

### **Sermon for Advent Midweek 3**

**Text: John 19:1-16a**

**Preached on 12-19-2007**

#### **Introduction:**

We all know what a democracy is. It is a government run by the people who live under it in freedom. But do we know what a theocracy is? I'll give you a hint. The "theo" in *theocracy* is the same root used in the word theology. Theology, in its basic form, is the study of God. A theocracy, then, is a government run by God. There has been only one theocracy in all of history. It existed in Old Testament Israel before there were any kings around. Can you imagine what it would have been like to have God as our King? There is no enemy He can't defeat. There is no problem He can't solve. It would be wonderful to have such a King. But the people of Israel didn't feel that way. In spite of how God had brought them safely out of Egypt and conquered their enemies for them, there came a time, about a thousand years before the birth of Christ, when the people of Israel rejected God as their King. Even still, God was not about to abdicate His throne. He was going to send a very special King into the world. That is why we continue concentrating on the fact that...

#### **Series Theme: Christ, the Savior, is Coming...**

Jesus would rule over all the kings of the world. His reign, however, would always be for the eternal good of His people. To this end He would live and reign as the eternal King of kings! That is why we say...

#### **Theme: Christ, the Savior, is Coming as King!**

##### **Part I: A King who fought for us**

##### **Part II: A King who rules in us**

#### **Part I: A King who fought for us**

Jesus demonstrated His power and authority during His short three-year ministry in Palestine. He showed His power over sickness and death when He cured every disease and brought people back to life. He showed His power to care for His subjects by miraculously providing food from only a few fish and a few loaves of bread. The people of that time thought this was alright. So they tried to make Jesus their king by force. They hailed Him as their king on Palm Sunday as He rode into Jerusalem amidst their Hosannas and shouts of praise. But now, what a different picture we see.

Now we see Jesus in custody. He had just been scourged with those leather straps embedded with shards of sharp metal. An old faded cloak had been thrown over Him to mimic the rich purple robes of royalty. A mock crown had been fashioned out of thorns and pushed deep into Jesus' scalp. He was laughed at for how weak He looked. His scepter, a plain wooden staff, had been ripped out of His hands and He was struck with it. He was hurting, bloodied, and humiliated. But this still was not enough to win Jesus any sympathy. The crowds still shouted, **"Crucify Him" (v. 15)!** Pilate, wanting to appease the crowd, gave in and the King of the universe wasn't treated very kingly as He was led to the cross.

**Application:**

Jesus still has complete power over every sickness and disease. He is still providing for every one of our daily needs. Because we believe this, it is easy to hail Him as our King. But that isn't always how we treat Him. At times, we treat Jesus with as much cruelty and mockery as the soldiers did. Just look at how many hours we spend with Jesus in personal Bible reading and study compared to the number of hours we spend watching TV, being involved with sports, or any number of other leisure activities? Misplaced priorities are not the only ways in which we reject Jesus' kingship. Saying things like, "If Jesus is so powerful; if He is such a great King, then why doesn't He end my suffering? He helped others! Why doesn't He help me?" is really no different than hitting our Savior with all our might and spitting in His face. Yes, we too are guilty of not treating Jesus very kingly.

If something is going to be done about our mockery and ridicule of our King, it is going to take a greater (or holier) person than you or I. Actually, it took the very one whom we view as weak and powerless to help. Christ has already done battle with sin by living far above it. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, He was never guilty of a single impure thought, let alone a hateful word or selfish action. The irony of Jesus' perfection is that He didn't have to go to the cross. He had no sin of His own to pay for. Our sins, however, still needed redemption. But we could not do it. The Bible says, **"The ransom (price) for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough" (Psalm 49:8).** Because we could never buy ourselves back from sin and death, Jesus went to the cross and claimed responsibility for every sin we have ever committed. And then, He died for them all. So by the very things that made Him appear weak and powerless to help, Jesus actually did battle with and defeated our greatest enemies. That makes Jesus a King who fought for us.

**Transition:**

To buy us back from sin! To conquer death! To destroy the devil! These are the reasons why *Christ, the Savior, is Coming!* But He is coming as King! In addition to being a King who fought for us, Jesus is also...

**Part II: A King who rules in us**

Ever since the time of David and Solomon, the Jews wanted a king to rule over them. They looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. They thought He would be a king who would destroy the Romans and restore Jerusalem's former glory. But when Jesus arrived on the scene, it became apparent very quickly that He wasn't the Messiah. He couldn't be. All He wanted to talk about were spiritual things. He wasn't going to miraculously wipe out all diseases from the face of the earth. He didn't come to be popular. He didn't come to accumulate wealth. He didn't come to bring glory to Himself. He didn't come to make life easy for His followers either. His kingdom wasn't established by succession, election, or conquest.

Nevertheless, Jesus' kingdom is real! It existed well before the creation of the world and it will never cease to exist. So when Christ's kingdom finally came to the earth, it wasn't possible for it to be any kind of earthly kingdom. You see, Jesus' kingdom exists in our hearts. The Greek word for *kingdom* is used throughout the New Testament with a verbal (or action) idea to it. In other words, "kingdom" could be better translated as *a ruling*. That's what Jesus' kingdom really is. It is *a ruling* in people's hearts by faith.

**Application:**

Rome was the world power at the time of Jesus. That meant Caesar was king. Even though the Jews told Pilate, "**We have no king but Caesar**" (v. 15) they didn't really believe it. They hated the idea of submitting themselves to Caesar's authority. They despised paying him taxes. Most Americans think along the same lines. When we think of a king, we think of harsh laws, unfair taxation, and absolute power and tyranny. If someone came to us and offered to be our king, we would say, "I don't think so! No one is going to be the king of me." Sad to say, that is also how we feel about Jesus at times. It can be easy to view our Lord as someone who makes all kinds of demands to keep us from doing the things we want to do. The sinful nature in us wants nothing to do with a king like that. So we reject Christ from our hearts.

That is why we need a King who comes to us. Once, long ago, Jesus came to the world, not to rule over us with an iron fist, but to give us the full benefits of His perfect life and innocent death. But He still comes to us today, to give the same benefits over and over again. He first came to us when water was poured over our foreheads together with the words and promises of God. He comes to us whenever His Word is read, spoken, preached, or shared. He comes to us whenever His own body and blood are joined with the bread and wine as a faith strengthening meal. These are the instruments (or tools) the Holy Spirit uses to penetrate our rebellious hearts, replacing our natural rejection of Christ with faith and life in His name. That makes Jesus a King who rules in us.

**Conclusion:**

Every once in a while something happens that just takes the wind out of my spiritual sails. It might be something significant like a health problem in the family. Most of the time, however, it is just a lot of little things all happening at once: The pressure of deadlines that must be met, work that doesn't get done, and the tension of disagreements that arise. These and other troubles can make my life seem pretty hopeless at times. Why? Doesn't God love me anymore? Doesn't He care? Of course He cares! But He did not come to give us our best life now, as some best selling books would lead us to believe. At no time does God promise us good health, abundant wealth, and prosperity. He does, however, promise the forgiveness of sins, new life, and eternal salvation. Better still; these blessings are ours RIGHT NOW! So during this Advent season, as we peer into that manger once again, see more than just a baby lying there. See a King: (1) A King who fought for us and (2) A King who rules in us. Yes, *Christ, the Savior, is Coming!* But He is coming as King! Amen!