gnostics focused on their misconception that everything physical was "evil" and everything spiritual was "good".

"When God Became King" – NT Wright

"The great second-and-third-century Christian teachers insisted, against such teaching, that God's rescue of the created order itself, rather than the rescue of saved souls from the created order, was central."

Today's thinking:

- Many Christians today still think God is saving us from this world and getting us TO heaven, rather than saving this whole created order – us included – for a much greater work that God is doing here on earth.

The Lord's prayer:

"When God Became King" – NT Wright

"One might say that the creeds and the canon were intended to stand side by side, each interpreting the other, with the Lord's Prayer as their obvious liturgical link."

The Fulcrum is the Lord's Prayer

*Matt. 6:9, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
10) your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
11) Give us today our daily bread.
12) And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'*

- Does one get the impression from the Lord's Prayer that we intended to be somewhere else than on earth? No, it's about living on this earth!
 - "Your kingdom come"
 - "Your will be done, on earth as in heaven"
 - "Give us daily bread"
 - "Forgive our debts"
 - "Protect us from temptation"
 - "Deliver us from the evil one"
- The dash on our tomb stone between the date of our birth and the date of our death hide the long story of what our life was all about.

The Gospel versus the creeds:

- The Gospels tell us how God became king of the world.

- The creeds were dealing with the whole concept of a Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- They show how believers could still be monotheists and also follow the Gospels and Paul’s teaching about the “Three” – and especially how Jesus is God.
- The Gospels focus on God become king and the creeds focus on Jesus being God.

Going to Heaven:

- Also, the focus in the church became about heaven as a reward for humanity.
- But, the entirety of the New Testament focuses on a “new heaven and new earth” that was being prepared for people after their bodily death and resurrection.
- Rom. 8:19, For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20) For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21) that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.
- Mark begins his Gospel with emphasis on the fact that Jesus came preaching the “kingdom of God.”

Mark. 1:14, After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

- Jesus went through Galilee proclaiming the good news of God.

15) “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

- Jesus wasn’t proclaiming a kingdom that was to come at least 2,000 years later, but a kingdom that “is near” – a kingdom that would begin after His resurrection!!

“When God Became King” – NT Wright

“At the center of the prayer itself we find Jesus teaching his followers to pray that God’s kingdom might come and his will be done “on earth as in heaven.” The “kingdom of heaven” is not about people going to heaven. It is about the rule of heaven coming to earth. When Matthew has Jesus talking about heaven’s kingdom, he means that heaven – in other words, the God of heaven – is establishing his sovereign rule not just in heaven, but on earth as well.”

Jesus Announced as King – by Pilate!

- The Gospel writers make a point of bringing the kingship of Jesus into the story of the crucifixion!
- They didn’t just mention those things for “historical detail” – but to make a point.
- On Palm Sunday pastor Glen encouraged us to read the “Easter stories” in the Gospels.
- And make note of the places where the phrases “Jesus as king” or “Jesus death on the cross” are mentioned.
- In John alone, there are MANY such references.

John 19:1, Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.

- Pilate has Jesus flogged responding to the demands of the Jewish religious leaders.

2) The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe

- The soldiers dress Jesus as a king – although with a crown of thorns instead of a crown of gold.
- Note that the soldiers didn't do that to the other two who were crucified with Jesus.

3) and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face.

- The Roman soldiers hail Him as "king of the Jews."
- While this was done in mockery, God is making a point to the Jewish people.

4) Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."

- Pilate presents Him to the people again – "He is innocent."

5) When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

- He presents Jesus not just as "the man" but as their king.

6) As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him.

- The chief priests cry out for His crucifixion.

6b) As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

- Pilate again says Jesus is innocent.

7) The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

- He has to die because He was profaning the law by saying He is "the Son of God".

8) When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid,

- Pilate is afraid of what is happening!

9) and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer.

- Pilate questions Jesus again.

10) “Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?”

- Pilate threatens Jesus for not answering.

11) Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

- Jesus declares that the power given to Him from God is much greater than Pilate’s power from Rome.

12) From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.”

- The crowd (Jewish leaders) threatens Pilate!
- That’s because Caesar claimed that he was the “son of god.”

13) When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha).

- Pilate now sits in his official seat of judgment

14) It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. “Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews.

- Pilate tells the Jews – “Here is your king.”
- They should have declared, “Hail, King Jesus!”

15) But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered.

- Instead, they totally defy the Law AND their cultural teachings by saying, “We have no king but Caesar!”
- How ironic, the Jewish religious leaders declare that the very one they have been fighting and hating for about 70 years, is their king!!

16) Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.

- He is handed over for crucifixion.

17) Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha).

- Immediately, the cross now comes into the picture.
- The cross will be the means Jesus is “lifted up as king!”

19) Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

- Pilate has a sign put on Jesus Christ that is supposed to be an expression of his CRIME.

19b) It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

- “Jesus of Nazareth. The king of the Jews.”

21) The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.” 22) Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

30) When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

- Before Jesus dies, He declares, “It is finished!”
- Yes, Jesus’ mission was fulfilled completely.

Concluding comments:

- Jesus had officially been lifted up by God as King of the Jews.
- Jesus had now finished the Old Covenant with Israel.
- And the New Covenant and the Kingdom of God was to be instituted at His resurrection.
- Jesus is working right now to enhance the Kingdom of God through all His believers.
- Jesus would declare that now ALL PEOPLE/NATIONS would be able to come to Him through His death and resurrection

Communion:

- Now, Jesus followers would partake of Jesus’ broken body, which indicates that He is in the process of healing our broken bodies and society.
- And we also partake of the wine as the “new covenant in Jesus’ blood.”

Blessing