

Intro - Open to John 19:17-30

We have reached the pinnacle of history. Everything before was preparing, prophesying and groaning for God's redemption in Christ. Everything after this will point back to the great redemption provided. So now that we have arrived, John shows that this has not come out of nowhere. It has been predicted in the Scriptures and in the moment itself we see that Jesus is king. God's sovereign hand has not led him to rule on earth yet, but has brought him to die to save the people from their sins. He is a different kind of king.

So let us look briefly at five points of who Jesus is as King. He is the King that some anticipated but no one expected to be like this.

God's sovereign hand declares and lifts up the King at Calvary.

Pray

One – King of the Transgressors

Read John 19:17-18

As we read that, John is focusing on the bare facts. They place the top beam of his cross on Jesus' shoulders to carry to the place of crucifixion. In other accounts, by the time Jesus gets about to the gates of the city, he is either collapsing under the weight or slowed down so significantly that they get Simon the Cyrene to carry the cross for him. He is mentioning the place (which by changes through the ages we are unsure exactly where this is), Golgotha which is the Aramaic, or Calvary coming from the Latin. Then John shows that he is crucified alongside two other criminals.

Crucifixion was not just used for every crime. This punishment was reserved for those in open rebellion against Rome. So likely, these two criminals were co-conspirators with Barabbas the zealot who was released.

What we find here in these two verses is the fulfillment of [Isaiah 53:12](#)

because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Jesus' kingdom, being of a spiritual nature, is one of substitution for the rebels. As he is walking to his death, as he is being poured out, he is considered a transgressor. He is considered a criminal but yet was without sin. Six times during the trial, Pilate admits that Jesus had done no wrong. Yet here is, hanging on a criminal's cross. Why?

He bore the sins of many, therefore making intercession (standing between) God and the transgressors. The Messianic claims in Isaiah 53 are being fulfilled all throughout Jesus' crucifixion. But none are as important as his taking the place of sinners, taking our place. Being our substitute. One of the two hanging on the cross will recognize Jesus' claim to the throne, the other will mock him along with the crowd.

The nature of Jesus' kingship is to take the place of the rebel, the weak, and the outcast. That is the king he is. Yet he is also, the king of the Jews.

Two – King of the Jews

Read John 19:19-22

Here is Pilate's final piece in the story. He has been battling with the Jewish leaders every step of the way. Trying to position himself and he loses. He had to just bend to their wishes. He tells his centurions to write in all the languages of the different people "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews". This angers the chief priests and wish to change it. They want it to be clear that he is not "actually" the king of the Jews, he just claims to be. Yet Pilate, to stick it to them says, "what I have written, I have written."

God uses the bitter response of Pilate to declare the truth. The King who is a descendant of David, the rightful King of the Jews, is being lifted up to save the people from their sins. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords, as Jesus is described in [Revelation 19:16](#), is paraded through the streets with his proper title displayed for all to see.

As you trace back the Jewish people through their history God has been ruling over not just their nation but the world. He created it, he destroyed much of it, he saved some and punished the evil doer. He has sovereignly ruled. Yet what do people do? They rebel. John's focus here is on Israel, who, as God was their faithful ruler, they were unfaithful. God, through Jesus, is now returning to show what his rule is like. It is being the king of the Jews even as they reject him. We all like sheep have gone astray. Yet God directs and is bringing, in Christ, everything together for his purpose.

And he is doing this through the fulfilling of prophecy.

Three – King of Prophecy

Read John 19:23-24

This seemingly inconsequential moment is fulfilling **Psalm 22:18**. John uses the phrase “**to fulfill the Scripture**” many times throughout his gospel but it increases in frequency as we have gotten closer and closer to the cross. Everything was done according to God’s revealed will and everything was done by Christ on purpose.

How do we know? Jesus quoted Psalm 22 verse 1 on the cross. In Matthew and Mark, they say that Jesus called out “**Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?**” that is, “**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**”

This is verse 1, calling us to look at the rest. That he intends to fulfill many prophecies that David wrote in Psalm 22 in this moment here. He was scorned and mocked, verse 6 and 7. He had his bones out of joint verse 14. He was thirst, which we will get to, verse 15. He was pierced in his hands and feet verse 16.

I assume John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, remembered Jesus cry this out, and turned to the Psalm and saw how Jesus was fulfilling what David wrote. Jesus knows he is fulfilling it. This is the part that we cannot miss. Jesus is not accidentally fulfilling Isaiah 53. He is not just inspiring John to reinterpret his life in light of Psalm 22. Many times, he avoided capture, he avoided acclaim, and he came to Jerusalem just at the right time to fulfill scripture and die.

He does his Father’s will and drinks the cup of wrath meant for us on purpose. He purposed to fulfill all of the prophecies and all of the law.

Four – King of the Law

Read John 19:25-27

This is a tender moment of love of a son for his mother. The four women mentioned here, his mother, aunt Salome and two other Marys. Jesus, dying as he was, takes the time to entrust the care of his mother to John. The disciple whom Jesus loved is shown the greatest love to be included in the care for the savior’s mother.

The care of your elderly parents was a particular place that Jews broke the law, specifically the 5th commandment from **Exodus 20:12**. Jesus would not. He would love the Lord his God with all his heart and love his mother, his closest neighbor as this sums up the law. He would honor his mother and provide for her in his agonizing breathing on the cross. Lifting up to inhale using that shallow breath to speak his love.

He was king over the law, upholding it to the last jot and tittle, even in his moment of death. A death he now shows his power as king over as well.

Five – King over Death

Read John 19:28-30

Jesus’ divine knowledge brought him to fulfill scripture and to give himself over to death. Jesus was offered two different drinks over the course of his crucifixion. As they had arrived at Golgotha he was offered, Matthew says, a wine mixed with gall. This would have dulled his pain, yet he rejected it.

Jesus intended to experience the full wrath of God. He would not dull the pain. He would not spare himself. God would not spare his own son.

Psalm 69:21 mentioned a sour wine, a wine which is offered here while Jesus is on the cross to quench his thirst. This would not dull the pain; it would actually quench his thirst enough to say his final words. It would extend his life so he could finish his task and say:

It is finished.

This is not a resignation to defeat. This is not a simple end. This is a declaration that what God sent him to do he has brought to completion. Remember his prayer to his Father.

John 17:4

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

He has accomplished, finished the work. It is because he was willing to die, we now live. Jesus willingly, by the sovereign plan was bitten in the heel with death, yet he crushed the head of the serpent. Putting death to death as he gave up his spirit.

Conclusion

Take a few moments and imagine with me that you were there that day. An execution is happening and as a Jew you are there in Jerusalem and will be staying with family for the Sabbath dinner that night. You hear all the commotion and begin to follow the crowds. Most are mocking and jeering but a small crowd of women and one man are at the foot of the cross. How long could you stand there to watch him die?

Today executions happen away from everyone else. They die for crimes of murder or similar atrocities where by God's law and our moral law their life is required as a consequence of their sin. I don't know if I could watch an execution by injection much less by crucifixion.

This is the fascinating purpose of God, that the most brutal and horrifying torture and death is what he would choose for himself. Himself. He planned it, he directed it, he walked into it. It was by design he died, so that we would be set free. And it was planned at a time in history when torture and execution would be publicly witnessed so there would be no doubt that God came to die and he came at this exact moment.

Romans 5:6-8

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

As Jesus was lifted up on that cross, the plan of God, to satisfy his justice and provide mercy to us sinners: was finished. **God's sovereign hand declares and lifts up the King at Calvary.**

We could go through Psalm 22 or Isaiah 53 with more detail and see all the ways Jesus fulfilled them but what are you going to do this week if we do that together? The fact that Jesus died means that truly "**It is finished**". We can stop striving. We can stop searching. We can stop agonizing over what our life is to be about. We should be in awe of what God has accomplished.

Our life is to marvel at, rest in, and live for the king who was lifted up.

There was not a moment of Jesus' life that was out of step with God's will. There was not a moment of Jesus' death that did not accomplish the task.

It is finished!

Romans 5 is so powerful. The weakness of the Jews, of Paul's people, who crucified the savior brought Jesus to die for the ungodly at just the right time. He was lifted up on that cross so that every Jew and Roman could see their guilt. There was no denying why he hung there. He was crucified for the sins of others and it was God's great plan of redemption that takes the most cruel and horrifying torture known to man and makes it not a symbol of death but through his sovereign decree it becomes the place where souls are counted free.

Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!

Oh, the grace that bro't it down to man!

Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span, At Calvary.

Mercy there was great, and grace was free;

Pardon there was multiplied to me;

There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary.

When our burdened soul, full of sin and regret and the weight of death that we deserve, finds liberty in the cross of Christ. Christ died for us! Do not turn away. This is sweet relief. It brings you to your knees in fear that if God would do this to his own son, his own self, what would happen to us if we would spurn this great grace that is free for the taking?

Then fear gives way to awe that this death is how **God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

I look to Christ, lifted up for me to see. Seize the pardon multiplied to me.