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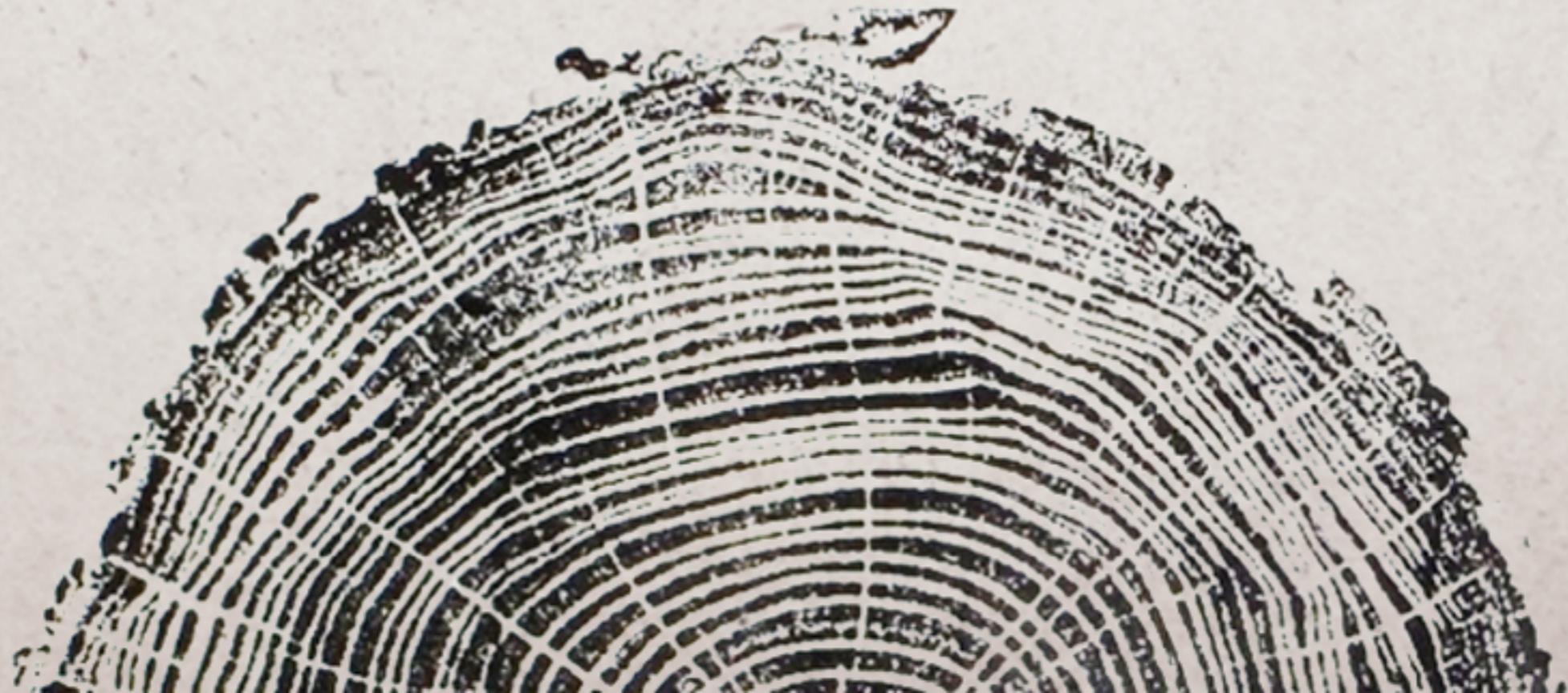
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TRAGEDY, COMEDY, FAIRY TALE

John 18:28-19:22



Pilate asked Jesus,
"Are you the king of the Jews?"

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“Are you the king of the Jews?”

“Is that ***your own idea***,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

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"You are a king, then!" said Pilate

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Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the **truth**. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind...

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-4, 14)

What is the hope in the **restoration of God's reign**? Isaiah describes it with a full artist's palette of vibrant colors. It is comfort and tenderness from God (40: 1, 2, 11; 51: 5; 52: 9; 54: 7- 8; 55: 7; 61: 2- 3), the presence of God himself (41: 10; 43: 5; 45: 14; 52: 12), help for the poor and needy (40: 29- 31; 41: 17; 55: 1- 2), the renewing of all things (42: 9- 10; 43: 18- 19; 48: 6; 65: 17; 66: 22), the judgment of God's enemies (42: 13- 17; 47: 1- 15; 49: 22- 26; 66: 15- 17, 24)...

...the healing of blindness and deafness (42: 18; 43: 8- 10), the forgiving of sins (44: 22; 53: 4- 6, 10- 12), and the making of a covenant (41: 6; 49: 8; 55: 3; 59: 21).

All of this will be accomplished through God's anointed, humble Servant (42: 1- 4; 45: 4; 49: 3- 5; 52: 13- 53: 12) and witnesses (43: 10; 44: 8).

Jonathan Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*

“What is truth?” retorted Pilate.

With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.”

But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?"

They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.

The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face.

Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."

When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace.

“Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer.

“Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said.
“Don’t you realize I have power either to free
you or to crucify you?”

Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon.

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.
But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him
away! Crucify him!"

"Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

"We have no king but Caesar," the chief
priests answered.

Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be
crucified.

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

John 11:31-33

A king who dies on the cross must
be the king of a rather strange
kingdom.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Why do the nations conspire
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord and against his anointed,
saying,

“Let us break their chains
and throw off their shackles.”

The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.

He rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

“I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain.”

Psalm 2

Is it possible, I wonder, to say that it is only when you hear the Gospel as a wild and marvelous joke that you really hear it at all? Heard as anything else, the Gospel is the church's thing, the preacher's thing, the lecturer's thing. Heard as a joke—high and unbidden and ringing with laughter—it can only be God's thing.

Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth*

A mass of legend and literature has sprung from this single paradox; that the hands that had made the sun and stars [*logos*] were too small to reach the huge heads of the cattle [*incarnation*]. Upon this paradox, all the literature of our faith was founded... [it is] something too good to be true, except that it is true.

GK Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*

The Gospel is bad news before it is good news. It is the news that man is a sinner, to use the old word, that he is evil in the imagination of his heart, that when he looks in the mirror what he sees is at least eight parts chicken, phony, slob. That is the tragedy. But it is also the news that he is loved anyway, cherished, forgiven, bleeding to be sure, but also bled for. That is the comedy. And yet so what? So what if even in his sin the slob is loved and forgiven when the very mark and substance of his sin and of his slobbery

is that he keeps turning down the love and forgiveness because he either doesn't believe them or doesn't want them or just doesn't give a damn? In answer, the news of the Gospel is that extraordinary things happen to him just as in fairy tales extraordinary things happen...

It is impossible for anybody to leave behind the darkness of the world he carries on his back like a snail, but for God all things are possible. That is the fairy tale. All together they are the truth.