

Biblical Notes — John 18:36

36 – Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." (36. ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου· εἰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἦν ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμή, οἱ ὑπηρέται οἱ ἐμοὶ ἡγωνίζοντο ἀν ἵνα μὴ παραδοθῶ τοῖς Τουδαίοις· νῦν δὲ ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐντεῦθεν)

"In his rejection, Jesus manifested the true nature of his kingdom. His power would not be exercised through political or military pressures. In this sense his kingdom was not of this world."

— O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, (Phillipsburg, N.J, Presbyterian And Reformed Pub. Co, 1985), 224.

"Jesus' point is often misunderstood. His kingdom isn't immaterial. His kingdom isn't limited to a reign in human hearts. His kingdom isn't indifferent to how Christians treat their fellow human beings. His kingdom is different from the power-grabbing, violence-driven kingdoms and policies of this world. Jesus' kingdom is a kingdom of peace and justice that enters the world first as an offer of grace and mercy."

— Silverio Gonzalez, *What Jesus Actually Meant When He Said: "My Kingdom Is Not of This World"* (2017) n.p.

"The charge on which Jesus was arraigned was that of laying claim to the office of a king. He here substantially admits that he did claim to be a king, but not in the sense in which the Jews understood it. They charged him with attempting to set up an earthly kingdom, and of exciting sedition against Caesar. In reply to this, Jesus says that his kingdom is not of this world - that is, it is not of the same nature as earthly kingdoms. It was not originated for the same purpose, or conducted on the same plan. He immediately adds a circumstance in which they differ. The kingdoms of the world are defended by arms; they maintain armies and engage in wars. If the kingdom of Jesus had been of this kind, he would have excited the multitudes that followed him to prepare for battle. He would have armed the hosts that attended him to Jerusalem. He would not have been alone and unarmed in the garden of Gethsemane. But though he was a king, yet his dominion was over the heart, subduing evil passions and corrupt desires, and bringing the soul to the love of peace and unity."

— Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible, Commentary on John 18:36*.

"He meant that it is not, as all the other world Empires are, the product of human skill, or courage, or ingenuity, or wickedness. It is not a human institution at all, but a divine gift."

— T. W. Manson, *On Paul and John* (London: SCM Press. 1963), 153.

"My kingdom is not of this world. It would be hard for Pilate to form any conception of a kingdom not of this world, a kingdom of which the subjects did not fight with carnal weapons to defend its king, or to extend its borders. He was a soldier and the representative of a monarch whose power rested on the sword. But such a kingdom was Christ's. It was not of this world, did not spring from it, was heavenly in its origin, and hence his servants would not fight that he should not be delivered to the Jews. (1) Christ's kingdom is supernatural, not of human origin. It is in the world, but not worldly. (2) It is maintained, not by carnal weapons, but by spiritual and moral means."

— Barton W. Johnson, *People's New Testament, Commentary on John 18:36*.

"My kingdom is not of this world. Jesus answers Pilate's question indirectly. He had done something to incur the enmity of the rulers, and that was to have authority with and exercise influence over the people (John 12:19). They objected to his kingly claims (Matthew 21:15,16; Luke 19:38,39), but Jesus shows Pilate that these kingly claims, however distasteful to the Jews, were no offense or menace against the authority of Rome. Further than this, Jesus did not define his kingdom for Pilate had no concern in it beyond this. It was sufficient to inform him that it made no use of physical power even for purposes of defense. Such a kingdom could cause no trouble to Rome, and the bare fact stated by Jesus proved that it was indeed such a kingdom."

— J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel, Commentary on John 18:36*.