

Connecting Minds

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31)

The Gospel of John

Chapter 18:35-37

"Pilate answered him, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nations and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here. Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.'"

"My kingdom is not of this world..." The first thing we learn from this statement is basic – Jesus does in fact have a kingdom - "My kingdom..." This we can see from many Scriptures as a prophecy regarding Christ. Psalm 2:6,7 says "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion..." Isaiah 9:6,7 says "There will be no end upon the throne of David and over his kingdom..."

The second thing we learn from the statement is the kind of kingdom Jesus possesses - "My kingdom is *not of this world*..." This surely confused Pilate to no end. What are we looking at? What kind of kingdom is it that Jesus reigns and rules in? One, it is a kingdom that is entered through rebirth – "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God..." (John 3:3). Peter says it is an everlasting kingdom (2 Peter 1:11). Paul says "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit..." (Romans 14:17).

To a confused Pilate Jesus offers straightforward proof to indicate that His kingdom does not pose any threat to the Romans – "If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight..." No one has fought for Him. His closest followers fled the scene. If He were an earthly king, He would not have been taken by the Jews without a fight and He would not be now in front of Pilate.

Having heard Jesus' answer, Pilate asks again "Are You a king then...?" We see the increasing difficulty Pilate was having in understanding the nature of Jesus'

kingdom. From a purely human standpoint we can see why. First, Jesus was at his mercy. Second, Jesus was accused by His own people, those that He was supposedly king over. Third, no one was defending Him.

Jesus' answer is one of the Scriptures' most profound statements. He starts out by saying that He is indeed a king – "You say rightly that I am a king..." But this time He describes His kingdom positively. However, He defines it in a rather strange way. He defines it by His mission. He doesn't define it by boundaries, or by armies, or by constitutions, courts and laws. He describes it as a mission of truth. His kingdom is a kingdom of truth.

He speaks of His entry into this world in two different ways. First, He says "For this cause I was born..." Most people do not speak like this, as though they were born for a specific destiny. Winston Churchill often felt all through his life that there would come a point where all the world would look to him to save it from terrible disaster. He called it his "destiny". But few people speak like this.

Second, He says "For this cause... I have come into the world..." Nobody, not even Churchill, speaks like that. What Jesus is indicating by using this phrase is that He has existed before He entered the world. I have "come into" this world as if He were simply walking into a room. When we walk into a room we say "I came into the room" not "I was born into this room." But with Jesus, it would be a mistake if He had only stopped at saying "I was born" because that would not rightly describe His nature. Jesus, even in His trial before a Roman official, never forgot who He was – God in flesh.

TableTalk

So often today the church and the state get mixed up. Christians seek to bring about the kingdom of God through legislative enactments. It is right for Christians to take up public office and influence good and godly decision making but we also must remember that Jesus kingdom is not of this world.

Read Philippians 3:17-21. Where is our true citizenship? And what is our eager hope and expectation for ourselves and for the renewal of our world?