

**Readings for Today:** *Daniel 7:13 & 14; Ps. 92 (93):1 – 3,6; Revelation 1:5 – 8; John 18: 33 – 37.*

A careful study of the books of the New Testament shows that the use of the title 'King' for Jesus seems to have grown over the years from the implicit to the explicit.

In Mark's gospel the only explicit use of the title 'King' for Jesus is in the notice on the cross. But it is clear that Jesus was recognized as exercising the power of God's kingdom, and used the title 'Son of Man' for himself, taking up the image in our first reading of *one like a son of man... On him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship*. Peter recognized him as *the Christ*, the Messiah, the anointed heir of King David. On Palm Sunday he fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah: *Behold, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey*.

In the Birth Narratives which begin the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, there is explicit reference to Jesus as king. In their versions of the parables there are references, not merely to the kingdom of God, but to the king (e.g. in the parable of the sheep and goats [*Matthew 25*]; and the parable of the pounds [*Luke 19*]. At the crucifixion Jesus is recognized as king by the penitent thief [*Lk 23*].

There are references in the epistles to the kingly rule of Jesus – explicitly in Colossians 1:13 (*God*) *has transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son*, and in 2 Peter 1:11 *the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour*; and implicitly in 1 Corinthians 15:25 (*Christ*) *must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet*;

In the Gospel of John the kingship of Jesus is made clearer than in the other gospels. Nicodemus recognises Jesus as *Son of God* and *King of Israel* [*1:49*], and in the trial by Pilate, from which today's Gospel reading comes, the evangelist uses the uncertainty of the pagan governor to reveal the hidden truth that it is on the cross that the kingship of Jesus is demonstrated.

In the Revelation of John Jesus is described as *the Ruler of the kings of the earth* and appears like the kingly figure in Daniel [*1:13*]. Towards the end of the book [*19:11*] *the Word of God* appears as a rider on a white horse, *clothed in a robe dipped in blood*, who bears the name *King of kings* and *Lord of lords*.

The most important conclusion we can draw from this study is that the kingship of Jesus is intimately connected with the self-giving which moved him to die for his people.

1121 SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING

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