



Table Talk II

By Rev. Timothy J. Swenson • I.L.T. Dean of Chapel

Good Friday | March 29, 2024



JOHN 18:1-19:42

"We have no king but Caesar." Vs. 15

Kings were always a problem for the Israelites. The Israelites were often at war with foreign kings. Yet, they came to covet those kings of other nations (cf. Sam. 8). Samuel, the last of the judges, warned them of the greed and corruption a king would bring to the nation. But, nonetheless, the people demanded a king. So, the people got Saul, then David, and then Solomon, the only kings to rule over a united Israel. After Solomon, the nation split into the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. Both north and south had successions of kings, a few good, most were bad. Eventually, after suffering a series of conquests by foreign nations including the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Greeks, the people came to be ruled by the Roman Empire and its Caesar.

What we hear from the chief priests in their answer to Pilate's question regarding Jesus' fate, "Shall I crucify your king?" simply continues the rejection by the Israelite leaders of the Lord their God as king over them. In their insistence, "We have no king but Caesar!" the chief priests stand in a line of rulers extending back in time to Samuel's day when the Lord told him, "...they have rejected me from being king over them" (1 Sam. 8:7). By some ways of reckoning biblical

chronology, there's about a thousand years... ten centuries... one millennium... from Samuel's day to Jesus' day. All that time... all those opportunities... and still the Israelites and their leadership continued to reject the Lord their God as ruler over them.

The Word of God, proclaimed among us still, continues to expose every generation in its rejection of the Lord their God from being ruler over them. This enduring Word reveals all as sinners standing shoulder-to-shoulder with those Israelites demanding of Samuel, "No! But there shall be a king over us (1 Sam. 8:19) ... standing shoulder-to-shoulder with those chief priests before Pilate and shouting, "We have no king but Caesar!" (Jn. 19:15). We sinners will have any king but the Lord our God.

Table Talk: Discuss all the people and influences that come to rule over you through their demands.

Pray: Heavenly Father, rule over me and bring me good even though I reject you as my king. Amen



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Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. 2 And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. 3 They came up to him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! and struck him with their hands. 4 Pilate went out again and said to them, See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him. 5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, Behold the man! 6 When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, Crucify him, crucify him! Pilate said to them, Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him. 7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God. 8 When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. 9 He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, Where are you from? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 So Pilate said to him, You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you? 11 Jesus answered him, You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.

12 From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar. 13 So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, Behold your King! 15 They cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate said to them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. 16 So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.



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