

For This Reason – *John 18:37*

Introduction – “Jesus is the reason for the season” we so often hear (and say). And all well and good. Christmas is the celebration of the Incarnation, the coming of Jesus, whose name means “Jehovah saves.” But let us not stop short on the reason for the coming of this Messiah, this Christ, the anointed One. To the greeting, “Merry Christmas,” one should add, “A King is Born!”

The Good Confession – Paul writes to Timothy that Christ “...in his testimony before Pontius Pilate, made the good confession...” (1 Tim 6:13), and our text records that good confession. Jesus must have looked like anything but a king by the time he comes before Pilate. He had spent the first part of the night sweating blood in the garden and then dragged from Annas to Caiaphas, interrogated, mocked, and struck until in the early morning hours he is brought to the Praetorium. Pilate asks Jesus if He is the king of the Jews (18:33) for he was not unaware of the zealots and other insurrection groups that sought to rescue Israel from her foreign oppressors. Jesus answers regarding His kingdom (v36). Pilate responds, “Are you a king then?” to which Jesus gives His good confession (v37).

You Say Rightly That I Am a King – The Greek is ambiguous for Jesus was not a King in the same way that Pilate was meaning. His kingdom was not of this world and He would not be engaging in battle with a carnal sword (2 Cor 10:3-6), but with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God Who was now standing before the representative of the most powerful king on earth.

For This Cause I Was Born – Jesus declares His humanity and here is the central reason we remember Christmas. But Who was born?

For This Cause I Came into the World – Here Jesus declares His divinity. John uses this phrase four other times in His gospel. It was spoken by the men who saw Jesus multiply the fish and loaves (6:14), when Jesus proclaimed blindness upon seeing Israel while granting the blind man sight (9:39). Martha testified to this at the time Lazarus is raised from the dead (11:25-27), and Jesus explicitly declared that He had come forth from the Father (16:28). Jesus was born, and Jesus came into the world, to be King.

“Jesus, Lord at Thy Birth” – Just as the carol announces, so the Old Testament declared extensively. Just a few examples –

Behold, your King (Zech 9:9-10) – We are to rejoice and shout because the King has come. Just as when Jesus rode into Jerusalem upon a humble donkey (He doesn’t come as a conquering king as much as a king who has conquered), so there is much shouting and singing to be done with the angels at His birth, for the Prince of Peace was born. He provides the basis for beating swords to plowshares; the king on a donkey cuts off the chariot and war horse. He speaks peace to the nations. And so, while He came in humble circumstances, His dominion is not less secure because of how He arrived. In fact, this glory beginning in a manger will extend to the ends of the earth. The promise is that all nations will be blessed (Psalm 72:8, 11-14, 17, cf. Gen 12:3).

The Beautiful King (Isaiah 33:17) – We are not to simply look upon the little Child in the arms of Mary. The King and His rule are beautiful, His land is vast (v17) as is His salvation (v22). We are invited to see this beauty by faith as we come into His temple (Psalm 27:4).

Joy to the World (Psalm 149:2) – We are to be joyful in our King and sing His blessings flowing “far as the curse is found.” And yet it is with great sobriety that we behold our King (Isaiah 6:5) and celebrate His ascension to the throne (Psalm 24:7).

God already ruled over all of creation. But He had made man to have dominion over all the earth under His authority. When Adam fell, he lost that position and it became necessary that a Savior be committed to deal with rebel sinners. But this had to be done by a man, another Adam. It is not enough that Jesus come to be our High Priest and to make atonement for our sin (and so it is not enough to say that Jesus was born so that He might come and die for us – though true). It is not enough that He come as the great Prophet to make known to men that the kingdom of God has come and that the curse of the law has been done away. He also has regal authority to sit at the Father’s right hand and now rule the nations of men (Psalm 2:7-8, 110:1). And so the Father gave this kingdom, this world, to Jesus, to go through and find the redeemed, to gather them from the four winds of heaven, to institute ordinances and commands, to appoint servants, and to subordinate whatever exists under His gracious rule. (Symington).

Jesus was not a "Wild West" deliverer, who swept into the world for a time, died for our sin, and then slipped away, never to be seen again. The Baby born is now King of kings and Lord of lords over all of heaven and earth. *"For this cause I was born; for this cause I have come into the world."* His birth, death, and resurrection, were "for this reason": to His ascension and present rule over all the Father has given Him. And the Father has given Him everything. The government has been laid upon His shoulders.

Your Good Confession – And so when we stand before any authority, any institution, any person, what is our good confession? Jesus is Lord. Here. Now. You. Your building. Your nation. Your person. Your home. Now. How will we respond when asked, "You believe Jesus is King of....this?" How will we respond when asked, "Are you a Christian? You really believe in Jesus? You believe you have been born again? And you believe that I must be as well?" And so it needs to be preached to your own heart first. Has the sword of the Spirit slain you? Has the Word of God taken hold, delivering you from the bondage of sin and making you a slave to righteousness? Here you are in church, but are you before the throne of grace through faith – a faith given to you freely from the Deliverer, the Savior, the King? "O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel." Merry Christmas; a King is born.

Dave Hatcher – December 9, 2018

Notes for Little Saints

Who is the King of this world?

When we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate the birth of a King.

Jesus said in John 18:37 that this was the reason he was sent by the Father.

"For this cause I was _____

and for this cause I have _____ into the _____."

Think of these Christmas hymns –

"Joy to the world, the _____ is come, let earth receive her _____"

"Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn _____."

"Silent Night, Holy Night, Son of God, loves pure light. Radiant beams from Thy holy

face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, _____ at thy birth, Jesus,

_____ at thy birth."

Is Jesus Lord and King of this world today?

Read Psalm 110:1 for an answer.