

Zion's King Shall Reign Victorious! - 5

Jesus told Pilate in John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world (Greek, kosmos)." The Greek word for "world" which the apostle John was inspired by God to use here is also used in 1 John 2:16 -

"For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the WORLD is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." Lust of flesh and eyes, and pride of life are the common motivation of mankind's sinfulness.

Scripture is clear that the physical earth, after all the divine effort to design and construct it, is definitely here to stay - "One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the EARTH abides forever" - Ecclesiastes 1:4 . God "laid the foundations of the earth, so that it should not be moved forever" - Psalms 104:5, having reserved the earth for mankind's habitation - "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; But the earth He has given to the children of men" - Psalms 115:16.

And so when John says that the world (kosmos) is passing away he is not referring to this physical earth. What he is saying is harmony with God stated objective, "Truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" - Numbers 14:21. The world (kosmos) that John says is passing away is that human society in which life is universally conducted in accord with "the lust (desire) of the flesh, the lust (desire) of the eyes, and the pride of life."

The final passing away of that world (kosmos) will be at the end of Christ's reign, when there will be no more mortal population of mankind on earth. All will be immortals, people who have been "transformed by the renewing of their mind" - Romans 12:2, becoming God-like in character, no longer motivated by lust and pride. Each person in that future society of mankind on earth will "do the will of God and abide forever."

To bring this about, Jesus submitted to God's requirement for his sacrificial death, confessing before Pilate his claim to be a king. The Roman governor could see that the non-violence of his disciples, and their lack of attempting any revolutionary activity, showed that Jesus was no political threat to the Roman imperial authority.

"From then on Pilate sought to release Him." But the enemies of Jesus vehemently pressed their case against Jesus, crying out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar" - John 19:12. Contemporary records show that Pilate already had two strikes against him with his overlord for offending the Jewish people. In these circumstances, to save his own hide, Pilate had to avoid causing a public disturbance, even if it was to cost the life of Jesus.

And so Pilate passed the verdict that the crowd asked for. He also arranged for the customary sign to be written for all to view as they saw Jesus in the cross. He took his little vengeance by annoying those who had annoyed him, by writing, "Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews" - John 19:19.

Christ's enemies complained about this wording, and demanded that it be changed to "HE SAID, I am King of the Jews" (v.21). In fact, Jesus did claim to be the Messiah, asserting his royalty.