

Rom. 14:19
So then let
us follow
after things
which make
for peace,
and things
whereby
we may
edify one
another.

John 8:32 And
ye shall know
the truth and
the truth shall
make you free.

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“FOR THIS CAUSE I WAS BORN”

by Russ Bowman

The gospel accounts of Jesus’ trial, particularly those of **Luke** and **John**, offer an interesting perspective to the accusations which were brought against Jesus. While the Jewish council focused their accusations and inquiries upon whether Jesus claimed to be “*the Christ, the Son of God*” (**Mt.26.63f**), their charges before Pilate were somewhat different. “*We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King*” (**Lk.23.2**). In John’s account, Pilate leaves the accusers and enters into the Praetorium and has a discussion with Jesus about that charge.

“*Are You the King of the Jews?*” he asked the Lord (**Jn.18.33**). Jesus, after addressing the source of that charge, answers the question very plainly. “*My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight...but now My kingdom is not from here... 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...*” (**v. 36-37**). Pilate is clearly intrigued by Jesus, even though he responds somewhat cynically to the idea of truth. He accurately perceived that Jesus posed no immediate political/military threat to Roman rule in Judea, and thus pronounced Him innocent. It seems to me that he may have even addressed the Jewish accusers with some degree of sarcasm as he repeatedly refers to Jesus as “*the Christ*” in **Mt.27.17-22**. He seems to have well grasped the truth of what was happening before him (**Mt.27.18; Jn.19**) even though he caved in to the political pressure placed upon him. And while the Roman governor finally commanded that Jesus be crucified, he was clearly disturbed somewhat about the true identity of Jesus as a King over a kingdom not of this world. The sign placed over Jesus at His crucifixion almost appears to be Pilate’s defiant confession to the Jews that he did not dismiss Jesus’ claim to royalty (**Jn. 19.19-22**).

What was the fundamental charge against Jesus became an important part of the early gospel message

– that Jesus was God’s King sitting upon God’s throne (**Acts 2.29-36; 5.30-31; 8.12; 10.42; 17.6-7; 19.8; 20.25; 28.23**). More so, that Jesus was God as King sitting upon God’s throne. Notice in the above passages (along with many others) that the message of the gospel was often summarized in preaching about Jesus as King or about the kingdom of God – God’s rule on the earth. Those of us who are followers of Jesus today likely don’t think in these terms, though we understand them intellectually and accept them as factual. Yet I think we sometimes fail of some important principles because we don’t think in terms of kings and kingdoms. We who are Americans have never experienced the idea of monarchy, and are in fact suspicious of any ruler who has too much authority. However, the very story of redemption is not only about restoring the relationship between man and God, but also about restoring in the eyes of men the proper position that God should assume in the created universe. While He has never ceased to reign, we have failed of appreciating that truth and man as a whole has rejected His rule. Yet the Bible has, from the beginning, portrayed God as King and Ruler over all of His creation.

Actually, the earliest biblical references to God as King date back to the time of Moses. In **Ex.15.18**, the song of Moses ends with, “*The LORD shall reign forever and ever.*” It is difficult to perceive how men thought of God during the patriarchal age and there is no mention in **Genesis** or **Job** of God in the position of King. However, His position as God, and thus a Being of power and authority, is clearly expressed and accepted in that time. In the Mosaic age, however, it becomes obvious that God is understood to be the King over His people. The tabernacle is patently designed to represent a palace with a throne (the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant), and the Jews appear to have appreciated that God was claiming that place (**Judges 8.23**). When the people ask Samuel for a king, he reminds them that they are rejecting God as their king (**I Sam.8.7; 12.12**), and God begins at that point to pave

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the way for His own return to the throne. He first gave them a king like they wanted (big, powerful but faithless Saul) and then a king like He wanted (David, a man after His own heart). In David and Solomon, He showed His people what life could be like under a godly King, foreshadowing what life could be like under the God King. Israel's history in **Samuel, Kings**, and **Chronicles** is a royal record. Israel's poetry repeatedly hails the promise and potential of a restored divine rule (**Ps.2, 5, 10, 20, 24, 44; 45; 47; 95; 110; 145**, etc.). And Israel's prophets are looking forward to the last days wherein God would reestablish His rule and place His King upon His everlasting throne (**II Sam.7; Isaiah, Daniel**, etc.). Gabriel's announcement to Mary (**Lk. 1.26f**) identifies her child as the One to Whom God would give *"the throne of His father David...and of His kingdom there will be no end"* (**v.32-33**). Thirty years later, when Nathanael would hail Jesus as *"the Son of God...the King of Israel"* (**Jn.1.49**), he acknowledged the very fulfillment of God's intention from the beginning of time – that God would again be understood to be King over all the earth. Thus, the words of Jesus to His apostles at His ascension – *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth,"* (**Mt.28.18**). This position of kingship is then affirmed over and over by His messengers (**I Cor.15.23-28; Eph.1.20-21; Phil. 2.9f; Col.1.13; Heb.1.8f; II Pet.1.11**; etc.). And finally, the bible story concludes with the victorious King of Kings leading His army against His enemies and destroying all who refuse or rebel against His rule (**Rev. 19-20**). God again rules.

The implications of the rule of Christ are many, and we ought to give some careful thought to the import of this concept. The fact of His complete authority is perhaps the most important and perverted of these implications. As residents in a democracy (of sorts), our standards of law are determined by the populace – "a government of the people, by the people, for the people" (Lincoln's Gettysburg Address). As we have seen in our day, if Americans don't like a law, we change it. Yet followers of the King have no such rights. We are ruled. We have submitted to Him who has all wisdom, authority, and power. What He declares is law and is not subject to our opinion or judgment. People in our day have fooled themselves into thinking that we can make addendums and adjustments to the law of the King and still please Him. The very truth of His rule ought to prompt some degree of fear to anyone who would suggest that we can do whatever we want and still please the King. What a farce! And yet this remains by far the most common element of religious activity in our day. Religious organizations, conventions, and individuals of influence regularly redefine what is and what is not acceptable to God. Whether involving conditions of forgiveness, activities of worship, definition of relationships (such as divorce and

remarriage or "homosexual marriage"), or the constitution of basic morality, any change of God's law by man is an act of pure rebellion. Such activities violate a fundamental truth of Christ's identity – He is God and King. And we need to recognize that fact, submit to Him, and obey His laws, grateful that He is benevolent, sacrificial, and concerned for our well-being, in spite of our continued failures, ignorance, and rebellion. We serve a King and we desperately need to be reminded of such.

Russ Bowman; Rjbow@aol.com; Taken from focusmagazine.org

JOHN THE BAPTIST

"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (**Matthew 11:11**). Matthew's narrative, now almost half finished, shows that Jesus is the Messiah, God with us. The tension builds; decision time is near. Jesus' message provoked basically two reactions. The Jewish leaders had negative views about Him. Some though, accepted and followed Jesus. These were the true members of His family. While Jewish conceptions of the Messiah varied, Jesus invited all to come to leave the burden of sin behind. Now, Matthew highlights the life and work of John the Baptist.

John was in prison (**Matthew 4:12; 14:3**). His question about Jesus' identity continues to fuel discussion among Bible students. How could the forerunner of the Messiah, the cousin of Jesus, the one who had baptized Jesus now wonder about who Jesus really was? When Jesus told the disciples *"Go and tell John,"* was He trying to alleviate John's fears and dismay? After all, John had been languishing in prison for some time now. Did John think Jesus wasn't acting like the Messiah should act? John had preached repentance; many, though, refused to repent. What's going on? Why hadn't Jesus laid the axe to the root; why hadn't Jesus taken concrete action to diminish the power of Herod? How would you feel or what would you be thinking if you were in John's shoes?

Jesus gave answer to John by quoting from **Isaiah 35 and 61**. *"The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of me."* The activities of healing, working miracles, and preaching the good news of the kingdom in **Matthew 8 and 9** illustrate that Jesus was acting as the Messiah; His work was in line with OT prophecy. Isaiah anticipated the restoration of Israel; now that day had dawned. The challenge for John, John's disciples, and for you and me is that we not stumble over Jesus' activities. We must not take offense; we must not be

scandalized because of who Jesus is.

John was a great man. His greatness was not intrinsic; his greatness was seen in his work of announcing that the Savior was coming. He was more than a prophet in the sense that he paved the way for the soon-to-come kingdom. He was on the scene. He opposed the religious status quo of the Pharisees. He had the courage to preach the truth even to Herod. John was not a reed blown aimlessly by the wind. He had the courage of his convictions.

Yet, even the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. Why? Remember that *kingdom* means the rule of God. Certainly John's life and work were ruled by his concern for heaven's will. Now, though, the advent of the Messianic kingdom, the church, is nearby. John was not a member of the church Jesus built. That doesn't mean John was not important or faithful or that he lacked something in relationship to Jesus. It means that the fulfillment of OT prophecy was soon to be realized. It means that the lesser would give way to the greater. It means that now, in these last days, those who come to Jesus must find no occasion of stumbling in Him, His will, and His call to be His disciples. That is what John would have wanted for us. Is that what you want for yourself?

Randy Harshbarger

In Honor of My Earthly Father

This article is being written for the July 12th issue of the Shopper's Guide. That day would have been my father's 105th birthday. He was born in Monarch, Clarion County, Pennsylvania, a town that doesn't exist anymore. He finished the eighth grade and went to work in the coal mines at the age of fourteen and forgot more than I ever knew with my college and advanced degrees.

My earliest memories of him were twofold. One was of him giving my mother a long kiss goodbye as he went off to work the graveyard shift in the plastics plant where he worked all my lifetime. The other was of him reading. Constantly and voraciously. He had an insatiable curiosity and willingness to try doing new things. He often told of a shotgun shell he "modified" with the predictable results. He warned me about that. He also warned me about smoking tobacco. He smoked till his last few years when he suffered emphysema and chronic lung disease. But from my earliest years he said he wished he never started, thought it make him look "big and mature" but really just made him a slave. I listened. He offered me \$500 cash if I would have cut up my first credit card. I really wish I HAD listened! When I was about to get married he told me, "If you can live with her then I can look at her." That was his way of saying that my marriage was my responsibility and that I was to make sure that I took care of them. If between the three channels available there was a John Wayne movie on that was what we watched, unless we had seen it and

there was something educational available.

That was my Dad!

Cleveland Reddinger

Parents: Be Consistent About Attendance!

All godly parents are concerned about bringing up their children to be good, God-fearing people. Of course, we are commanded to do so (**Ephesians 6:4**). Consistency is an essential key in bringing up faithful children. An obvious area where this consistency needs to be seen is in the matter of attendance.

If you allow your kids to miss the worship services in order to be at a ball game, you are teaching them that the ball game is more important than the Lord. If you let them skip the assemblies for school functions, band trips, dramas or plays, or to go camping, fishing or hunting, in all at these ways you are demonstrating that there are things that are more important than God. If you fail to worship when you are traveling or on vacation, you are showing them that serving God is something you do only when it is convenient. If you let them take part-time jobs that interfere with their attendance, you are giving them a clear sign that work and career considerations are higher in priority than spiritual things.

Many parents who are violating the principles stated above will scoff at these warnings. Yet the personal experiences of many people, as well as the plain teachings of God's Word indicate that this is the truth.

Joshua had it right when he said, "*as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*" (**Josh. 24:15**). There would be no compromise in his family. He would LEAD them in a consistent, faithful path. Let's imitate his example of consistency!

by Greg Gwin

Worldly Wisdom

A wise man learns from the mistakes of others. Nobody lives long enough to make them all himself.

A wise man learns by the experience of others. An ordinary man learns by his own experience. A fool learns by nobody's experience.

You don't have to be listed in Who's Who to know what's what.

Source Unknown.

Spiritual Wisdom

Prov. 2:6 *For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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RON PECK

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE
CLASS - FORGIVENESS
JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON:
GUEST SPEAKER:
BRENT DYER



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10