

Redefining “Kingdom”

Scripture Reading — John 18:36-38

“But now my kingdom is from another place.” — John 18:36

“You are a king, then!” Pilate exclaims. He thinks he has an “aha, gotcha!” moment. Pilate knows what to do with would-be kings: squash them like bugs in order to keep the peace. He’s done it many times before with various upstarts and revolutionaries.

But Jesus’ reply is intriguing: “You say that I am a king.” Jesus doesn’t refuse the title; instead, he reorients and redefines it. He refuses to be pinned down by mistaken notions of his kingship and kingdom. This is not what Pilate is accustomed to, so it leaves him questioning the very nature of truth.

Jesus gives one clear piece of evidence showing that his kingdom is different: he offers no resistance to arrest. Every chief, prime minister, sultan, and national chairman has an elite bodyguard. Presidential palaces are heavily defended. Even the Pope has a bulletproof car. But at his arrest, Jesus asks no one to protect him (John 18:1-14). As Jesus himself shows, his kingdom is different: non-violent, submissive, even self-sacrificing. This sounds almost like an antikingdom, except that it is *the real thing*, and it reveals that all other kingdoms are merely imposters. This is no -ordinary kingdom, because this is no ordinary King.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, give us your life from above, that we may grasp and follow the ways of your seemingly upside-down yet surprisingly right-side-up kingdom. In your name we pray. Amen.

Written by Darrin Compagner — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/darrin-compagner>

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