Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

I have a book called “*A Visual Theology Guide to the Bible*.” And rather than just using words, it uses colourful charts and graphs to explain things like what the Bible is, how it was written, why it is trustworthy, what the books are about, and how to study it.

And one of the charts lists the different authors of the Bible. So for example, the person who contributes most of the Bible, with 19%, is? Moses. And next, with 12%, is? Jeremiah. Paul and Luke contribute 6% each, and David just 3%. Many authors wrote less than 3% each and we also do not know who authored some of the books, like Job and Hebrews, for example.

And I am pretty sure that if one of the quiz questions last night was name 5 authors of the Bible, all or most of us could have done that. Yes? But I wonder if any of us would have included Pontius Pilate in our lists? You see, every word in the Bible comes by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So even though Pilate did not write a whole book, because the words that he caused to be written on the inscription on the cross are a part of the Bible, we know that it was the Holy Spirit who led him to write those words. So Pilate is one of the authors of Scripture.

Well, the word ‘**gospel’** means good news. So we call the four books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ‘Gospels,’ because they are good news about Jesus. And of course, they did this as believers in order to bless the church. But even though Pilate was not a believer and had no desire to bless the church, what we are going to see today is that what he wrote down on the inscription is good news about Jesus. So the sign that was put on the cross truly is **The Gospel According to Pontius Pilate**. And it is sobecause Pilate’s unintended Gospel message is that Jesus is the **King** of the world and the **Saviour** ofthe world. And they will be our two headings this morning.

1. So let’s begin with how Pilate’s inscription reveals Jesus to be the **King** of the world.
   1. A common theme in John’s Gospel is that every humiliation of Jesus also reveals His regal or royal glory.
      1. So back in 18:6 we read about the **arrest** of Jesus. And you may remember that Jesus asked the soldiers who had come to arrest Him who they were looking for and when they said Jesus of Nazareth, He told them, “I am He,” and “*they drew back and fell to the ground*.” And we commented at the time that at that moment those idolatrous, unbelieving, sons of darkness were actually worshipping Jesus. It was not the worship of faith and love, like the worship we offer King Jesus today; it was the worship of terror and astonishment. But the message being proclaimed in that moment was: Jesus is Yahweh – God’s King!
      2. And we saw it also in 19:2-3 as **the Roman soldiers mocked Jesus as a King**. To them it was a bit of sport and humiliation, but they were unwittingly honouring the King from heaven!
      3. And in 19:12-16 **the Jewish people** also unwittingly honoured Jesus as the promised King when they said to Pilate, “*We have no king but Caesar*.” For in saying that they were fulfilling the prophecy in **Isaiah 53:3** thatsays that His own people would reject the promised Messiah.
      4. In Philippians 2:10 we read, “*One day every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that [He] is Lord*.” And that is a beautiful picture and a horrifying picture. It is beautiful in terms of believers because our bow will be the bow of love and adoration that precedes our entry into eternal life but it is horrifying because for unbelievers it will be the bow of terror that precedes their dismissal to the agonies of eternal hellfire.
   2. But the unwitting worship of Jesus continued here with Pilate and his inscription. We have seen that Pilate saw right through the scheme of the Jews. Three times he declared him not guilty of any crimes. Nevertheless, Pilate had agreed to crucify Him. And it was customary that an **inscription** be placed above those crucified listing the crimes that the criminal was guilty of. But Pilate had a problem didn’t he! By his own testimony, Jesus was not guilty of any crime. So he wrote, “*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*.”
      1. The history books reveal that Pilate did not like the Jews and the Jews did not like Pilate. So we see something of his utter disdain for them in what he chose to write. Think about it: Pilate represented Rome, the world superpower of that time, and here were these petty, jealous Jews, who were, in Pilate’s view, a people with ideas way above their station, who wanted to crucify Jesus for a crime that they could not even prove! So Pilate’s inscription basically amounted to this: This is Jesus, the unsuccessful dictator of an historically irrelevant people. And this too was a part of the utter humiliation of the Lord Jesus.
      2. But this was also **the perfect picture of unbelief at work**. You see, Pilate did what the whole realm of fallen man does in regard to Jesus. In His natural, unbelieving state, fallen man will not have this Jesus as *His* king. He is happy for Jesus to be the King of the Jews or the King of the Christians, but He is not *my* King. The unbeliever, if he knows of Jesus at all, simply sees Jesus as a poor fool who ended up on a cross – end of story. And my friend, if this is you today then I pray that you will see that Jesus *is* King and that He is *your* King!
      3. And we see that Jesus is the King of the whole world in **how Pilate caused this inscription to be written**:
         1. First of all, “*It was written in* ***Aramaic***.”
            1. Aramaic was the common language of the Jewish people in those times. It was also the language of true religion because at that stage in world history, God had been working in a saving way almost exclusively just with the Jews. So only the Jews had the OT with all of its promises and prophecies about a coming King. And it was Passover time in Jerusalem so there were Jews from all over the world there and we are told that “*many of the Jews read this inscription*.” So the Holy Spirit, through Pilate, was broadcasting a message to the Jews – the One you have rejected is the Promised King!
            2. Well, when the chief priests read this they asked for it to be changed. They wanted it to say that Jesus only claimed to be their King. But Pilate stood firm, “*What I have written I have written*.” So it was now written and recorded in the language of God’s people that Jesus was their King!
         2. But it wasn’t just written in the local or religious language of the Jews, as we see. For it was written also “*in* ***Latin****, and in* ***Greek***.” And they were the major languages of the Empire! Latin was the language of Rome, which represented law and government and power, and Greek was the language of Athens, which represented science and art and culture and philosophy.
         3. Back in **Isaiah 28:11** we read these words: “*For by people of strange lips and with a foreign tongue the LORD will speak to this people*.” And here the Holy Spirit proclaims Jesus as King in Latin and Greek!
         4. And in **Isaiah 66:18** we read, “*The time is coming to gather all nations and tongues*. *And they shall see my glory*.” And as Aramaic speakers and Latin speakers and Greek speakers passed the cross and read the sign and saw Jesus they were seeing His regal or royal glory.
         5. This is also why we read that passage from **Daniel** earlier in the service. Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of a great statue. And Daniel explained that the statue represented the great kingdoms of the world that would culminate in the kingdoms of Greece and then Rome. But they would be smashed to smithereens by a stone that would then “*became a great mountain that filled the whole earth*.” And the fulfillment of that prophecy was beginning here at the cross. It looked like World Empire, with Satan at the helm, had defeated Jesus. But this was not the defeat of Jesus; this was His triumph! This was the moment that the small stone was smashing the statue! This was the moment that God was establishing the kingdom that would become a great mountain that filled the earth! And that was signaled by the fact that this inscription was written in the languages of the empire!
         6. And this same message has continued to be written in the languages of the world as the Bible has been translated into many languages. According to Wycliffe Bible translators, as of Oct 26th, the full Bible has been translated into 698 languages and the NT is available in 1548 languages. But there is still a need for Bible translators. There are still people in the world who cannot read the Bible in their own language. And until the Lord Jesus returns, missionaries who are prepared to learn other languages to proclaim Jesus as King and Saviour will be needed, as will those who can serve in diaconal ministry and church planting. So keep that in mind, boys and girls and young people, as you think about a career. Is the Lord calling me to ministry/missions? Should I study subjects and get skills that will help with Bible translation or diaconal mission work? And of course, it’s never too late for a career change, brothers and sisters!
2. But this is where we have to cross over from Jesus as the **King** of the World to Jesus as the **Saviour** **for** **the World**.
   1. And to see this, we have to take a wander through John’s Gospel.
      1. **John 1:10-12**  “*[Jesus] was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him … Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God*.”
      2. **John 1:29**  “*The next day John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*!”
      3. **John 3:16**  “*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life*.”
      4. In **John 4** Jesus meets the Samaritan woman – a non-Jewish woman from the world. And we are told that she went back to town and told the people there all that had happened and we read, “*Many Samaritans from that town believed because of that woman’s testimony*.” So some from the world were saved!
      5. **John 6:33**, “*For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world*.”
      6. In **John 10:14**, of the Jews, Jesus said, “*I am the good shepherd … and I lay down my life for the sheep*.” But then Jesus continued, “*I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen (ie. Gentiles or non-Jews). I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd*.”
      7. And in **John 11:50** we read of another author of Scripture that we probably would not include in our lists of Bible authors. For that is where **Caiaphas**, the High Priest, who despised Jesus, said, “*It is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish*.” And then John wrote, “*He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one*.” So Caiaphas also proclaimed the gospel or good news of Jesus as the Saviour of the world!
      8. And then, finally in this connection, in **John 12:20** we read about some Greeks who asked to see Jesus. And Jesus went on to say, “*When* I *am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself … I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness … For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it*.”
   2. So this theme of Jesus as the Saviour of the world has been prominent in John’s Gospel. And right here, as Pilate wrote this message in Latin and Greek, He was writing something that could be read by the people of the world in those days. He could have written it just in Aramaic. But He did not! And this was because Pilate was an instrument of the Holy Spirit to declare that Jesus came to be the Saviour not just for the Jews but *for*  *the*  *world*!
      1. And congregation, this really **helps us understand passages like John 3:16** and others that talk about Jesus as the Saviour of the world. They are not saying that Jesus saves absolutely every person. They are not saying that Jesus makes it possible for anyone to be saved, as our Arminian friends believe. What they are saying is the time of Jew-only salvation was over and now salvation would include all of the nations of the world.
   3. But the message that Jesus is the Saviour of the world arises not just because these words were written in three languages but also because of **the words themselves**. You see, the purpose of the sign was to record the *crimes* that the one crucified was guilty of. But Jesus had not committed any crime and the sign said He was the King of the Jews.
      1. And there were two people there that day who saw Jesus and the inscription and they believed. And again, this would have made a great question at last night’s quiz: Who were the first two people to believe in Jesus as the crucified Saviour?
         1. The first one was a **thief**. He was on the cross next to Jesus. He was most probably Jewish. Do you remember His words to Jesus? He said, “*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom*”!!!!! And Jesus replied, ‘*Today, you will be with me in Paradise*.” So that thief saw and read and believed.
         2. But the second person was not Jewish. He was the first person from the world to recognize who Jesus is. He was a **Romancenturion**. In Luke 23:47 we read, “*Seeing what had happened, [He] praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man; the Son of God."*” He too saw and read and believed!
   4. But of course, the most important question today is how about you? Have you believed in Jesus as your Saviour? Do you understand and believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, who came to die on the cross for your sins?
      1. **Acts 4:12** says, “*There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*.” Jesus is the *only* Saviour. Jesus is the *only* way to the Father. Jesus is the *only* way to inherit eternal life. So have you repented of your sins and believed in Jesus as your Saviour?
   5. But as we have seen, Jesus is both Saviour **and King**. The Jewish leaders said Jesus *claims* to be the king of my life, but He is not the king of my life. I will not be ruled by Jesus. But how about you? Have you recognized and believed in Jesus as your Saviour *and your King*? Does the way you speak and behave reveal that Jesus is your King?
      1. Boys and girls, if Jesus is your Saviour and your King, you will want to obey your parents, immediately, fully, and joyfully.
      2. Young people, if Jesus is your Saviour and King, you will leave sex for marriage, and you will not get drunk, and you will work at self-control, rather than just having or watching or buying what you want when you want it.
      3. And Brothers and Sisters, if Jesus is your Saviour and King, you will work hard and not only when your employer is watching, and you will pay the taxes you owe, and you will obey the road rules, and husbands will work at loving their wives and wives will work at submitting to their husbands.

Earlier in the sermon I quoted Philippians 2:11, “*One day every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that [He] is Lord*.” May it be that your bow is the bow of love and adoration and not the bow of terror. Amen.