

I've got a trivia question for you today. Who was the first president of the United States of America? It's something kids learn from an early age – George Washington was the first president of the United States of America. Follow-up question: do you know why our country decided to elect a president instead of electing someone to be a king? I'd imagine many in our school can think of the answer to that question too. Americans don't like the idea of having a king. We tend to view kings as people who have absolute power and authority. Most kings have more power and authority than we're comfortable with. The founders of our country recognized the importance of not giving one person too much power, and that's why we have checks and balances in our government. And so we elect presidents, we elect governors, we elect congressmen and women, but kings? No. Kings are not an American thing.

But what if there were a perfect king. A king who ruled not for himself. A king who cared for his people. A king who always wanted to do the right thing and a king who always did the right thing. I think we'd view having a king differently then. Today we'll see why it's such a comforting thought to know that Jesus is our king.

The Old Testament Israelites wanted a king to rule them. Even though the Lord told them that it wasn't such a good idea and even though the Lord himself wanted to be their king, the people insisted: We want a king. We want a king who will govern us. A king who will fight for us. A king who will defend us. And so God eventually said ok. The first king was Saul, and he was a good king at the start. But eventually Saul's ego started to grow and instead of trusting the Lord, he trusted in himself. Then there was David. David is described as a man after the Lord's own heart. He was generally a very good king. But he certainly had dark moments in his life. We think of his affair, his murder, and his cover-up. Sin had seized him, and for a time he even fell away from the Lord. After David, there was Solomon and a whole bunch of others. There was king after king – some were good, many were evil, and all who failed in some way, shape, or form. But through it all, God pointed the eyes of the Israelites forward to a perfect king that would come. God it made clear that this king would come from the line of David. And he also says this: Psalm 2 **"I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain." He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father."** Did you catch that? God is saying that I have a king that's coming, and this king is my own Son.

So who is this king that God has installed? Who is this Son? We jump forward about 1,000 years after this Psalm was written to a town called Nazareth, and there we meet a virgin named Mary, and this is what the angel Gabriel says to her: **30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."** Luke 1

Jesus is that king. So what kind of a king is he? Well, we fast forward ahead to those verses from John 18. And I want to show you a picture that depicts that scene. Think about this question: Where is the king in the picture? At first appearance it would seem that the king is the one in the Roman soldier attire. The one who looks like he's in control. The one who seems to have all the authority. But on closer, look, we see this a picture of Jesus standing before Pontius Pilate.



How strange Jesus must have looked to him? Bound. Blood dripped from his body. Stains of spit that had dried on his clothes. He looked weak. He looked powerless. And then how strange Jesus must have looked to him? **My kingdom is not of this world...my kingdom is from another place.** Pilate responds: "You're a king then, really?"

What kind of a king do you want Jesus to be in your life? A king who came to make our lives on earth better? A king who only blesses us with nice jobs and a house full of toys? Does Jesus look like that kind of king as he stands before Pilate? He seems so helpless, so lost, and so defeated.

But you see that's the greatness of our king, Jesus. Jesus knows very well you don't need more stuff. You don't need a life free from sorrow. You don't need a Christmas tree with a never-ending supply of presents underneath it. We have problems much greater, much more serious. It all started when Adam and Eve listened to the lying voice of Satan. At that moment, sin and death came into this world. And sin and death came upon you. It had looked like Satan had won and that all was lost.

But then a king comes into the world. He's a perfect king. He might not be the king we always desire, but he's the king we always need. Because this king came to fight. This king came to go to battle.

He's born not in a royal palace, but he's born among the foul stench of barnyard animals. God comes down and wraps himself in human flesh and becomes our brother. This king comes does what you and I could never have done. Born under God's law, he obeys it perfectly. Every temptation Satan throws at him, he resists it perfectly and submits to his Father's will. One day he would go and say enough is enough, and he could give his all, he would give his own life, and in doing so he would crush Satan's head. Three days later, he would show his power over death as he walked out of the grave.

This is the king you need because all this he did, he did for you. Jesus is a king because he fights for us. He fought our greatest enemies. He fought sin, death, and Satan, and conquered them all. Now he gives you his victory because this king, King Jesus, has brought you into his kingdom. This king lives and rules in your heart through his Word. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom made up of him and all who trust in him.

Now his promise to you is what we heard in our lesson. The king born in Bethlehem. The king crucified at Calvary. The king raised to life. He's the king who lives and rules eternally. He's the king who says, "And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age." This is the king who rules over all things for the good of his people. This is the king who will come, not in humility to suffer and die for us, but in glory and majesty to bring his people home.

Napoleon Bonaparte once commented: **"I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of people would die for Him."** "Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love." A love that led him to be born in a most humble place. A love that led him to live in a world of sorrow and sadness. A love that led him to a cross. A love that took him into the grave only for him to take up his life again. All this he did for you. And he has a love for you that will lead him to keep every promise that he makes to you. A love that will one day lead him to come and bring you home. My friends, this is a king indeed. This is your king. Amen.