

Are you ready for King Jesus? This is a very important question to consider—yet, it may be a confusing inquiry for some of us. With some anxiety in our voices, we may begin to ask our own questions in response to this query: “When is King Jesus coming, and how am I to prepare for him?” Let me explain the context of the initial question before addressing the questions you might have.

As a teaching tool, the ancient Christian church set up the year in three yearly cycles so that the major themes of the scriptures would be taught and preached over a three year period. We call this the lectionary, and our congregation follows this for the same reason. The last Sunday in the lectionary year is called Christ the King Sunday when we celebrate the promised return of Jesus Christ to earth as the King of the universe and the end of world as we know it. Next Sunday will be the first Sunday in the new lectionary cycle when the Advent Season begins. Advent prepares us for the birth of Jesus. Today, however, is Christ the King Sunday which raises the question asked earlier, **“Are You Ready For King Jesus?”**

I wonder if the show business folks were aware of this question and the celebration of the return of Jesus when they chose this time of year to bring out a movie and TV series that promote the apocalypse or end of the world. I dislike how their versions of the end of the world often twist the message of The Revelation and focus on promoting destruction and fear. All the claims that the Mayan calendar prophesies December 21, 2012 as the end of the world are based on incomplete and false information according the present day Mayans. Unfortunately, truth does not sell as well as fiction does.

With all this in mind, allow me to return to the question people often ask, “When is King Jesus coming?” Jesus taught over and over again, that only

God knows and decides when Jesus will return, and the world as we know it, ends. I prefer to trust in God in Jesus Christ than in the ancient Mayans. How about you?

The truth is that God in Jesus Christ is already here in spirit and power. As we heard from Revelation, he is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He has never really ever left us. His physical return is not just a return, but a fulfillment of what he started “When in the beginning he created the heavens and the earth,” as stated in Genesis 1. His return also fulfills what is written in John 1:1-4: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.” Keep all this in mind as false prophets predict the destructive end of the world. Jesus has always been with us as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. His physical return will be the fulfillment of life, not death. He is the God of life who has all the power over death. This gives one a different mindset on the apocalypse or end of time.

As we heard read in 2 Samuel, even as King David faced death, his last words directed his people to the God of life. King David had reigned for 40 years. There was great sadness and fear amongst the people when they realized that their great leader was dying. King David began his life on a good note as a King serving in faithfulness and humility before God. He united the twelve tribes into one nation, Israel. Israel became a great nation. He led the people to worship the one true God, Yahweh. Yet, he also eventually committed murder, adultery, and made major mistakes with his sons. So wisely and truthfully King David directed his people’s attention

away from his fault-filled life and his death to the always faithful God of life.

King David reminded the people that the God of life has the last word. God's covenant with us is forever. The promises God made in the covenant; to provide for us, to care for us, to discipline us, to see justice is done and to redeem us will never end. "Trust in the Lord, my people," not kings, King David was declaring. "To do otherwise will indeed lead us to apocalyptic destruction and failure." When Israel trusted in and followed God, life went well. When they did not, they lost their lives and nation. Even then, God was still with them through it all to give them new life and help them rebuild once they had learned their lesson. Do we as Christians and as a nation trust in the God of life as our Lord and King like we need to in order to keep such disasters away from our doors? Do we hear and believe King David's last word about the God of life having the last word. Shall we live our lives based on the God of life having the last word; "because we trust that God is at work to bring possibilities for life, hope, love, and justice that go beyond the sum total of our human capacities?" King David in his last words said if we are wise, we will trust in the God of life above all else. [TNIBC](#), Vol. II., Pg. 1372

It is ironic after having heard all this affirmation of the God of life to turn to the Gospel Lesson in John and find that King Jesus, God of life was on trial for his life! He is on trial for bringing God's kingdom in person to earth. Just what did he do to be arrested? He gave life! He healed the sick, fed the hungry, taught the Word with authority, befriended the outcasts, forgave sins, gave dignity to woman, saved a woman from being stoned to death, raised a couple of people from the dead, encouraged people to follow God's laws and promised his followers everlasting life, just to name a few of his deeds of wonder. He did all this in the name of the God of life of whom King

David spoke. Obviously, some of the Jewish leaders and Pontius Pilate were not ready for King Jesus, the God of life, for they accused him of sedition, treason and blasphemy. In summary, King Jesus came to build a better world for us while working with the rulers of this world. But, the kings or rulers in Jerusalem would have none of it. Like Pilate they could not see the “way and the truth and the life” of the Kingdom of God in King Jesus. Therefore the King Jesus, the God of life had to die.

Interestingly enough, Pontius Pilate who debated Jesus “was never noted for his religious sensitivity. In fact, his lack of insight into spiritual issues frequently got him into trouble. On one occasion, Pilate rode into Jerusalem under banners bearing the image of a Roman deity. Another time he decorated the city tower with pictures of the Emperor, Tiberius Caesar, held by the Romans to be a god. The Jews were furious over this violation of the Second Commandment — in Jerusalem, no less! Sure, Pilate was a politician and a military man, not a theologian. But that’s no excuse. His spiritual blindness was profound. Pilate stood in the presence of Jesus Christ the King himself, the God of life, the only Son of God, who came to bring life, truth and salvation to all people. Jesus Christ, the Truth, was standing directly in front of him — and all Pilate could muster was, ‘What is truth?’ The author of John clearly was aware of the irony. Also ironic is the fact that the oldest fragment of the New Testament yet discovered is a credit-card-sized snippet of parchment bearing these words, “What is Truth?” “Emphasis,” Nov/Dec. 2009

A trial similar to the one in the Gospel of John occurred in Nazi Germany. Bible professor Wayne Brouwer writes: “The year was 1934. Times were difficult around the world, especially in the repressed economic

and political climate of post-World War I Germany. But recovery was in sight. A group of theologians at Wurtemberg saw a rising star of hope and penned together a declaration of faith that would be signed by 600 pastors of churches and fourteen theology professors at seminaries.”

“Their promising statement included these words: ‘We are full of thanks to God that he, as Lord of history, has given us Adolf Hitler, our leader and savior from our difficult lot. We acknowledge that we, with body and soul, are bound and dedicated to the German state and to its Fuhrer.’” In our Book of Confessions we have the “The Declaration of Barmen,” that countered this blasphemy. It is the Well worth the read.

“Such selling out to Hitler is astounding, isn’t it? In retrospect we can only shudder at the demonic twists of history that could produce such unqualified devotion to a man who would later rip God’s world apart, and destroy, insofar as he was able, both the church and children of God.”

“That same year, 1934, Hitler summoned a group of church leaders to his office. Martin Niemoller was among them. He had been a great hero in the German Navy during World War I, commanding a submarine that caused great destruction to the Allied fleet. Now he was a pastor, much loved in his new vocation. The meeting with Hitler began cordially enough. Suddenly, however, Hermann Goering, (Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe) burst into the room with a charge of treason against Niemoller. Hitler raged in angry tirade. Finally, he regained his composure and told Niemoller, ‘You confine yourself to the church. I’ll take care of the German people!’”

“But Niemoller knew what ‘Christ The King’ Sunday meant, and he marched to its challenging beat. He stood quietly and replied, ‘Herr Reichskanzler, you said just now: ‘I will take care of the German people.’”

‘But we, too, as Christians and churchmen, have a responsibility toward the German people. That responsibility was entrusted to us by God, and neither you nor anyone in this world has the power to take it from us.’”

“Hitler knew a showdown when he saw it. Niemoller went to trial, and was convicted of misusing his pulpit for political purposes. Hitler refused to pardon him, declaring, ‘It is Niemoller or I.’” What an interesting contrast between the man who brought the world so much death and the man who stood for the God of life.

“Not all political confrontations are that dramatic. No current government leader would ask North Americans to make a choice between themselves and God. But the gray area of compromise, whether social, economic, emotional, physical, or political, always takes place with the slow staccato of drumbeats in the background. Conflicting rhythms tear at our souls until we find a way to isolate the heartbeat of the God we will follow.” “Emphasis,” Nov. Dec. 2006

In the face of all this, are we prepared to follow King Jesus who is the Kingdom of God, the God of life, and the truth of God in the flesh? I hope so, for to do otherwise will only bring more world wars and the kind of disaster Hitler brought to Germany. I am thankful for those of you who did indeed stand up for Jesus and against Hitler in those dark days. I am forever grateful that King Jesus, the God of life won that one for us.

As we continue to encounter such evil in this world, there is a way for us to prepare for King Jesus to enter our lives, not just in the last days, but today. You know the way. With our hearts and mouths let us confess King Jesus as Lord and Savior. In response to this confession, he has promised us life, everlasting life. Let us live in obedience to him and his ways. Let us make sure we are on King Jesus’ side and no one else’s. It may cost us

dearly by the standards of this world, but we will be right with the God of life who always stands by us.

No matter what the Mayan calendar might have said or what Hollywood puts on the screen, our lives now and after death are in the hands of King Jesus, the Alpha and the Omega. He is “the one who is and who was and who is to come, who brings us grace, peace and truth. The one who is the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth; who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.” He is here with us now to give us life. He will be with us when we pass from this earth to join him in heaven. Yes, it is Christ the King Sunday. Are you ready for King Jesus? He is ready for you.

Please turn in your Bibles to the Old Testament Lesson in 2 Samuel 23: 1-7. We hear some of King David's last words of praise to God and his warning to the people to remain faithful to God.

1 Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, son of Jesse, the oracle of the man whom God exalted, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the favorite of the Strong One of Israel:

2 The spirit of the LORD speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue.

3 The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me:

One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God,

4 is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.

5 Is not my house like this with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. Will he not cause to prosper

all my help and my desire? 6 But the godless are all like thorns that are thrown away; for they cannot be picked up with the hand; 7 to touch them one uses an iron bar or the shaft of a spear. And they are entirely consumed in fire on the spot.

The Word of the Lord.

Please turn in your Bibles to the Epistle Lesson in The Revelation 1: 4b-8. This passage speaks of the return of Jesus and of his power over all of life.

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 Look! He is coming with the clouds;
every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.
So it is to be. Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. The Word of the Lord.

Please turn in your Bibles to the Gospel lesson John 18: 33-38a. Jesus is on trial for his life and has an interesting debate with Pontius Pilate.

33 Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" 34 Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" 35 Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" 36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." 37 Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." 38 Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" The Word of the Lord.

First Presbyterian Church
Cheyenne, Wyoming
November 22, 2009
Rev. Bob Garrard

Worship Theme: Are You Ready For King Jesus?
2 Samuel 23: 1-7, Revelation 1: 4b-8, John 18: 33-38a

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