

Behold Your King Jesus as God! (John 19:7-15)

A.W. Tozer said ‘What comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you.’¹ What comes into your mind when you think about God? Don't think what's the answer you'd give a Sunday School teachers, think of Monday to Saturday when you think of God, when you pray to Him, what concepts come into your mind when you think of God?

Mike Abendroth writes: ‘What thoughts or concepts flood your mind when you think of the meaning of the word “God”? When you think of God, how long does it take you to think of the word “king”? If you are like most Westerners, it may take a long time, if you even associate the word ... Have we as evangelicals lost the concept that “God is King”?...if we asked a person who lived 2,000 years ago in...Israel [what words describe God] ... Likely the response time to arrive at “God is King” would be much shorter [for many ancient Israelites they addressed God as ‘King’ in prayer every day of life.² Do we think of God as King as we pray, through the day?]....

God requires that we think about Him as “King” because that is how He has revealed Himself... You life cannot stay the same if you understand God as King... When you properly comprehend Him as King, this doctrine is like a legal steroid for the soul. Perhaps you're thinking this subject is not that important... [I'm struggling in my family], I have more critical matters in my life... [but], contemplating the greatness of the King more often than you find yourself despairing over your marital troubles... The more you yield to God as King, the more [it will impact marriage, family, all of life]³

OT Israel had a lot of problems, families falling apart, rebellion from God's law, a nation of everyone doing what was right in his own eyes, immorality and anarchy and enemies without and within, those were secondary issues, God's root verdict: *‘they have rejected Me as King over them’* (1 Sam 8:7). But the psalms restored God as King in the prayer and praise of His people:

- the Lord is my Shepherd-King of Ps 23 and King of Glory in Ps 24
- He's King of creation and the King enthroned over the flood, Ps 29
- In Ps 47 He's *‘most high...great king over all the earth to be feared’*
- The Lord is the King of Ps 45 whose bride He'll take to His palace

Later when Israel went off to exile, they had all kinds of problems in their lives personally and nationally, but the remedy God gave wasn't just tips or tricks for their horizontal relationships and struggles here on earth. God's Word started with the vertical relationship, as we behold our God and King:

Isa 40 begins with ‘*comfort, comfort,*’ and what is the comfort? v. 9: ‘*say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” Behold the LORD God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold...*’ ‘*Thus says the LORD, the King ...I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King... I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.*’ (Isa 40:9-11, 44:6, 43:15, 11)

In Isaiah God alone is King, Shepherd, Holy One, Savior, Creator, and there is no other. In John’s gospel Jesus is all those things: Creator in Jn 1, He’s called ‘*Savior*’ in Jn 4, He’s called ‘*the Holy One of God*’ in Jn 6. He’s the ‘*Shepherd*’ of the OT prophets in Jn 10 and ‘*the King of Israel*’ in Jn 12.

Please turn in God’s Word to John 19 and today we again behold our King, and John wants us to behold in faith King Jesus as God. Jonathan Edwards presented his most famous message, ‘sinners in the hands of an angry God.’ The message John presents in Jn 19 is ‘God in the hands of angry sinners.’ A mob of angry sinners came to Jesus hours before this to arrest Him. When they ask in the garden who Jesus is, He says ‘*I Am,*’ and they all fall down. The whole mob and the Roman soldiers are knocked down by the power of Jesus’ name. The One who shares the same name of God from the OT and the same nature of God as His Son, the God who speaks to sinners in the OT now surrenders to sinners in the NT, God in the hands of angry sinners.

In the end of Jn 19:14 we have these words we began to look at last time, ‘*Behold your King.*’ This is part of a context culminating in Jn 20:31. Look at 20:31 ‘*these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*’ There are many things about Jesus John doesn’t record, as v. 30 says, but what he chose to write was so that you would behold and believe Jesus is the Christ (Messiah-King) and ‘*the Son of God,*’ God’s Son and God the Son. This is on the heels of Thomas calling Jesus God in v. 28, this is what he called the risen Christ in v. 28 ‘*My Lord and my God!*’ Thomas beholds Jesus as ‘my Lord and my God,’ and this is written so you would too would behold your King Jesus as your God and your Lord to have life in the name of the King.

So look back at Jn 19, and this is also part of what John has written so you will believe Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah-King), the divine Son of God. Pilate 3x says Jesus is not guilty of any crime, much less any capital crime. In Jn 19:7 the Jewish leaders said to Pilate “*We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.*”

When did Jesus do that? Several times, we'll look at some of them in a little bit, but the most recent was hours earlier when the Jewish high priest asked Jesus if He was the Christ, the Son of God. Mark's gospel said Jesus replied *"I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."* And the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" And they all condemned him as deserving death (Mk 14:62-64). But the Jews did not have legal authority to kill Jesus, so after that interrogation they bring Him to Pilate for execution.

Jn 19:8 *When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid.* That means Pilate had already been afraid, but now he's even more afraid. Why? In v. 1-4 to satisfy the mob, Pilate had Jesus unjustly flogged and mocked. Pilate knew He's innocent but now heard the title Son of God used of Him. In the Greco-Roman world they feared offending a god or his son, they had altars to unknown gods just to make sure; if Pilate just mistreated a divine being--bad news! Pilate had never heard any man speak like or even act like Jesus in suffering like that, and Jesus just told Pilate His kingdom was from another world. Pilate now hears a 'Son of God' claim so he fears even more--if it's true, Pilate's doomed. Not only that, Pilate had gotten a text message from his wife also that morning, a text of paper with this message delivered as Pilate sat on his judgment seat: *'Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream'* (Mt 27:19).

Jn 19:9 *He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.*¹⁰ *So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?"*¹¹ *Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."*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."* [note v. 7 'made himself Son of God']¹³ *So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat*

...

Now notice these Jewish leaders say Jesus made Himself a king, they knew making Himself the Son of God (v. 7) was also making Himself out to be a king. They had heard crowds call Jesus *'the King of Israel'* on Palm Sunday, and even children joined in, now much to their chagrin, Pilate joins in at the end of v. 14 when he says to these same Jewish leaders: *'Behold your King!'*

Pilate is sitting on the seat of judgment and we'll see next week the verdict of judgment for Jesus to receive the death penalty, but all these details John writes are so you will behold your King Jesus, Christ-Messiah-King, the Son of God, so that you can be given life instead of the death you deserve.

But before we get to the rest of the story, notice this detail of authority in v. 10 where Pilate claims authority over whether Jesus lives or dies, but Jesus says in v. 11 Pilate actually has no authority over Him at all but what God allows. Turn to chapter 10 where the same word authority is used for who really had authority to take the life of Jesus. In Jn 10:15 Jesus said He was the good shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep. He says of His life ¹⁸ *No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.* No one is able to take my life, He says, I'll only give up my life of my own initiative.

No Jew or Gentile authority has that power. In resurrecting Lazarus after he was dead 4 days in the next chapter, Jesus demonstrated divine authority to take up life again, and He says here of His own life that He alone had power to lay down His life and the power to take it up again, to resurrect Himself. Only God has authority over life. The one and only God alone has power to raise the dead. Jesus is claiming He is God! v. 30 *'I and the Father are one.'* ³¹ *The Jews picked up stones again to stone him.* ³² *Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?"* ³³ *The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."* Remember Jn 19:7, 'He made Himself the Son of God...He deserves to die'? Here they say it's blasphemy to make Himself God, and in v. 36 Jesus equates that with saying I'm the Son of God

³⁶ *do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?* ³⁷ *If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me;* ³⁸ *but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."*

Look at Jn 8:56, He says ⁵⁶ *Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.* ⁵⁷ *So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"* ⁵⁸ *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."* ⁵⁹ *So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*

In OT law you stoned men for blasphemy. In v. 57 they maybe thought He was crazy--but what He says in v. 58 goes beyond--'*I Am*' is the title of the pre-existent God in the Jewish Bible. When Moses was at the burning bush, the voice from it said '*I am the God of your father...Abraham...*' Moses asks what is your name to tell the people of Israel, answer? '*I AM.*' Earlier in Gen 15, '*before Abraham was,*' back when Abram was his name, God began His covenant promise to Israel with this: *Fear not Abram, I am.* So even before Abraham was His name, God revealed His own name '*I am.*' In Jn 8:58, Jesus says '*I am,*' i.e., that was me talking to Abram and Moses, I share God's name and nature as His Son, I and the pre-existent God are one.

Go back to Jn 5 for one more example of Jn 19:7, claiming to be God's Son. The context is Jesus just showed His power to heal a man on the Sabbath. The Jewish leaders were offended that Jesus was doing miraculous work on the day of rest. ¹⁷ *But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."* ¹⁸ *This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.* There's no biblical law against healing on the Sabbath, but Jesus broke their man-made extra-biblical rules, and His answer is basically: God the Father is always at work each Sabbath, it's ok for the God the Father and God the Son

These Jews wanted to kill Jesus for blasphemy on two counts now, and the big one is Jesus called God 'my Father,' making Himself equal to God. This is a big part of the background of Jn 19:7, Jesus making Himself to be God. And notice here Jesus doesn't correct them for thinking He made Himself to be equal with God, Jesus presses the issue further, and makes it even more clear in v. 22: *The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,* ²³ *that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father ...* ²⁷ *And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.*

The Jews were right about this in Jn 19:7, a man claiming to be the Son in terms like this would be death-deserving blasphemy of the highest order if that man is not God. Look at v. 23: no man or angel can say 'everyone must honor me just as they honor God, everyone must give the exact same honor to me that is due the Father.' The Jewish scriptures say to God '*your name alone do we honor*' (Isa 26:13 NIV), but here is a Jewish man saying all men are to honor Him just like God. The same Isaiah says God will judge all, Isa 66:16 '*by fire will Jehovah execute judgment...upon all*' (ASV). God is the one who executes judgment on all, Jn 5 says Jesus is the one so Jesus is God

²⁸ *Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice [that's the voice of the Son of Man from v. 27, Christ's voice] and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.*

That's the same word 'judgment' used in Jn 19, same word evil Pilate asked of the Jews 'what evil has he done.' v. 27 talks about the authority to execute judgment, that's what Pilate claimed he had over Jesus, but the truth is Pilate had just a limited jurisdiction under God. v. 22 says the true judgment of all is given to Jesus, and He must be honored more than any earthly judge who we address as 'your honor.' v. 23 says we must honor Jesus as the Father. If you don't honor Jesus as God, you will suffer eternal dishonor in judgment.

On an earthly temporal level, Pilate's voice could send men to their graves, Christ's words will bring all men out of them for the day of judgment. In Jn 19 Pilate said he had authority to execute Jesus, but here v. 27 says the true authority to execute judgment eternally is given to Jesus as the Son of Man. Pilate in Jn 19 thinks he sits in judgment over Jesus (and some today think they can judge Him), but v. 22 says He sits in judgment over Pilate and all.

John MacArthur: 'In His trials before corrupt earthly judges who falsely condemned Him, the one true Judge who was sinless, who is the pure eternal Judge to whom all final judgment is assigned, was found guilty of things He did not do. He is the Judge before whom ... Annas, Herod, the Sanhedrin, and Pilate... at the final tribunal... will be... condemned by the very One they condemned, sentenced by the very One they sentenced ... [So behold your King in Jn 19, the true Judge in a false trial, Jesus] possessed a sovereign scepter of absolute power and authority was given a reed and hit in the face with it. The [Lord of glory] whose robe is the covering of perfect righteousness and light was given a faded soldier's tunic in mockery. The One who has the right to call everyone to fall down and kneel before Him ... was treated with contempt by soldiers who mockingly bowed down, knelt before Him and then punched Him in the face. The one who is King of Kings, the One who lifts up and puts down all rulers, who will vanquish all kings when He establishes His earthly kingdom and reigns as King of kings' and Lord of lords, that One suffered rejection by rulers and people alike ...'⁴

But one day everyone who has ever lived will be resurrected, as v. 28 says, and as Paul says every knee will bow. But only those who truly honored King Jesus in this life, Him as God deserves, they alone get eternal life.

But as the end of v. 28 says, all evildoers will face eternal judgment. The way to heaven isn't being good, it's believing God, v. 24: *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

Do you hear Christ's Word and believe? If not, behold your King in faith as you hear His Word today, believe Him, trust Him for eternal life, and you can pass from death to life and avoid coming into eternal judgment for your sins. The King has authority to judge the fate of His subjects, the King also has power to forgive, to pardon rebels who accept His terms: unconditional surrender. Bow your will to the King, submit to His kingship over your life, confess your sins against the King, turn by grace, there's saving mercy for you. Behold Jesus as *your* King and Savior or you'll behold Him as Judge.

That's what this means for unbelievers. What does this mean for believers? I want to end where we started, how we speak to God and think about God on Monday morning and throughout the week. The gospel of John calls us to behold our King, to think about Him as King, and this really ties in to the concept of the King in Bible times who would sit on His throne as Judge.

King Solomon's throne room was called '*the Hall of Judgment*' (1 Kgs 9:9). Scripture says his '*throne had six steps...and on each side of the seat were armrests and two lions standing beside the armrests, while twelve lions stood there, one on each end of a step on the six steps*' (10:19-20). Lions? He wrote in Pr 19:12 '*A king's wrath is like the growling of a lion, But his favor is like dew on the grass.*' If you approached the king, you'd be vividly reminded by the lions on each step, the king's wrath is like a growling lion, how much better to have his favor, his grace, like the gentle refreshing dew. 'criminals had to approach kings with knives tied under their chins so...they were forced to look the king in the eye as they received their punishment. Knees would have been knocking and teeth chattering, as "*a king who sits on the throne of justice disperses all evil with his eyes*" (Prov. 20:8).¹⁵

Ps 11: '*the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them. The LORD examines the righteous, but...on the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur*' (v. 4-6 NIV). Ezekiel received a vision of that throne surrounded by lion-faced creatures whose appearance was as burning coal, and it was like flashes of lightning as they moved, and the one on the throne had '*appearance of fire enclosed all around*' (Ezek 1). What man can approach the throne of God? Ezekiel sees it and can't stand!

John gets a vision of heaven's throne room in Rev 4: *'From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire...living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty..."'*

Daniel also got a vision of the throne room of God, the Ancient of Days, he says in Dan 7: *'His throne was flaming with fire...A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened...I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His ...kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.'* Behold King Jesus, the Son of Man who can approach the ancient of Days, on behalf of His kingdom!

Isaiah saw a vision of the holy, holy, holy Lord seated on the throne, and he said *'Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen **the King**...* This Lord of hosts was the King that Isaiah beheld with his eyes and he's undone. The gospel calls us to behold the King, but as sinners we need what Isaiah experiences next, Isa 6:7 *'He touched my mouth...and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips...your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven'* (NASB). Behold your King who deals with your sin from His altar, His cross

Let's close in John 14 and with all that in mind that no sinful man can come to God the Father, none of us can approach His throne, look at the familiar words of Jn 14:6, end of v. 6: *'No one comes to the Father except through me.'* Through Christ, as we behold our King who was slain for us and rose for us, we can come to the throne of God as Father, not as judge, as Father. We come to the Father though Jesus not just in salvation, but in prayer, too: ¹³ *Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* ¹⁴ *If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.*

In the old days, people used to say 'open in the name of the King.' Heaven's doors are always open for prayer in the name of King Jesus. You can speak to the King directly, He says *'ask me anything in my name.'* And amazingly, Jn 15:15 says the King calls His followers friends. He befriends us, brings us to His throne in His inner circle, the intimate closeness of King's friends

Think of this as you go through your day and as you pray tomorrow, when weak or tempted, behold a King *'able to sympathize with our weaknesses ...one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need'* (Heb 4:15-16).

David prayed to God as King and taught Israel to pray that way in Psalm 5: *'Hearken unto the voice of my cry, **my King**, and my God: For unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning...'* This is an inspired pattern in the morning to direct my prayer to the King and then to look up. Another says of prayer *'May the King answer us when we call'* (20:9 NKJV). Is the Lord's kingship a practical doctrine for someone afflicted or weak in heart, or some depressed or oppressed, or a single mom when things don't seem fair or just? Psalm 10:16 *'The LORD is king forever and ever...LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear¹⁸ to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed...*

Heb 12:2 *'looking to Jesus...seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*³ *Consider him* who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted...¹² *Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees... Behold your King Jesus!*

¹ A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 1.

² One of the prayers the religious Jews prayed every day was "May you be our King, you alone." -- Ronald Whitacre, *John: The IVP New Testament Commentary*, p. 456.

³ Mike Abendroth, *The Supremacy and Sovereignty of King Jesus*, p. 13-18.

⁴ <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/43-106/jesus-appears-before-pilate-part-4>

⁵ Abendroth, p. 156.