

**March 30, 2015**

John 18:36-38 (NASB), ***“My kingdom is not of this realm.’ Therefore Pilate said to Him, ‘So You are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’”***

Last evening I sat down to watch “Killing Jesus” a made for TV movie based on Bill O’Reilly’s best selling book by the same name. O’Reilly has apparently cornered the market on books about the killing of extremely well known people which started with “Killing Lincoln” followed by “Killing Kennedy” followed by “Killing Jesus” and now a new best-seller “Killing Patton.” Eventually he will run out of killings, right?

I did not expect much in the way of sound theology from “Killing Jesus” since Mr. O’Reilly’s theology is very questionable and I’m sad to say that he did not disappoint me. To start with the Jesus in Mr. O’Reilly’s film was weak and very confused about who and what exactly He was. As the movie progressed it took on a decidedly political tone. By “political” I mean as in the *entire* reason that Jesus was crucified was for political reasons both on the part of the Romans and the Jewish leadership. While it was a somewhat entertaining movie, it completely missed the point. Jesus did not die because He was leading some political movement and He did not die for political reasons. Tragically Mr. O’Reilly and the Mr. Ridley Scott the producer completely ignored the real reason that Jesus was crucified.

In John 18:36-38 as Jesus is standing before Pilate who will determine whether or not He lives or dies, Jesus speaks to the reason for His life and for His impending death. Jesus makes the very important point at the end of verse 36 “My kingdom is not of this realm.” Jesus was a king, but not a political ruler who was intent on challenging Roman rule. Pilate didn’t understand this, the Sanhedrin didn’t understand this, and most of the public did not understand this either. The source of Jesus’ power was not the world system, nor did He derive His authority from any human source. Jesus was King because He was fully God and fully man, but the eyes of Pilate were blinded to this truth as were the eyes of the Pharisees and many of the people who followed Him.

Christ’s kingdom is spiritually active in the world today, and one day He will return to physically reign on the earth in millennial glory it tells us in Revelation. But until that time His Kingdom exists in the hearts of those who believe in Him. He is the undisputed King and Sovereign Lord of the hearts of those who have repented of their sins and believed in Him. Jesus therefore was absolutely no threat to the national identity of Israel, or to the political and military power of Rome. That was not why He died.

Because Pilate was a polytheist and could not conceive that there was one true God and that He was standing right in front of him, he was somewhat confused. If Jesus’ kingdom was not an earthly one, then was this Jesus really a king at all? Pilates seeks to clarify the issue when he asks, ***“So You are a king?”*** The Lord’s answer was clear and to the point: ***“You say correctly that I am a king.”*** In 1 Timothy 6:13 Paul wrote, ***“I charge you in the presence of God, who***

*gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate.”*

Jesus declared to Pilate in verse 37, **“For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world.”** Jesus had not only **“been born”** just like all of humanity, but He had also **“come into the world”** from another **“realm”** – heaven.

Despite what Mr. O’Reilly, Mr. Scott and millions of others think Jesus’ mission was not political, economic, or social; it was purely spiritual. It was as He says to Pilate in verse 37 **“to testify to the truth”** by as it says in Matthew 4:23, **“proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.”** Christ proclaimed the truth about God, men, sin, judgment, holiness, love, eternal life, or as it says in 2 Peter 1:3, **“everything pertaining to life and godliness.”** What people do with the message of truth Jesus proclaimed determines their eternal destiny; as He went on to declare here in verse 37, **“Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”** The Greek word here for **“hears”** carries with it the concept of obedience. Jesus says in John 14:6 that He is **“the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”** In John 10:27 He says, **“My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me.”** Only those who continue in His Word are truly His disciples; only those who are truly His disciples will know and be set free by the truth which He has come to proclaim.

This passage ends with one of the most haunting questions posed in the gospel. Pilate replies to Jesus’ statement on truth with, **“What is truth?”** Jesus had just given an implied invitation to the Roman Governor to hear and obey the truth about Him. But that invitation is lost on the governor. Like skeptics throughout the centuries, including modern intellectuals, and postmodernists, Pilate despaired of finding universal truth. This is the tragedy of fallen man’s rejection of God. Without God there are not absolutes; without absolutes, there can be no objective, universal, normative truths. Truth then becomes subjective, relative, and pragmatic; objectivity gives way to subjectivity; timeless universal principles become mere personal preferences. All fallen humankind has accomplished by turning its back on the true God, is as it says in Jeremiah 2:13, **“to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”** Pilate’s dismissive reply to the Lord proved that he was not one of those given by the Father to the Son, who hear and obey Christ’s voice.

Friends this is why Jesus had to go to that cross on that Friday long ago. It wasn’t because He was an insurrectionist who threatened the political and social power structure as some would have us believe. Jesus Christ who was the Son of God and as such fully God and fully man died on the cross to pay the price for our sins. That is the truth of the Gospel that never changes in anyway. Any other discussion of the intentions of Christ on the cross are willfully ignoring God’s Word and the clearly enunciated purposes of the cross. When we hear His truth we have two choices; to obey or not to obey.

I pray that You will be able to join us this Resurrection Sunday to worship our Lord and King who is the Living God! Our schedule will be a bit different this Sunday. We have a time of worship at the cross behind the church at 8a.m. We then will have a time of fellowship as we enjoy breakfast together which will be followed by an Easter Egg hunt for the little ones. Then at 9:30 we will have Sunday School with worship following at 10:45a.m.