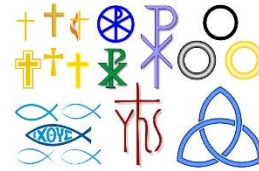


# What kind of King was Jesus?



## Different Christian Symbols

### What country is Jesus the king of?

The Kingdom of God lives in human hearts and minds, lives and communities. Jesus' key teaching in the first three Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) is that he is beginning a kingdom where God's rule of love, forgiveness and inclusion will grow. The Gospels look forward to a time when this kingdom will spread across the Earth. For Christians today, across the world, being a member of the community of the Kingdom of God is a precious gift, and a challenge: living out the values of the Kingdom of God is the key challenge of being a disciple of Jesus, loving God and loving our neighbour. There is no space here for hypocrisy, selfishness or personal pride. Instead, generosity, compassion, love even for enemies, and a joyful willingness to put others ahead of one's own

The offer of forgiveness through Jesus, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, give Christians hope that God can help them to be more loving and faithful. Christians use these texts to remind themselves of the way the world is supposed to be, and to reflect on how careful they must be not to forget that they are living in God's Kingdom. Many might say they find it easier not to let God rule in their lives, as Jesus' example shows that they may well end up in conflict with others. They would probably agree that the point is not just to listen, but to act.

## Key Definitions

<b>Parable:</b> a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Gospels.
<b>Kingdom:</b> a country, state, or territory ruled by a king or queen.
<b>Heaven:</b> a place regarded in various religions as the abode of God (or the gods) and the angels.
<b>Community:</b> a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
<b>Christian:</b> a person who has received Christian baptism or is a believer in Christianity.
<b>Gospels:</b> the record of Christ's life and teaching in the first four books of the New Testament.

### The parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?'

Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'

'Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.'

'At this the servant fell on his knees before him. "Be patient with me," he begged, "and I will pay back everything." The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.'

'But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. "Pay back what you owe me!" he demanded.'

'His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, "Be patient with me, and I will pay it back."

'But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.'

'Then the master called the servant in. "You wicked servant," he said, "I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.'

'This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

This parable is like a double edged sword. On one hand it teaches of God's forgiving nature – God is like the king who offers forgiveness to all. But there is also another side to the teaching – if we are not like God in the way that we treat others and we do not learn to forgive, then we will be judged. Christians believe that we need to show grace to all people just as God has shown grace to us. This teaching is echoed in the Lord's Prayer

'Forgive us our sins

As we forgive those who sin against us.'