

Behold Your King Jesus! (John 19:1-14)

I wonder what comes to your mind when you hear the word king? In we're to talk about kings in the Bible, we have to go outside our culture. We don't have kings in America except for sports teams, ex: local Sacramento Kings in NBA, or NHL fans have the Los Angeles Kings. Baseball fans in Seattle have a pitcher nicknamed 'King Felix.' If you're a Cleveland Cavs fan, my apologies, but King is a nickname for who? (Lebron James). For golf fans, 'the King' was the nickname for who? (Arnold Palmer). For NASCAR fans, which driver in the 60s and 70s was nicknamed 'the King'? (Richard Petty).

Soccer fans a generation ago might recognize a Brazilian legend nicknamed 'king' (anyone? Pele). In the 50s and 60s rock and roll scene, 'the King' was the nickname of...Elvis Presley. In the 80s and 90s pop music scene, 'the King' was the nickname of...Michael Jackson. In the early Hollywood days, actor Clark Gable also had the nickname 'the King.' Others who have been called 'the King' include Jan-Ove Waldner (less of a household name in our circles, Swedish ping pong pro), also a Kilkenny hurler, an Australian TV performer, a Scottish football manager, a Welsh rugby player, and of course - Ole Eina Bjorndalen - a Norwegian biathlete dubbed 'the king of Biathlon'.

I bring all that all up to say, the word 'king' is used commonly and lightly in our day, and all that title often means is that many people think he or it is the best at something, or hope they will be some day (Sacramento Kings). Another example: the restaurant name Burger *King*...need I say more? That title is just a title, trying to make a statement, but it doesn't carry any weight of royalty or true supremacy or sovereignty like the word 'king' meant in the biblical world and most of history. In modern Western pop culture, to speak of 'the king' of something often just means fan favorite, or if a sports athlete, maybe he's won more championships or trophies than others, but he doesn't have an unbroken reign or undisputed authority over others under him. We don't see true kings in our world like in times past, absolute rulership over a kingdom for decades. The only 'king' most of us have ever seen is a chess piece or a playing card. Western countries that have kings or queens today, like the UK, that type of royalty is limited by a constitution in a democracy.

But as we turn to the Bible, and I'd invite you to turn with me to John 19, to be a king had massive implications in the context of ancient dictatorships. Kings had supreme authority and sovereignty over subjects who must bow or face the consequences of rejecting the king's rightful rule. In NT times, the Empire's king was called Caesar, and Pilate was a governor under him.

This is where we left off before we took a break this summer for our series in the psalms, so let me just remind you of the context before I read the text. The Jews under Roman rule did not have the power to execute criminals so in Jn 18 they brought Jesus to Pilate. Pilate could care less about Jewish law but he does care about any threat to Roman law and order. So Pilate wants to find out does this guy claim to be Israel's king, not as a nickname or title, but a king with an army to fight Romans and to take back Israel's kingdom?

John 18:33 says *Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you **the King** of the Jews?"*³⁴ *Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?"*³⁵ *Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?"*³⁶ *Jesus answered, "**My kingdom** is not of this world. If **my kingdom** were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But **my kingdom** is not from the world."*³⁷ *Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?"* *Jesus answered, "You say that **I am a king**. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."*³⁸ *Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him."³⁹ *But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you **the King** of the Jews?"*⁴⁰ *They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!"* Now Barabbas was a robber. **19:1** *Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. ² And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. ³ They came up to him, saying, "Hail, **King** of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. ⁴ Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him..."*¹² *From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who **makes himself a king** opposes Caesar."*¹³ *So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha.¹⁴ Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "**Behold your King!**"**

The kingship of Christ is the key issue in this passage and for every person. In the verses I just read the word 'king' was used 10x and if we kept reading v. 15-21 we'd see the word 'king' is used 15x in these few verses. Whether or not you behold Jesus as your king is the central critical subject before us.

We've looked at the verses before v. 14 in earlier messages, for today I want to look at v. 14, focusing on '*Behold your King!*' We won't exhaust all of v. 14 today or even those 3 words at the end of it, but let's behold what we can. Only John tells us Pilate said of Jesus to the multitudes '*Behold your King.*' Matthew, Mark, and Luke don't give us this detail, but John does because it fits with John's themes since chapter 1 on beholding Jesus as King in all the aspects of that word in Bible time. John writes so we'll behold King Jesus truly. These 3 words go beyond Pilate's statement and are a bigger subject than we can cover in the next 40 or so minutes, it'll take the next few weeks:

Behold Your King, Part 1 (today introducing this, overview in John)

Behold Your King Jesus as God (part 2 next week)

Behold Your King Jesus the Savior of All

Behold Your King Jesus in Sovereign Grace

Behold Your King Jesus Over Sinful Government (before election)

Unbeknownst to Pilate, his words '*Behold your King!*' actually tee up for John the themes John's been hitting home. John loves ironies, like the man born blind in chapter 9 showing the spiritual blindness of Pharisees. Now in chapter 19 a pagan Gentile governor says what Jewish religionists refuse to say or see, Pilate calls leaders to see, to '*behold your King.*' He doesn't call Jesus '*our King,*' Pilate isn't a believer, but coming from Pilate of all people, this phrase clinches John's argument and culminates it: behold Jesus as King and Savior, God of Jews and Gentiles, sovereign over even sinful governors

It isn't the first time an unbeliever in John's gospel said more than he knew. In Jn 11 Caiaphas the high priest that year said to his fellow apostate leaders '*it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.*' *He did not say this of his own accord* [or 'own initiative,' or 'on his own,' it says it was unwitting prophecy] ... *Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad* (v. 50-52). Caiaphas didn't mean it's good for Jesus to die for our sin. He didn't try to predict particular redemption in Jesus dying for His people, but he did. And Pilate in a similar way unintentionally speaks like a prophet as he says '*Behold your King!*'

Charles Spurgeon explains: 'Everything said or done in connection with the Saviour during the day of his crucifixion was full of meaning, far fuller of meaning than the speakers or actors were aware. Transformed by the cross, even the commonplace becomes solemn and weighty ... Caiaphas...little thought that he was enunciating the great gospel principle of substitution.'

When the Jewish people cried out before Pilate “*His blood be on us and on our children,*” they little knew...[but Spurgeon asks where are you in this?] Messiah will be brought forth again this morning, not by Pilate, but by [his preacher] who longs to do him honour...when [Jesus] stands before you and is proclaimed again in the words, “*Behold your King!*” will you also cry, “*Away with him, away with him*”? Let us hope that there will not be found here hearts so evil as to imitate the rebellious nation and cry, “*We will not have this man to reign over us.*” Oh that each one of us may acknowledge the Lord Jesus to be your King, for beneath his sceptre there is rest and joy. He is worthy to be crowned by every heart, let us all unite in beholding him with reverence and receiving him with delight. Give me your ears and hearts while Jesus is evidently set forth as standing among you, and for the next few minutes let it be your only business to “*Behold your King.*”¹

These words in God's word by God's inspiration and by John's intention as the original author, ‘*behold your King*’ is like a big exclamation mark at the end of 19 chapters of Jesus as King in all that means. Let's take the words ‘*behold your King,*’ and unpack these big themes, looking at the big picture of John's gospel and really the NT, starting where the NT starts, in Mt 1:1.

So let's turn to Mt 1 and let's think about what it means to *behold your king*. To *behold* is to think about, to see, to consider, to give your attention to. In this case, it's thinking about Jesus as King, giving Him the attention a King deserves, considering His kingship, seeing and seeking first His kingdom. The word *king* means by definition reigning and ruling over a kingdom, and to be a rightful heir to a king's throne in the Bible you had to be of a kingly line by blood. That's the point of the first page of the NT, to show Jesus is in Israel's kingly line. This is the message of the gospel in its very beginning, behold your king Jesus in Mt 1:1, as proved by Christ's royal family tree:

- The first line of the NT calls Him ‘*Jesus Christ, the son of David...*’ (*Christ*=anointed Messiah-King, *son of David* also, 82x in gospel)
- And the names in v. 2 also were the promised line of Messiah-King:
 - o *Abraham* was promised ‘*kings shall come from you*’ and God promised his descendants a great kingdom and land (Gen 17)
 - o In v. 2 *Isaac, Jacob, Judah* also were given king/kingdom promises by a coming Messiah-King through their ancestry
- Mt 1:3 traces the kingly line through Judah's line to fulfill prophecy of Messiah-King also back in the 1st book of the Bible in Genesis 49
- Notice what v. 6 says of the earthly ancestry of Jesus, ‘*and Jesse the Father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon...*’

Notice Solomon isn't called *the king* and the other names in v. 7-11 aren't called kings even though they were the kings of Israel, but v. 6 calls David '*the king*' so v. 1 calling Jesus '*son of David*' is emphasizing Jesus as King.

Now look at Mt **2:1**: *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been **born king of the Jews**? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."* There's another prophecy in the early books of Moses behind that: '*a star shall come out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel...one from Jacob shall exercise dominion*' (Num 24:17-19, or NIV says it this way '*a ruler will come out of Jacob...*'). The first worshippers of Jesus as King in v. 11 were Gentiles bringing Jesus gifts fit for a king, and it may be Arabs first bowed to the Jewish Messiah. They understood the King of the Jews was not just for the Jews but for all who would come to worship and fall down like v. 11 and honor the King.

The song We Three Kings says '*Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice, Alleluia, Alleluia, earth to heaven reply*'²

Or '*Come and behold Him, born the King of angels, O come let us adore Him*' (3x)³

Or in O Holy Night: '*The King of kings thus lay in lowly manger, In all our trials born to be our Friend; He knows our need, To our weakness is no stranger.*

Behold your King, before Him lowly bend!' (2x)⁴

In Mt 3 John the Baptist comes preaching the kingdom is near and calling the people to make ready the way of the king. Like a herald in ancient times preparing the way for a king to visit his subjects, John tells the people to get ready, to bow when he comes, to repent, to turn from their wicked ways, to confess their crimes against the king because He has power to judge and to condemn and your only hope is to cry out for mercy before that day comes.

This is the NT message from the beginning, behold your king, His kingdom is at hand, it's right here, repent and be baptized, be cleansed for your King. When the King shows up in Matthew's gospel He preaches His kingdom (4:17) and what's it all about in the sermon on the mount (chapter 5-7) then in the rest of the gospel Jesus demonstrates His kingly power over Satan's kingdom of darkness. But turn back to John to see this theme in his gospel. John 1 begins with Jesus as the Word who is God, king of creation, the king of glory who became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory (v. 1-14). The first Jew to behold Jesus as 'king' with that title is in John 1:49. Nathanael said to Jesus, 1:49 '*Rabbi, you are the Son of God! **You are the King of Israel!***'⁵⁰ *Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."*

The greater things include turning water to wine in chapter 2, and healing a dying son in chapter 4, and healing a paralyzed man in chapter 5. Turn to chapter 6 and after Jesus multiplies loaves and fishes to feed thousands, Jn 6:15 says: ***Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.***

¹⁶ *When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸ The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened.*

²⁰ *But he said to them, “**It is I; do not be afraid.**” ²¹ Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land ...*

John wants you to behold your king. You don't make Him King, certainly not the kind of king the carnal multitudes wanted Jesus to be to get rid of all non-Jews and give out free food and health and wealth and prosperity. You don't make Jesus a King, He *is* King, and He sets the terms for who's in His kingdom and what kind of kingdom it is. John wants you to behold your King as He is. Behold your King's power to save and sustain! Behold what manner of King is this that even wind and waves obey! Behold your King who can turn water into wine or into a walkway for His feet just as easily!

Behold your King who cares for the disabled and the dying, the hurting and the hungry, a King who stoops to get involved with servants at a wedding, a King who sees us sitting under trees and sees everything about us, a King who knows our hearts and fears and meets us in the storm to calm them.

Are you afraid? Behold your king who says ***It is I; do not be afraid.*** Do you feel paralyzed at times by life? Behold your King who says ***rise and walk.***

Not sure how things will be provided for in the future? Behold your King.

Now turn to chapter 12 for the other behold your King scene. Palm Sunday, Jn 12:13: *So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna [Save us]! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even **the King of Israel!**” ¹⁴ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ¹⁵ “Fear not, daughter of Zion; **behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!**” ¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.*

That 'behold your king' statement took on greater meaning later for Christ's disciples, and it should for us as well seeing how Jesus has been glorified.

Fear not, daughter, behold your king! Fear not, children singing His praises. Fear not, young person, old person, don't be afraid, behold your King Jesus, the blessed One who comes in the name of the Lord. Matthew's gospel says *'This took place to fulfill...the prophet, "Say...**behold your king** is coming to you, gentle..."'* (Mt 21:4-5). Behold your King who comes in gentleness and lowliness to help the lowly, behold your King who humbly stoops to ride on a donkey and comes to the humble. v. 9 here quotes from Zech 9:9: *'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king...'* That takes us full circle back to Jn 19:14. That's the only other time in Scripture we see that exact phrase *'Behold your king.'* Pilate didn't realize it but he's quoting and fulfilling scripture saying *'Behold your king!'*

Even his disciples didn't realize it as first, but as Jesus was glorified, all the events and statements of that week leading up to the cross took on a greater meaning. This side of the cross, Jn 19:14 was written years later to complete one of the themes of the book so that you'll *behold your King* in John 19. Behold your King in v. 1 of Jn 19 being flogged, being whipped. Behold the stripes on His back from the cat of nine tails that tore his flesh apart; behold your king with this thought--by His stripes were are healed, spiritually and emotionally of sin and its effect, and one day physically eternally in heaven. Behold your King Jesus in faith, and all that has been torn by sin He'll heal.

Behold your King in v. 2 as they twist a crown of thorns and stab the spikes into His head. Behold your King as sorrow and blood flow mingled down, and know the Man of Sorrow knows sorrow and knows pain and His blood redeems us from the curse of sin that thorns symbolize in scripture. Behold your King in this verse wearing a purple robe of mockery in false honoring, and think of how Jesus took on our sin and shame to give us in exchange a robe of true righteousness. Behold your King Jesus and give Him true honor

Behold your King in v. 3 being hailed as king in sarcasm. Behold your King being struck in the face. See a beard with spit of soldiers stuck in it. Look at His cheeks bruised and beaten like a boxer's punching bag. Notice the black eyes swollen from blows that blindsided Him while He was blindfolded and His disfigured appearance marred more than any man. Behold your King as He is beaten and brutalized *by sinners for sinners*. Behold your King's love!

But this isn't John's last word on this theme. Turn to Rev 5 which was also written by John. As you're turning listen to Isaiah's prophecy of the future: *'Behold, a king will reign in righteousness...Your eyes will behold the king*

in his beauty...the LORD is our king' (32:1, 33:17, 22). The same John who wrote 'behold your king' in his gospel, in Rev 5:5 is told this 'stop weeping, **behold the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered ...** [and to King Jesus it says they sing v. 8] "*Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.*" This is the rest of the story after Pilate says 'behold your king' when Jesus looks conquered and about to be slain. John is told to behold the Lion who conquered so we can join his reign. Let your kingdom come on earth as in heaven. John beholds the King who turns weeping to worship.

This lion theme runs Genesis to Revelation. Gen 49:10 prophesied to Judah and ultimately to the King to come through His line: '*sons will bow down to you...Like a lion he crouches [it says of Messiah-King]--who dares to rouse him? The scepter [scepter meant a king] will not depart from Judah...until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. He will tether his donkey...he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes*' (v. 8-12 NIV). Israel first beheld their king on a donkey but He'll come again as the lion of the tribe of Judah, the ruler all tribes will worship and all nations will bow before, one with robes washed by the blood of the lamb who is worthy to open the book and to whom the iron scepter belongs.

Now turn to Rev 19. John wrote that Palm Sunday fulfilled an OT prophecy '*Behold your King is coming on a donkey, lowly...*' but John's NT prophecy begins '*Behold he is coming again on the clouds...*' (1:7). Behold your King is coming again. In Jn 19 Pilate's men sarcastically bow down to hail Jesus as king, but in Rev 19, v. 4, true worshippers hail the power of Jesus' name, and angels prostrate fall. And notice in v. 11, this time He's not on a donkey ¹¹ *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True [contrast to false trial Pilate was sitting over], and in righteousness he judges [contrast to Pilate's unrighteous judgment]*

Behold your King, His eyes aren't swollen shut or blackened anymore, the next time the world sees Him, v. 12 says *His eyes are like a flame of fire.* On His head is no crown of thorns, it says He's crowned with many crowns, coming forth with royal diadems crowned Lord of all. He's not wearing that mock robe anymore, v. 13 says He wears a real royal blood-dipped robe. No striking Him in the mouth on this day, mocking *king of the Jews*, v. 15 says His mouth strikes down all enemies, and v. 16 calls Jesus the *King of kings.*

Mike Abendroth writes *The Sovereignty and Supremacy of King Jesus*:

'Worship wars, music debates (traditional hymns vs. contemporary songs), and every other ecclesiological dispute could be virtually solved if we remembered that [Jesus] is *the* King and He is the only Audience that matters in worship. The focus needs to be on the One who has "worth" (... ancient root word in "worth-ship," or "worship). When people today move the spotlight and the center of attention away from the Lord and His Word, they move it toward themselves and end up saying... "I didn't like the music" [or] "the sermon was too long," "the hymns were boring"...

Immaturity and ignorance manifest themselves in self-centeredness and thinking...worship is about getting [what I get out of it], not giving. [But he says if we behold our king, if we see and consider and think about this truth about what a king is in Bible times, this will change everything] ... human monarchs were not at all impressed with those in their realm who received an audience with them but then wanted the meeting to be about themselves [or who walked away after meeting with the king saying] "I didn't like the king's throne"; "I thought the carpet wasn't royal enough"; "The trumpeters signifying the King's entrance weren't playing my style of music"; "The meeting with the king was too long." Can you imagine a person telling a king, "I don't like drums in your court"?... If you understand [Jesus] is King, it will help you to perceive worship biblically and to actually worship better

...Forget what others are doing or thinking in worship...Be taken up with the greatness of the King and His marvelous works. Some people say that they get 'bored' during corporate worship...Boredom in worship reveals a problem of focus. If the object of worship is God, boredom cannot exist ... Is there anyone greater, more awesome, and more wonderful? Redeemed sinners ought to gush with wonder and explode with joy, knowing that their King stooped low to serve them by sending His Son to die in their place...'⁵

NT worship calls for psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thanksgiving:

Psalms – *'clap your hands...shout...amid the sounding of trumpets...sing praises to our King...all the earth; sing praises with a psalm.'* Ps 47
'let the children...be joyful in their King! Let them praise his name with the dance...with the timbrel [hand drum]...praise him with the lute [10-string guitar]...stringed instruments and flute...Ps 149, 150

Hymns – 'Awake my soul and sing of Him who died for thee
And hail Him as they matchless King through all eternity'⁶
'O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His power and His love'⁷

Spiritual songs: 'behold our King, nothing can compare, come let us adore'⁸

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, “Ecce Rex,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 23 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1877), 265–266.

² We Three Kings of Orient Are.

³ O Come All Ye Faithful.

⁴ O Holy Night.

⁵ Mike Abendroth, *The Supremacy and Sovereignty of King Jesus*, p. 182-83, 193-94.

⁶ Crown Him with Many Crowns.

⁷ O Worship the King.

⁸ Behold our God.