

## Redefining “King”

### Scripture Reading — John 18:28-36

*“Are you the king of the Jews?” — John 18:33*

Earlier in his ministry of teaching and healing, Jesus had fed 5,000 people with a boy’s small lunch. The response of the people was to try to make Jesus king by force, but Jesus slipped through their fingers and withdrew (John 6:1-15).

In today’s reading from John 18, Jesus stands in front of Pilate, the local representative of Caesar, the most powerful man on earth. Pilate asks what should be a simple question: “Are you a king?” The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all speak of Pilate asking this central question.

But the answer is not so simple. Jesus has questions of his own for Pilate. Here Jesus seems to be getting at the  *motive* for Pilate’s question. Jesus repeatedly claims to have a kingdom, so that’s a partial “yes.” But he states that his kingdom “is not of this world.” Pilate has his hands on the levers of power here, but Jesus shows that  *he*’s the true King.

This month, we have been pondering the Bible’s message that Jesus is King. But if we insist on giving our own definitions to the ideas of “king” and “kingdom,” Jesus’ kingship and kingdom will slip through  *our* fingers.

Jesus fulfills the world’s longing for a true king, but he also redefines what it means to be King. That is because the kingdom Jesus brings is wholly other—it comes from the very heart of God.

### Prayer

*King Jesus, may your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as in heaven. Rule us in such a way that we submit our agendas to yours. Amen.*

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