

# LESSON 293

## CHRIST THE KING

Related Scripture: John 18:1-14

**KEY VERSE:** "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."— Luke 1:33.

Lesson Scripture: John 18:33-38;  
19:4-11

### Introduction:

Rejection by condemned sinners of the only Savior Who could deliver them from the guilt and power of sin is in itself a monstrous folly; but when we remember that this Savior is the rightful King of all creation, we see that the enormous wickedness of such rejection is more than folly.

Earthly rulers are limited in power and often are not fit for the positions they hold. Even so, they are due some respect, and certainly ought not to be rejected or deposed without just cause. But the King of kings (Rev. 17:14; 19:16) is infinitely worthy (Rev. 5:12). To refuse His rule is the beginning, the end, and the substance of sin.

This week's lesson considers the rejection by Jewish and Gentile authorities of the eternal King of all. An outline follows:

1. Arraignment, John 18:33-35
  - a. The King questioned, 33
  - b. The King questioning, 34
  - c. The King quitted, 35
2. Averments, John 18:36-38
  - a. The King acquainting, 36
  - b. The King acquiescent, 37
  - c. The King acquitted, 38
3. Arbitrament, John 19:4-6
  - a. The King rebuffed, 4
  - b. The King ridiculed, 5
  - c. The King rejected, 6
4. Aggrievement, John 19:7-9
  - a. The King's title, 7
  - b. The King's terror, 8
  - c. The King's tactics, 9
5. Assignment, John 19:10, 11
  - a. The King's submission, 10
  - b. The King's sovereignty, 11

### Notes on the Printed Text:

**Arraignment, John 18:33-35.**

Whole books have been written by competent Christian lawyers on the irregularities and illegalities of the series of "trials" leading to the crucifixion of Christ. Our present lesson is from John's account of Jesus' arraignment before Pilate, the Roman governor, after the Jewish authorities had already determined that He must be put to death.

**The King Questioned, 33.**

If Jesus had been willing to serve the narrow national interests and ambitions of the Jews, He could indeed have been accepted as an earthly king and so have been guilty of the crime of sedition of which they now charged Him. There was a time when they desired to "take him by force, to make him a king." (Jn. 6:15.)

Note that Christ was condemned on two completely different charges, both false, in different courts. The Jews condemned Him for blasphemy, because He claimed to be the Son of God. But He was not guilty of blasphemy, because His claims were true. When they brought Him to Pilate, however, they changed the charge to sedition, claiming that Jesus was trying to set Himself up as a king in rebellion against Caesar. This was the very thing that Jesus had refused to do.

Pilate had no jurisdiction over the religious charge, but he must recognize the political charge. It was on this charge, therefore, that he questioned Jesus: "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

**The King Questioning, 34.**

Of course, if Jesus had been a political agitator, an ambitious rebel against Rome, Pilate would have known about it: it was his responsibility to maintain order. So Jesus answered with a question of His own. In effect He was reminding Pilate that the charge was completely without foundation, having no supporting evidence.

**The King Quitted, 35.**

On the other hand, Jesus had no defenders; disciples and friends had fearfully forsaken Him; the authorities of His own people, quitting all bounds of law and decency, had brought Him to an alien governor for execution as a common criminal. What terrible crime had He committed?

**Averments, John 18:36-38.**

For the record, Jesus made some clear statements of truth so that there could be no excuse for those, including Pilate, who unjustly accused and condemned Him.

**The King Acquainting, 36.**

Always Jesus had spoken of His kingdom in such terms as the "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven." His ministry was not intended to upset the kingdoms of this world at that time; He will attend to them later. So far as Pilate could understand His words, therefore, Jesus acquainted him with the spiritual nature of His present kingdom.

**The King Acquiescent, 37.**

Yet the kingdom is no less real for being spiritual. If Pilate insists on an answer to the question, "Art thou a king?" Jesus must confirm the fact. But it is a kingdom in which the King reigns by teaching the truth, and in which the subjects serve by obeying the truth.

**The King Acquitted, 38.**

Even so worldly a judge as Pilate, though he might not recognize the truth when he heard it, could find no evidence of criminality in such talk. Though he lacked the character to stand by his own decision, his official verdict was a clear and definite acquittal: "I find in him no fault."

#### Arbitrament, John 19:4-6.

Power corrupts, it has been often observed, and in this world arbiters of other men's lives are seldom motivated by high principle, though they like to pretend that they are. Three times Pilate proclaimed the innocence of Jesus, and then ordered His crucifixion. But in all soberness he was no worse than any other judge who knowingly sets free the guilty and condemns the innocent to secure his own position.

#### The King Rebuffed, 4.

Vainly attempting to appease the hatred of the Jewish leaders toward Jesus, Pilate had given Him into the hands of the soldiers for scourging. If he hoped to excite some pity in their hardened hearts, it was a vain hope. But for the second time he declared, "I find no fault in him."

#### The King Ridiculed, 5.

It must have been a pitiable sight when the King of glory wore a bloody crown of thorns and a robe of royal purple in submission to the mockery of the Roman soldiers. And now Pilate brought Him forth for the ridicule of the rabble.

#### The King Rejected, 6.

Priests and other officers of the temple were in that mob, and the sight of some blood only stirred their lust for more. "Crucify! Crucify!" they shouted. Do it yourselves, said Pilate in effect; and then for the third time, "I find no fault in him." But obviously a judge and governor with little enough concern for justice to permit a mob to kill an innocent man could, with a little more pressure, be made to do their bloody killing for them under the cloak of a spurious legality.

#### Aggrievement, John 19:7-9.

Finally the Jews admitted to Pilate their real grievance: the charge of sedition was intended only to give the Roman governor an excuse to give the order for a crucifixion desired for religious reasons.

#### The King's Title, 7.

"He made himself," that is, He claimed to be, the Son of God. And that not in any watered down or "modernistic" sense, but in the Messianic sense of an eternal and divine relationship with the Father. Now, if Jesus was not Who and What He claimed to be, then He was guilty of blasphemy and the Jews were right in demanding His death. But His claims were true. He was and is the eternal Son of God.

#### The King's Terror, 8.

Naturally Pilate could not permit himself to believe it, but for at least a few fleeting moments he seemed barely touched by the fear of God. Just suppose that Jesus was in fact God, the Son of God! The thought must bring terror to the heart of any unrepentant sinner, especially one conspiring with the enemies of God to crucify His Son!

#### The King's Tactics, 9.

But the King of glory does not do things our way. It was no part of His plans to avoid death by converting Pilate. At this point in Pilate's quandary, "Jesus gave him no answer." In a sense we may say that the King cooperated with His enemies in letting them do their worst, because He intended to use their worst to do His best.

#### Assignment, John 19:10, 11.

When the wicked apparently prevail for a time, it does not mean that God has died or abdicated His throne. The King despised and rejected is still the King, assigning responsibility for evil deeds with a view to ultimate judgment.

#### The King's Submission, 10.

Since Jesus chose not to exercise His divine power to save Himself, it was true that Pilate had in his hands the power to crucify or to release Him. For the time and for His own purposes the King was submitting Himself to the power of creatures who owed submission to Him.

#### The King's Sovereignty, 11.

Jesus was far from being intimidated by Pilate's threats. Aware of His own absolute sovereignty and infinite power, He pointed out the simple fact that wicked men are dependent on their Creator for their very existence and for whatever power they may have even to do evil. The sovereign Judge will yet bring them to account for their misuse of the power He has given them.

Note Jesus' statement that the sin of Judas Iscariot (or perhaps of the Jewish high priest) was a greater sin than the sin of Pilate. This statement is enough to expose the folly of false preaching that one sin is as bad as another. There are degrees of sin in God's sight, as there will be degrees of punishment in hell.

#### Key Verse:

"And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."—Luke 1:33.

Interpreters may differ as to what is meant by "the house of Jacob"; but at least the angel Gabriel made it clear that Jesus shall reign for ever, and that His kingdom shall never end. Hallelujah!