

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?”

-John 18:33–38a (NRSV)

To the members and friends of the Wey Valley Circuit,

As an American living in the U.K., I often get asked what I think about such traditions as the monarchy, jubilees, and coronations. Naturally, as a guest in the country, I’m always a little nervous when this question gets asked. “How honest an answer do they really want?”, often runs through my mind.

In all honesty, though, we have been living in the U.K. through some...interesting times in the nation’s history. Brexit, Covid, the Jubilee, the death of the Queen, Harry and Meghan. To use a word that was perhaps overused the last few years: it’s been an “unprecedented” time, whether these events were good or bad (I’ll let you decide on Brexit and The Sussex’s).

As you all know, this coming weekend is the Coronation of His Majesty, King Charles III and so the questions have started again, “What do Americans think of all this royalty business?” The answer, in general, is that we’re fascinated with it. In 1776, America ran away from the house of royalty, and then have spent the last 200+ years trying to peep back into the windows of that house. Whether it was Charles and Diana, Andrew and Fergie, William and Kate, or even Harry and Meghan, we’re fascinated by these people that history (or chance, or whatever) has placed on a pedestal.

I heard a poll on BBC News this week that found approximately 1/3 of those 18-24 believe the monarchy should continue. Of all adults, its only 58%, which is not as

strong as it was in decades past. Does that mean the days of the monarchy are coming to an end? If not imminently, then in the decades to come? I don't know. If the end does come, is that a bad thing? I don't know that either, although I think the historian in me will mourn it's loss.

Yet, either way, we as Christians will still have a king. He wasn't crowned in Westminster Abbey. He reigns not in Buckingham Palace, but on a heavenly throne. He won't reign for years, or even decades, but for all time. As a matter of fact, to truly appreciate the idea of what kind of monarch Jesus really is, we have to dissociate the word "king" from every earthly idea we have of a monarchy. Jesus was a king that sought not power and prestige, but to serve and to love. In a world obsessed and deluded with power, greed and selfishness, celebrating Jesus as King is a chance to challenge the very definition of the word.

I don't know how history will judge Charles III (hopefully better than those previously of his name). I don't know whether Charles will be a good king or a bad one. Whether the monarchy continues another 1,000 years or ends tomorrow. But I know that we have the ultimate example of what a king SHOULD be. An example that I hope King Charles is also looking toward as he considers the years of his reign.

Long live The King (interpret that how you like)!

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Good News/Resources

In keeping with the Coronation theme, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers initiated an appeal to recruit more ringers to be trained in time to *Ring for the King*. To find out about the initiative and bell ringing in general, have a look at [Ring for the King – Ringing for the King's Coronation](#)