

about this book . . .

Christ the Conquering King is a study book, developed for a Summer School, with a list of competent contributors. Its main theme concerns Christ and the Kingdom of God.

So many themes are taken up which can be personally useful, as well as being good material for study groups. Commencing with the Kingdom of God in the Old Testament, and the intimations of the coming Kingdom in the prophets, the studies build on Christ's Kingship, and the way in which the Kingdom healed and liberated people.

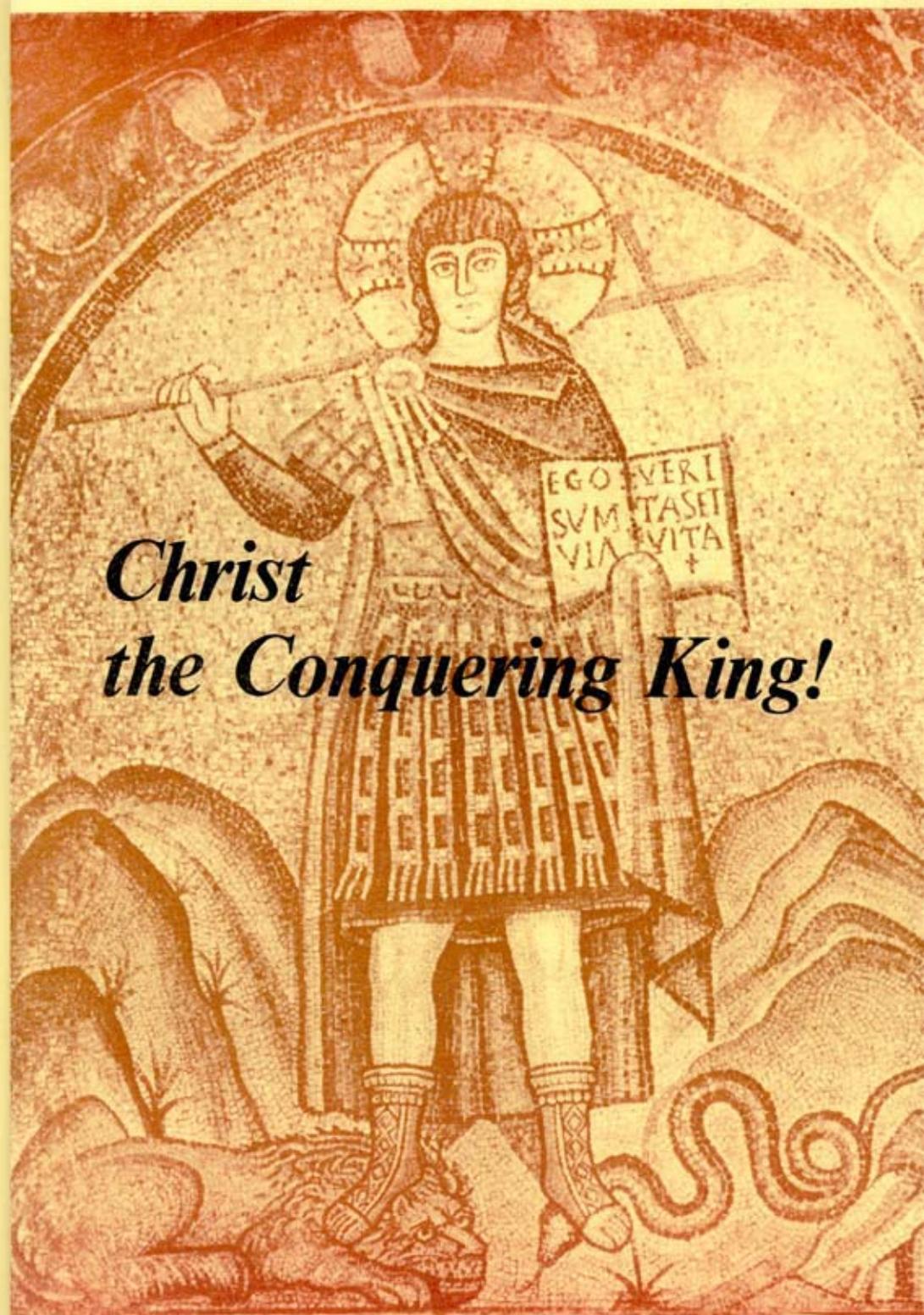
Showing the Kingdom victory of the Cross, Resurrection and Ascension, the studies cover the present and future aspects of the Kingdom, including the present lifestyle of those within the Kingdom.

This study book is a companion to Ian Pennicook's *Living in the Kingdom*, and Ian Murdoch's *Healing in the Kingdom of God*, and Geoffrey Bingham's *Christ the Conquering King!*, which are books intended to supplement this study book. Contributors to it are:

Geoffrey Bingham
Deane Meatheringham
Ian Pennicook
Martin Bleby
Don Priest
Ian Murdoch
Maurice and Marjorie Wellby

new creation publications inc.

www.newcreation.org.au



THE COVER:

A MILITANT CHRIST is depicted on this late fifth century mosaic as a triumphant warrior, dressed as a Roman legionary. He stands astride the heads of a serpent and a lion, and holds a book inscribed in Latin:

'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life'.

Christ the Conquering King!

GEOFFREY BINGHAM
MARTIN BLEBY
DEANE MEATHERINGHAM
IAN MURDOCH
IAN PENNICOOK
DON PRIEST
MAURICE AND MARJORIE WELLBY

Published by

NEW CREATION PUBLICATIONS INC.
P.O. Box 403, Blackwood, South Australia, 5051 1986

First published 1985

©1985

Geoffrey Bingham
Deane Meatheringham
Martin Bleby
Ian Pennicook
Don Priest
Ian Murdoch
Marjorie Wellby
Maurice Wellby

National Library of Australia Card number and

ISBN 0 86408 037 9

Cover design by Glenys Murdoch

Printed at New Creation Publications Inc.
Coromandel East, South Australia

CONTENTS

SECTION ONE: G. BINGHAM

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| 1. The King Has Come | 1 |
| 2. The King Conquers Forever | 4 |
| 3. The King Has Conquered. Me | 6 |
| 4. Living in the Kingdom III | 8 |
| 5. Living in the Kingdom IV | 10 |

SECTION TWO: D. MEATHERINGHAM

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| 1. The King and His Coming | 15 |
| 2. The King is Still Conquering | 18 |
| 3. The Spirit and the Kingdom | 21 |
| 4. The Climax of the Kingdom | 24 |

SECTION THREE: M. BLEBY

- | | |
|----------------------------|----|
| 1. The King in Action | 29 |
| 2. Man the Conquering King | 34 |

SECTION FOUR: I. PENNICOOK

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Living in the Kingdom I | 41 |
| 2. Living in the Kingdom II | 42 |
| 3. The King and His Priestly Community | 43 |

SECTION FIVE: D. PRIEST

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. The Father is King: the Son is King | 49 |
|--|----|

CONTENTS

SECTION SIX: ELECTIVES

The Kingdom of God and Social Justice Don Priest	61
The Kingdom of God and Today's Practical Ethics Ian Pennicook	64
The Kingdom of God and Human Suffering ... Geoffrey Bingham	67
Healing in the Kingdom of God Ian Murdoch	69
The Kingdom of God and Human Wholeness ... Marjorie and Maurice Wellby	70

SECTION 1

GEOFFREY BINGHAM

The King Has Come
The King Conquers Forever
The King Has Conquered Me
Living in the Kingdom–III
Living in the Kingdom–IV

THE KING HAS COME

1. INTRODUCTION: THE KING HAS COME

John announced the immediate coming of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 3: 1–3). Then Jesus announced it (Mark 1: 14–15), but this was after his baptism. The event of baptism was intimately linked with Psalm 2. Psalm 2 is quoted many times in the New Testament, and after linked with Psalm 110. We need to study Psalm 2 and then Psalm 110. We must realise that Jesus had used many Old Testament references in regard to himself (Luke 24:25–27, 44–49, cf. Acts 1: 3).

2. PSALM 2 – ITS FORM AND SIGNIFICANCE

The ‘form of Psalm 2’ is as follows:– The Psalm opens with the nations rebelling against God and His Messiah. God opposes their rebellion and does this by announcing that He has appointed His King in Zion. The Son then tells what has happened, i.e. that the Lord has announced him as His Son, (adoption–coronation), and will now give him these very nations who rebel. In the light of this, the nations ought to have a change of heart, fearing God and submitting to Him.

Had the New Testament writers not seized on this Psalm, it might have gone unnoticed, but because it is applied to Jesus in the New Testament, we must see that it refers to him, and his conquest of the world (cf. Genesis 49: 10).

3. PSALM 2 IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament the Psalm refers to Jesus' coronation which takes place in steps.

- (i) It refers to Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3: 17, with Isaiah 42: 1).
- (ii) It refers to his transfiguration (Matthew 17:5, cf. Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35).
- (iii) It refers to his death (Acts 4:26 with Psalm 2: 1–2).
- (iv) And is linked with his resurrection (Acts 13:33).
- (v) It is linked with Jesus' authority over the nations (Acts 1: 8 with Psalm 2: 8, 'the end of the earth').
- (vi) It refers to Christ's ascension in Hebrews 1: 5, and defeating the nations and ruling them (Revelation 2:26–27, 12:4–5, and 19: 15).

Thus all the events from the baptism to his reign in heaven are linked with the King–Messiah of Psalm 2.

Psalm 2 is linked strongly with Psalm 110. See Hebrews 1:5 and 13, then 5:5 and 5:6. Thus the Priest–King rules. See also Matthew 22:44, 26:64 (cf. Mark 12:36, 14:62, Luke 20:42–43, I Corinthians 15:25, Ephesians 1:20, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 1:3,13, 8:1, 12:2. Psalm 110 is used in Hebrews 1:13. and 10:13 and I Corinthians 15:24 28 fox' his reigning and ruling.

CONCLUSION: CHRIST WAS THE KING AND THE KINGDOM IN HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY

He was the King, and is the King. When Christ was in action (Matthew 12:28), then it was as Messiah–King. See Matthew 12:28, Luke 10:9. He is now King. What does this mean for us?

STUDY TWO

THE KING CONQUERS FOREVER

1. CONCLUSIVE CONQUEST REQUIRED

In Study 3 of our series entitled 'The King in Action', we saw that the King was triumphant over his foes: they receded before him. He had to come to some climax with them and defeat them forever.

2. THE CROSS THE PLACE OF BATTLE AND VICTORY

(i) Jesus' statements regarding conflict with evil. Luke 11:14–23, John 12:31, 14:30–31, 16:11. Cf. I John 3:9, Hebrews 2:14–15.

(ii) The conflict joined. Luke 22:53. Cf. Colossians 2:14–15.

3. THE 'STRONG MAN'S' WEAPONRY IS HUMAN GUILT

Man's enemies are sin, the flesh, Satan, his powers, the world system, the idols, the law, death the wrath (curse) of God and conscience. Each of these holds power through human guilt. Where guilt and impurity (Jeremiah 33:8 RSV) are cleansed away, the enemies lose their power.

THE BATTLE MUST BE SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF PSALM 22 AND 69

The enemies fight Christ because he is made sin (II Corinthians 5:21), has the sins of the world on him (I Peter 2:24), and so he becomes the target of accusation. See Jude 9 with John 14:30–31. When he bears the sins, the guilt, the curse (cf. Galatians 3:13), he destroys the grip of evil. He conquers through death (Hebrews 2:14–15, Colossians 2:14–15). His 'It is finished!' fits with II Timothy 1:10 and I Corinthians 15: 55–56, Revelation 1:5. Acts 2:25 = Psalm 16:8–11, should be read with Romans 4:25 and I Peter 1:3, 3:18, i.e. we are also 'saved by his life' (Romans 5:10).

STUDY THREE

THE KING HAS CONQUERED ME

1. I AM A REBEL, THE WORST OF SINNERS

I am autonomous: through the Fall I made myself independent (Genesis 3:1–6, cf. Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 4). Through guilt I have become an enemy of God, cf. Cain. Genesis 4, cf. Job 1:5, i.e. as man I hate God, Romans 1:30, 5:10, Colossians 1:21. I see God as grim, vengeful. See Psalm 18:26, Titus 1:15.

2. I AM A MAN ANGRY WITH GOD

Again see Cain in Genesis 4, with I John 3: 1011, cf. I John 4:20. When angry with God, I am angry with man: when angry with man, I am angry with God, cf. Jonah 4:6–11. See Revelation 6:8–10, cf. Romans 2:4–5. II Peter 3:9. Man thinks God does not hear him in suffering.

3. I AM DECEITFUL AND HATEFUL

My heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9, Mark 7: 22. Romans 3:13). of. Psalm 10:7, Proverbs 20:17, 26: 24–26, and I am deceived by sin (Hebrews 3:13, Romans 7:11), by my lusts (Ephesians 4:22), by Satan (Revelation 12:9, 13: 14, 20: 1), and demons (1 Timothy 4: 1f.). I am hateful and hating (Titus 3:3, Genesis 4, I John 3:10–11, 4:20).

4. THE KING HAS CONQUERED ME

(i) The Father loved and loves me (Ephesians 2:5f., John 3:16, I John 3:16, Romans 8: 32, I John 4:10, cf. Romans 3:24, II Corinthians 5:21, Isaiah 53:4ff.). His love holds me (Romans 8:37f.).

(ii) The Son loved and loves me (John 10:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:1–2, cf. II Peter 1:8).

Now I hate evil, sin, rebellion, and love God Father and Son – and I am no more a rebel. Principle is I John 4:19, see Romans 8:28, I Corinthians 2:9, (cf. I John 4:20, I Corinthians 16:22), James 1:12, I Peter 1:8.

STUDY FOUR

LIVING IN THE KINGDOM—III

1. LIFE IN THE KINGDOM AS DEPICTED IN THE PARABLES

We take the parables of Matthew 13.

- (i) **OF THE SOWER (1–17).** In the Kingdom true 'members hear the word of God.
- (ii) **OF THE WHEAT AND TARES (24*30, 3643).** In the Kingdom, God does the judging and separation, there is a time which is ripe for judgement, let man not take God's place (cf. Romans 12:19–21).
- (iii) **OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND LEAVEN (31 33).** The principle of growth and expansion.
- (iv) **OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE, THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE (44–45).** The true values are discovered in the Kingdom, and possessed. The Kingdom is highly esteemed.
- (v) **OF THE GOOD AND BAD FISH (47–50).** Another view of judgement. This is in the light of man's idea that God does not take notice of and 'speedily' punish the unjust (cf. Luke 18:1–8, Revelation 6:9–11).

In all the above, there is the dynamic view of God moving' in His creation, of man either coming under His reign and rule, or opposing it. The **OUTCOME** of the Kingdom is always in mind.

2. LIFE IN THE KINGDOM AS TAUGHT IN THE EPISTLES

- (i) Life in the Kingdom is holy. Only those who take holiness sincerely will inherit the Kingdom. See I Corinthians 5:9–11, Galatians 5:19–23, Ephesians 6:5–14. cf. Galatians 6:7–9.
- (ii) Life in the Kingdom – in spite of persecution – is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit'. See Romans 14:17.
- (iii) Life in the Kingdom is not empty words, but great power. See I Corinthians 4:20.
- (iv) Life in the Kingdom always demands 'life for the Kingdom', i.e. suffering and persecution. See II Thessalonians 1:4–6.

The warnings against deceit, and mistaking the life of the Kingdom, are made in the light of 'the coming Kingdom'. Conflict is inevitable now, but the richness of the Kingdom to come is what gives good substance to hope.

STUDY FIVE

LIVING IN THE KINGDOM—IV

**LIFE IN THE KINGDOM IN THE LAST DAYS AND TIMES,
ESPECIALLY AS SEEN IN THE BOOK OF THE
REVELATION**

- (i) Living in and for the Kingdom will entail suffering. This is general for the servants of God because of their witness. See 1:2,9, 6:9–11, 12:10–17, 20:4. This is because the 'have (hold) the word of God and the testimony of Jesus' (Acts 1:8, Revelation 19: 10).
- (ii) There is the strong conflict and clash of two kingdoms, the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness, i.e. 'the kingdoms of this world' (cf. 11: 15). On one side there is God, the Lamb, and 'the armies of heaven', and on the other the Dragon, the beast, the second beast, the false image, and the false prophet, together with Babylon the great and gaudy harlot. See especially chapters 12,13,14, 15:14, 16:12–16, 17, 18, 19:11–21, 20:1–10. All of this is proceeding now.
- (iii) Conquest of the people of God is allowed. See 6:9–11, 13:7–10, but judgement comes to those who surrender to the beast (14: 9–11), whilst the deeds of those who do not (14:12–23), bring rewards. 15:2 shows true victory is possible, but 13:10 and 14:12 show it will be a matter of endurance.

- (v) The outcome of victory (cf. chapters 19 and 20) will be (a) the marriage feast of the Bride and the Lamb, and (b) the fulness of the Holy City, especially the Temple being God Himself (19:6 9, 21:1–5, 22, and 22:105).
- (vi) Those in the Kingdom conquer with Christ. They are 'conquerors' or 'overcomers'. See chapters 2 and 3, 15:2 and 21:7. These inherit all things, i.e. the new heavens and the new earth, and they reign over these, and forever, as a kingdom of priests. See 5:10, 20:4, 21:7, 22: 4–5. The Kingdom has come to final victory (cf. I Corinthians 15:24–28, Revelation 11:15), and they are part of it.

SECTION 2

DEANE MEATHERINGHAM

The King and His Coming
The King is Still Conquering
The Spirit and the Kingdom
The Climax of the Kingdom

STUDY ONE

THE KING AND HIS COMING

1. DANIEL 7:13–14 PROPHETICALLY GIVES THE KING'S COMING IN HISTORY

Prophecy is the word given by God in time concerning His purpose in history, decreed before the world began (Amos 3:7, Isaiah 14:24–27, Proverbs 16:4,9, 20:24, Ephesians 3:2–6). It does not concern itself with events in an otherworldly realm, but with the predictive events of the government of history. It gives the ultimate and true interpretation of history, all of which is not tolerated by fallen man, who will only have a god governed by history, and its process.

The one 'like a son of man' is a royal man who rules with divine authority a heavenly man. Jesus ascribes to himself this highest imaginable role (Luke 17:22ff., Matthew 24:27,37ff., Mark 8: 38, 14: 62, Revelation 1: 7) o Daniel sees the victory of kingdom over all the human kingly beasts of prey (Daniel 7:1–12, Revelation 5:12).

Note the sensation caused by the Baptist, then Jesus when the kingdom is announced as being at the doors (Matthew 3:lff., 4:17).

2. THE ONE LIVING GOD REIGNS OVER THE ENTIRETY OF HIS CREATION

He is 'the Ancient of Days', the eternal king (Daniel 7:13,9–10. He has no competing gods, and

Christ the Conquering King

is not limited in His being, reign, or power (Daniel 2:19–23,47, 4:17,34f., 6:25–27). God's Kingship is over all the creation (Psalm 47:2, 145:11–13, 22:28, Obadiah 21, I Chronicles 29:11). The cry of the gospel is 'our God reigns (Isaiah 52:7).

His rule is constant, absolute, and universal.

We emphasize God's reign is free, not dependent, but a reign of pure grace (Daniel 4:35, Psalm 115:3, Romans 9:16,20, 11:33–36).

Such a God is offensive to rebellious man, who wishes to reverse God's role. Babel parallels Jerusalem at every point (Genesis 4:16, 11:lff.). Man arrogates himself to determine history (Daniel 3:lff., 3:15, 4:30, Revelation 17:5). Denying the law of God, corporate man seeks to save the world by statist law (Daniel 7: 25, 11: 2).

3. THE SHADOW AND THE PROMISE

By shadow we don't mean abstract unreality, rather the prefiguring and predicting of what is to come (Hebrews 10:1, 8:5, 9:8f., 7:3, Colossians 2: 17).

Genesis 3:15 promises the defeat of the world system. The call of Abraham in Genesis 12:lff. has in view a nation under God's Kingship, and its scope is all the nations. Genesis 49:10 prophecies that one of Judah's descendants will have kingship over the nations. Israel redeemed from Egypt, is a theocracy within the whole kingdom of God (Exodus 19:5–6, Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2,21, 26: 19). The promise to the covenant people is a Son who is greater than David's (Psalms 2, 89, 110, 132).

Christ the Conquering King

Israel violated the covenant which God does not break with the promise of one who will restore Israel from her enemies, bring forgiveness and regeneration (Isaiah 9:2–7, 11:1–9, 52:13 – 53:12, Amos 9: 13, Ezekiel 36, 37 etc.).

4. THE TRIUMPH OF THE KING WILL BE THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE

The Ancient of Days gives the Son of man authority over all the nations (Daniel 7:13 14). His defeat of the political beasts of prey (Daniel 7: 1–12), is the effectual action of the God of God's, and Lord of Kings (Daniel 2:44–45,47). It is not stage-managed by man in any way. The kingdom will irrevocably be sealed against all evil and possessed by the saints of the Most High (Daniel 7: 21,26f.).

STUDY TWO

THE KING IS STILL CONQUERING

1. INTRODUCTION

The victory of Christ did not end with his Cross. Rather, it opens the last days where as King, Christ has authority over all history. With his people, Christ brings history to its climax, where he hands the kingdom to his Father.

Therefore, while to common sense the Cross is the absurdity of history, it is truly the centre and solution of history.

2. CHRIST, THE LIVING KING

Revelation 1:12–18 shows Christ regal and glorified, with the keys of full and total control.

The Messiah, Son of David, was more than a man of history (John 8:58).

The 'Living One' dispossessed the 'powers' in his victory at the Cross, as he also freed men from their power, in bringing all sin to a head in judgement, and thereby acquitting the guilty of sin's power (Colossians 1: 15, Romans 6: 7, 4: 24).

The power of Christ's obedience to death is in his bringing life and immortality to light (II Timothy 1:10, Hebrews 2:9,14f.), declaring Jesus to be Lord of all (Romans 10:9f. Philippians 2:6–11).'

Christ is more than a historic servant of God, he is the 'living' Lord (Revelation 1:17 18).

3. THE ON-GOING BATTLE

Eschatology shows the events of history leading up to the end, where Christ brings all of his enemies into subjection (I Corinthians 15: 24–28, cf. Psalm 2). 'D-Day – V-Day'.

Man fortified his kingship over the creation by the Fall, and set up his alternate kingdom, which leads to death. Jesus the true man reestablishes this vocation and opens the kingdom (Hebrews 2:15–18).

By the proclamation of the Gospel, Christ brings the nations to obedience through his servants (Matthew 28:18f., Acts 1:1,8, 2:47, 3:16, Romans 1:5, I Corinthians 1: 18,25, II Corinthians 2:14, 10:3–6).

4. THE KING HAS AUTHORITY TO. REIGN OVER HISTORY WITH HIS PEOPLE

- (1) The prophets declared God's plan for history, the course of history is now declared by Christ (Revelation 4:lff.). Apocalyptic tells of the events of the present, and shows us what is happening from the standpoint of the Throne. Christ is preparing his people for battle and victory.
- (2) The victorious Lion is the Lamb who has authority over history (Revelation 5:lff.). The scroll is God's decree and providence. The central problem is who has the power to open the scroll, man having disqualified himself? The all seeing Lamb is given this power and redeems men to reign with him

Christ the Conquering King

(Revelation 5:9f., cf. Daniel 7:13f., 18, 21f., 27, Matthew 5:5, Romans 5:17).

(3) Christ takes action against the 'rulers' who have been dispossessed, but refuse to surrender (Revelation 6:1ff., 8:2ff., 16:1ff.).

(4) Victory is in suffering (Revelation 11:1–12, Romans 8:31–39). The decisive victory of the Cross is depicted as the ultimate triumph of the end, and it is this which undergirds our victory now (Colossians 1:24, Philippians 3: 10f.).

5. CONCLUSION

Christ's intervention on behalf of his people is the continued energy of his reign on the Cross (Romans 5:10f., 8:34). He not only lives and conquers, but mingles himself with our lives.

Christ the Conquering King

STUDY THREE

THE SPIRIT AND THE KINGDOM

1. CHRIST, THE SPIRIT AND THE KINGDOM

From the beginning the Spirit has been active in the action and goals of the kingdom (Genesis 12: 1ff., cf. Galatians 3:6–9, 14, 4:28, Isaiah 48:8, 44: 1–5, 42: 1–4, Genesis 49: 10). Messiah would be a man of the Spirit (Isaiah 11:2, 61:1ff., cf. Luke 4:16–21).

'The promise of my Father' (Luke 24:49) can mean 'the Spirit of promise', which links the Spirit with the Old Testament prophetic promises of salvation, the establishing of the kingdom and the gift of the Spirit (Isaiah 4:4, 44:1ff., Ezekiel 22:17–22, 37:1–28, Joel 2:28–32, Malachi 3:2–3).

In announcing the fulfilment of God's time, John the Baptist, then Jesus, spoke of the Day of the Spirit (Matthew 3:1–12, John 7:37–39, 14:25f.).

Acts 1:1–8 links Christ, the Spirit, and the kingdom: –

- (a) Following his resurrection, the subject of conversation is the kingdom.
- (b) The promise is being baptized in the Spirit.
- (c) The disciples expect (rightly) the kingdom to be restored to Israel, (linking the kingdom and the out-pouring of the Spirit).
- (d) Jesus takes the disciples beyond Israel to the ends of the earth, indicating that their testimony will embrace the nations. This will be the action of the kingdom.

2. THE SPIRIT OPENS THE KINGDOM

Entry into the kingdom can only be by that work of the Spirit which regenerates man encased in his rebellion (John 3: 5– 8, 6: 63). The victory of Christ's Cross is wrapped up from man unless the Spirit communicates its truth (I Corinthians 2:3f., I Peter 1:12, Hebrews 6:4, 2:4). No Spirit: no kingdom.

The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is the opening of the kingdom (Acts 2:29–36). Those who repent and are baptized, enter the kingdom (Acts 2:38–41). By the Spirit they are led into all the truth, washed, and filled with power to bear witness (John 15:26–27, Titus 3:5f., Acts 2:17–21).

The kingdom is opened to the Samaritans and the Gentiles (Acts 8:5,12,14–17, 10:44–48, 11:15,18).

Ephesians 4:10 speaks of ascension and reign over all, combined with the fulness of his presence. According to Calvin, 'The supreme purpose of the ascension (is) to fill all creation with the Regnum Christi'. By the Spirit, Christ's kingship is present in history.

3. THE SPIRIT CONDUCTS LIFE IN THE KINGDOM

The Father and the Son are not known apart from the Spirit (Romans 8: 9–17, Galatians 4: 4– 6, Matthew 10: 20). By the Spirit we know Christ's saving lordship (I Corinthians 12:3, 2:9–14), and we are not in the kingdom except under his lordship (Romans 10:9), so that by the Spirit we experience the power of the kingdom (I Corinthians 4: 20).

Under the life of the Spirit. the members of the kingdom are joined to the saints – the people of God (Ephesians 2:11–18, Galatians 4:6, 3:28. I Corinthians 12:13, Acts 2:42–47, 4:11–35).

Life in the kingdom is life in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). This is not a trivial pursuit, as the three-fold gifts are known in the Holy Spirit, with their consequent moral fruit. The harvest of the Spirit is not only the produce of the Gospel and the life of Christ in his people, but the fruit of the kingdom (Galatians 5:21–25, Matthew 7:15,23).

Life in the kingdom is life lived under the authority of the Father's grace, through the redemption of Christ the Lord, and realized by walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16,18,25, Acts 5:32, Matthew 5: 6, 6: 33).

STUDY FOUR

THE CLIMAX OF THE KINGDOM

1. IT IS A CLIMAX

Christ is the 'first fruits' of the assured harvest, as he is progressively subduing his enemies by the Gospel and judgement (I Corinthians 15: 20-28, Revelation 11:15). Now Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings (Revelation 17: 14, 19: 16, Matthew 28: 18ff.). At the fulfilling of his reign, all creation will acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus (Philippians 2:9-11).

Important! The idea of a dual time of evil in which Satan and the world powers more or less subjugate the kingdom, is absent. The Revelation is addressed to suffering and troubled Christians, as well as to smug and self satisfied Christians, who thought the world's problems presented a hindrance to Christ and his kingdom. Not by evading conflict, but in assuming responsibility do the people of God inherit the new world.

2. THE TIME FACTOR

By the grace of new birth we enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5-8, Colossians 1:13). We have been justified and sanctified (Titus 3:3-8). The powers of the new age have come upon us (Hebrews 6: 5). We have entered the new creation (II Corinthians 5:7, Colossians 1:20). We have come into the new Jerusalem, which opens into its marvellous fullness

of glory through ages of ages (Hebrews 12: 22-24). We have received a kingdom which cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:25-29).

Yet we pray 'Thy kingdom come'. We await the consummation with hope (I Peter 1:3-9,20-21, Romans 8:18-25).

The key is found in Luke 18: 1-8, (cf. Revelation 6:9-11). God will act, but not until His salvation and judgement are filled up. He is working 'speedily' in history (cf. Matthew 24:49,36, 25:14-30, II Peter 3:3f.).

3. THE APPEARING OF THE KING

A variety of words describe Christ's manifestation at the summing-up of history. He who is now hidden from sight, will be revealed (*apokalypsis*) (Romans 2:5, II Thessalonians 1:7, I Peter 1:7). He will come (*erchomai*) (Matthew 10:23, Acts 1: 11, Revelation 1:7). Christ will show himself, or appear (*epiphaneia*) (II Thessalonians 2:8). The word 'parousia' means presence, or arrival, which, when linked to the other words, point not to Christ's absence, and return, but rather to the revelation of Christ's kingship in a new way.

The kingship of Christ will be apparent and unmistakable to all (Matthew 24:30, Revelation 1:7, II Thessalonians 1:7,10, Philippians 2:10f.). All will be headed up in Christ (Ephesians 1: 10).

4. CHRIST'S KINGSHIP IS VINDICATED IN THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL EVIL FORCES

We saw in previous studies that Christ has authority to open the seals of judgement upon the world system, so that judgement is currently processive and ultimately climactic (Romans 1: 18ff., 2: 5,

I Thessalonians 1: 10, II Thessalonians 1: 7–10). The course is set now (John 3:19, 8:50).

All final judgement is before Christ (Acts 17:31, 10:42, 24:24f., II Corinthians 5:10, I Timothy 4:8). (This may be interchangeable with the judgement seat of God [Romans 14:10, Hebrews 12:23, Revelation 20:12]).

Revelation announces the fall of the world system – Babylon (ch. 18). The dream of a Paradise without God is exposed, doomed and finished at the Cross. Christ makes war on Babylon's pretensions. Armageddon is the culmination and final destruction of that dream (Revelation 16: 16, 19: 17–21). Here the Messianic pretensions of the state are destroyed with the faiths' which supported it (Revelation 20: 710). The last enemy destroyed is death (I Corinthians 15:26, Revelation 20:14).

5. THE FINAL INHERITANCE

This is the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb (Revelation 19:9), the revelation of the Holy City, Jerusalem (Revelation .21:1–4,9,22:5. cf. Ephesians 5: 25–33). The people of God are glorified in Christ (Romans 8:22–25, Ephesians 1:10, I John 3:1ff.). Now God is known fully (I Corinthians 13:12, Matthew 5:8, I Corinthians 15:28). The inheritance is God Himself (Ephesians 1:18, Colossians 1:12). This is life in the kingdom – in the King, as decreed by the Father (Matthew 25:34, Ephesians 1:4). The redeemed reign in a new heaven and a new earth (II Peter 3:7,10–13), where all is to the praise of the Father's glorious grace fully seen in His only Son, Jesus our Lord.

SECTION 3

MARTIN BLEBY

**The King in Action
Man the Conquering King**

STUDY ONE

THE KING IN ACTION

1. A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE SON OF THE KING

Mark 1: 14–39. One who had authority.

2. THE WORD OF THE KING

The earthly King: Proverbs 16:10,12–15, cf. II Samuel 23:3–4 (David). N.B. ‘in the fear of God’.

The heavenly King: Isaiah 55:10–11. A word which effects what it says. Cf. the creative word Genesis 1: 3, the prophetic word Deuteronomy 18: 21–22 (e.g I Kings 22, Jeremiah 28),

The King, the son of a King: Psalm 72:1. So Mark 1: i – the man with authority.

The testimony of John ‘the way of the Lord!': Mark 1:3–8.

By the Spirit: Mark 1:9–15 (of. Luke 4:14), Acts 10:38.

3. THE KING SPEAKS

Mark 4: 1– 34, the Parables.

The word of the Father: John 3:34–35, 12:49,50,14: 24. So would expect the word to be effective, as indeed it is – cuts both ways. Mark 4: 33–34, 10–12 (Hebrews 4:12–13).

4. THE KING ACTS

Mark 4:35 – 5:20. The stilling of the storm and the Gadarene demoniac. 4:41 – good question. See Psalm 65:7.

The works of the Father: John 5: 19–20, 14: 10–11. So Mark 5:19–20.

The actions also cut both ways: Mark 4:41, 5:18, cf. 5:17.

5. THE KING RECOGNISED

The demons: Mark 3: 11, 5: 7..

The centurion: Matthew 8: 5–13.

Peter: Matthew 16:15–16, N.B. 17, ‘my Father’.

6. EXCURSUS: TRUE KINGSHIP

So far: great stuff. Good to watch the power at work zapping left, right and centre. But is kingship the naked exercise of power? Unless we see Christ’s kingship exercised supremely in the Cross, we will misunderstand it.

Resurrection is the promulgation of the Cross, not its reversal.

Philippians 2:8–9. Not as a compensatory reward – the action of the Cross itself constitutes the kingship.

P .T . Forsyth in ‘*Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*’ (1907), speaks of ‘the final authority of grace: God’s love is the outgoing of His holiness, not as exigent law, but as redeeming grace, bent

on reclaiming us, all bankrupt and defiant, to His full, rich, harmonious, eternal life’ (p.145). ‘In the Cross, the world was doomed to – salvation’ (p.247). ‘That which saves the world will also judge the world’. Thus we preach ‘the absolute right over us of the Christ who *bought* us – the active supremacy in conscience of our moral *redemption*’ (p.27, emphases added). This is true authority.

‘Muscular Christ’ is not the Man of Calvary.

7. THE KING (DELIBERATELY) MISUNDERSTOOD

Peter: Mark 8:31–33.

James and John: Mark 10:32–45. N.B. Matthew 20:23, ‘prepared by my Father’ – His kingdom, not theirs.

John 6:15: The king and the king–makers. A nasty business.

8. THE KING OPPOSED

Mark 2:7,16,18,24, 3:2,6. The opposition to grace.

Matthew 12: 28–29. What constitutes the binding of Satan? The taking away of his power to accuse. Revelation 12: 10–11.

9. THE KING EXPLAINS

Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33–34. Insistently.

The Father’s business. Mark 9: 7o

Mark 12:1–12: 6 – ‘still, one other’, all he had. The showdown.

Christ the Conquering King

Revelation 5. N.B.v.12: Jesus is worthy of power, wealth, wisdom, might, honour, glory and blessing, simply by virtue of being the Lamb who was slain. The world will be judged by that which saves it – holy unrelenting grace.

– ‘the Lord’s doing’ – marvellous. Cf. I Peter 1:20 – from the beginning.

Wants even his enemies to understand.

Mark 11:27–33: by what authority?

Mark 12:35–37: whose Son?

But John 16:3 ‘have not known the Father, nor me’.

10. THE KING OF LOVE

Mark 15:30–32: the one who saved others by not saving himself.

Mark 15: 33– 34: the place of outer darkness.

‘This limitation in Christ was the result, the expression of his absolute power...if the infinite could not be finite, it is less than infinite. For then there is a region outside its range...he parted with a physical omnipotence but never with a moral, never with the Omnipotence of love, which is the Christian meaning of the Cross’. (P.T. Forsyth, ‘Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind’, p. 152).

One who has done that, and no other, has the right to rule you. All Christ’s authority is only ever of the Cross.

So Mark 2: 10: authority to forgive sins.

Mark 3:27: authority to bind Satan, plunder his house.

Matthew 8: 17: authority to heal.

What about Mark 4:35 – 5:20: over nature? See Romans 8: 19– 23.

Christ the Conquering King

What about Mark 6:30–44: feeding? See John 6, Mark 8:14–21, Romans 8:32.

Revelation 5. N.B. V. 12: Jesus is worthy of power, wealth, wisdom, might, honour, glory, and blessing, simply by the virtue of being the lamb who was slain. The world will be judged by that which saves it– holy unrelenting grace.

STUDY TWO

MAN THE CONQUERING KING

1. TRUE SERVICE IS TRUE RULING

Danger when speaking of Christ as King that we see submission in wrong light, e.g. Christ as great and mighty Lord, man as worthless worm. This demeans true humanity, and arises from resentful (i.e. unrepentant) submission.

'O God...whose service is perfect freedom' (*Book of Common Prayer* 1662). Cf. Psalm 100: 2, Revelation 7: 15–17. From mediaeval Latin prayer 'cui servire, regnare est', 'whom to serve is to rule'.

Many contemporary Christian exhortations to 'live the triumphant/victorious life', 'enter into your inheritance', 'reign with Christ', be in control of life and its circumstances, rather than other way round. Important to see this in right context and right spirit. May be reassertion of man's desire for independent autonomy.

2. TRUE HUMANITY

'The noble and regal figure' 'visionary man' as in *Bright Bird and Shining Sails* p.10–11.

Even Adam and Eve are not 'the man-that-is-yet-to-be'. True humanity is in Christ, not just in Adam. We are 'created in Christ Jesus' (Ephesians 2: 10), chosen 'in him before the foundation of

the world' (Ephesians 1:4), destined 'to be his sons through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:5). Cf. Romans 8: 29. So we begin there.

3. THE TRUE MAN

Daniel 7:9–10,13–14. 'One like a son of man'. Jesus' favourite self-designation, e.g. Matthew 26: 63–66.

An individual, Daniel 7: 13–14, but also the community of the saints, Daniel 7:18,22,27. Cf. Romans 8:29, 'firstborn among many brethren'.

'Son of... ' in Scripture, e.g. Mark 3: 17, 'sons of thunder' (cf. Luke 9:51–55), John 17: 12, 'son of perdition', Acts 4:36, 'son of encouragement'. Having the essential nature of. Hence 'Son of God', Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3, (cf. us, II Peter 1:4!), 'Son of man' – the true man? Revelation 1:12–16 certainly a fine figure of a man. N.B. an individual, who is communal, who is given dominion.

4. MAN CREATED FOR TRUE RULE

Genesis 1:26–28. In the image of the Trinity, not just of the Son. (This is not static, but dynamic and relational). Given dominion.

Genesis 2:7. As a created, dependent being. With a high destiny. –Romans 4: 13, 'inherit the world' (through Abraham). In Christ: Hebrews 1:2 'heir of all things', Romans 8:17 'heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ'.

Hence I Corinthians 6:2,3 'judge the world... angels' (Cf. Hebrews 1:4ff.). So Psalm 8:3–9. A due and beautiful order I Corinthians 11:3,7.

5. UNTRUE RULING

Independent autonomy: Genesis 3: 5– 6.
The order disrupted: Genesis 3:16 (also 17–19).
Perverse authority: Genesis 11:1–9, N.B. 6.
Fallen authority: Mark 10:42, cf. 43–45.
The lemon tree and the lemon squeezer.

6. TRUE MAN RULES FROM THE TREE

Romans 3:10–18, Isaiah 59:15–16.
True man is individual before he is communal, because he is the only one left. John 18:3–11, Mark 14:27,50, Luke 18:31–33.

Daniel 7: with the coming of the son of man, a great judgement takes place. Hence John 5:26,27, 22–23.
Judgement given to the son of man.

John 12:31–33: the world and the devil judged – unto salvation.

‘The world’s condemnation of him was his condemnation of the world – but a condemnation unto forgiveness and salvation...All were shut up to sin, that there might be mercy on all. The world’s one sin was made by grace the world’s one hope’. P.T. Forsyth, Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind, p. 247.

John 13:31: the Son of man glorified – on the Cross.

I Peter 2: 23: ‘He trusted to him who judges justly’ the only one who ever did. But for us all.

Christians aren’t just perfect – they’re forgiven!

7. TRUE RULE ESTABLISHED

Hebrews 2:6–9. By faith.

True kingship is in and with Christ: Matthew 19: 28, twelve thrones.

True kingship is gift: Luke 12:32, Matthew 25:34.

Revelation 5:10: true kingship is communal, for others (priestly), on the earth (in this age and the next, Luke 19: 11–27).

The rewards of true kingship: Revelation 2: 7, 11,17,26–27, 3:5,12,21, 21:7.

SECTION 4

IAN PENNICOOK

The Living in the Kingdom–I
Living in the Kingdom–II
The King and His Priestly Community

STUDY ONE

LIVING IN THE KINGDOM—I

(A fuller discussion of this subject is to be found in the booklet, '*Living in the Kingdom*', by Ian Pennicook).

1. Introduction

- the variety of views
- Sermon on Christian Ethics?

2. The Context

the kingdom in action the perversion of the law

3. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1–2)

4. The Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3–12)

- statements of fact
- the truth as it always was

5. Salt and Light (Matthew 5: 13–14)

STUDY TWO

LIVING IN THE KINGDOM—11

6. Jesus and the Law (Matthew 5: 17–48)

the true dimensions of the law

- murder
- adultery
- divorce
- oaths

7. What, Then, is True Piety? (Matthew 6: 1–34)

- who sees?
- almsgiving
- prayer
- fasting
- the attitude towards possessions

8. Issues of Kingdom Living (Matthew 7: 1–27)

what of the others?
wherein lies security?

9. The Kingdom and the Cross

STUDY THREE

THE KING AND HIS PRIESTLY COMMUNITY

We must start with the existence of the Church. However we may understand it, it is there. Pentecost was the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but specifically with a view to the formation of a community of people who live by and in the dynamic of the Spirit. They live in the dynamic of the new age, the dynamic of the kingdom. The evidence of this may be seen in the powerful vitality of the people of God in the Acts of the Apostles.

But the people of God are more than just a dynamic group of people. They have a clear identity and purpose in life. This, of course, does not mean that they must somehow organise themselves to become something. Their identity and purpose is, on the contrary, contained within the action of the Spirit. That is why the New Testament, as also the Old, contains so many statements of fact with regard to the people of God.

One of the significant statements of fact about the people of God is found in I Peter 2:9, 'But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light'. They are that. Our question at this point is 'what does it mean for us to be a royal priesthood?'

The picture of the church as a priesthood is not unique to I Peter. Similar statements are found in Revelation 1: 6, 5: 10 and 20: 6 with 'priestly'

language being used in Romans 15: 16, Hebrews 13: 15 and I Peter 2:4–5. But the subject does not begin in the New Testament. In Exodus 19: 5–6, the newly released Israel is declared to be ‘a kingdom of priests’. There their experience of being that is conditional upon their obedience. But they cannot become that, for they are already a redeemed people. What is clear from the history of Israel is that by and large Israel refused to be what they were. The consequences of this refusal for them, and incidentally for the nations round about, were calamitous.

In John 4: 23, Jesus describes God as the Father who ‘ever seeks such to worship him’ Those whom He seeks are those ‘who worship the Father in spirit and truth’. Isaiah calls God, in the Messiah’s titles, ‘the everlasting Father’, (9: 6). From this we may conclude that God has always been Father and has always been seeking to have His people in worship. There has never been a time when this was not so. Men and women are created to worship. It is intrinsic to their being (cf. Joshua 24: 14–15). Furthermore, it is significant that it is the Father who longs for the worship. For by this we can see that the worship is not that of some eccentric potentate, but of the Father, by the sons. Hence, statements such as ‘Adam (was) the son of God’ (Luke 3: 38), and ‘Israel is my first born son...Let my son go that he may serve me’, (Exodus 4:22–23). The word for ‘serve’ here in the Greek Old Testament is one which means to serve in worship. Such worship by the people of God was to be true filial adoration, which in no way demeaned the worshippers, but rather gave them their fulness of identity.

In this capacity, Israel was to be the point where God was represented to the nations. Hence, the servant of the Lord in Isaiah (a reference first to Israel and then, secondly and by derivation, to her fulfilment in Christ), ‘will bring forth

justice to the nations’ and be ‘a light to the nations’ (Isaiah 42:1,6). Israel’s role was nothing more than a fulfilling of the declaration to Abraham that ‘in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed’ (Genesis 12:3), which in turn is the statement that in Abraham the command given at creation, ‘*be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it’* (Genesis 1:28, cf. Acts 17:26–27), is to be fulfilled.

We may say, then, that there were two aspects to the priestly function of Israel. Israel was to be a community of worship as well as the point where God was represented to the world and the world to God. We would call this the ministry of intercession.

What of the failure of Israel? There were certainly individuals in Israel who knew the delights of true worship, but the whole community denied (and the prophets would say they did so deliberately), its corporate identity as the Priestly community of God. Did this mean then that the purposes of God, established in eternity and expressed at creation and the exodus etc., were to be frustrated and so fail? Or could it be that God will yet have his son to worship and serve him?

In Matthew 2: 15, Jesus has applied to him the statement, which in its Old Testament context, referred to Israel, ‘*Out of Egypt have I called my son’*. There was no mistake. Jesus was all that Israel was, yet refused to be. He was Israel! ‘For all the promises of God find their yes in him’ (II Corinthians 1: 20). It was, then, truly of him that the psalmist said (Psalm 40:4–8), cf. Hebrews 10:7), ‘*Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God’*. *He will be ‘a light for revelation to the Gentiles (nations) and for glory to thy people Israel* (Luke 2:32). We see in Christ true filial adoration and

Christ the Conquering King

worship over against the pedantry and self righteousness of the Jews (John 5:16–20, 14:31).

We have said that at Pentecost the outpouring of the Spirit was with a view to the formation of the true community of God. Hence, Peter's statement, '*You are a royal priesthood*'. The people of God are a priesthood which relates to the kingdom. Repeatedly, the scriptures tell them that they reign, i.e. the kingdom is their's. But how can that be? The answer is that '*You have come to fulness of life in him*', (i.e. in Christ, Colossians 2:10). Literally, this should read that you have come to 'fulness' or 'fulfilment' in him. In other words, the people of God reign and have a priestly identity and purpose only because they are in Christ. They can now live in the fulfilment of creation's purpose. Hence, the sacrifices which this priestly community offer are 'spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ' (I Peter 2:5). Also, by the new community, 'repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations' (Luke 24:47). So Paul says, in Ephesians 1:5–6,12, 'He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved We who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory' It is true to say that we cannot truly see the church until we see it as 'Lost in wonder, love and praise'.

The dynamic vitality of the new community in the Book of Acts, is not in any way purposeless. There is the clear ministry of intercession in prayer, as the saints pray for one another, in order that the work of representation may go on at full pace (So, Ephesians 6:18–20), I Timothy 2:1–4). Then there is the work of proclamation by which the

Christ the Conquering King

nations are confronted with the being of God and so brought to God. Paul says, in Romans 15: 16, that he is 'a minister of Christ to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit'.

In the Book of the Revelation, we see the church as it really is, 'a kingdom, priests to his God and Father' (1:6). Twenty four elders appear repeatedly in the book as representatives of the church in all its fulness. But it is conspicuous that, every time these elders are mentioned, they are worshipping (see 4:9–11, 5:8–14). Nor is this worship in any way mechanical; it is the rich outpouring of the heart, motivated by the dynamic of redemption. The King has saved them and so they worship. They know in experience what the psalmist meant when he said, in Psalm 40:2–3, 'He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God' Small wonder then that Peter says in I Peter 2:9 (and no doubt echoing such passages as Isaiah 43: 18–21), that '*you are a royal priesthood that you may declare the wonderful works of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*'.

SECTION 5

DON PRIEST

THE FATHER IS KING: THE SON IS KING

THE FATHER IS KING: THE SON IS KING

THE SON IS KING

We all know something of our personal rebellion against God. We are aware of the 'Australian rage' against the Lord and His Messiah (Psalm 2:1-3, cf. Romans 12:2). We too often live as terrorists seeking to sabotage the divine government. We readily argue that God is not completely in control of His creation, as though we are the judge and He is on trial (Job 38: 1-3, 40:1-7, 42:1-6, Psalm 2:3,4).

In Psalm 2, by contrast, the Psalmist is not 'fist shaking against heaven'. He questions the defiance that opposes God's sovereignty and tells of God's Messiah-Son-King whose rule demonstrates the futility of human rebellion. No wonder the early church was familiar with this Psalm (Acts 4: 23- 31 , ' Revelation 2: 27, and compare Acts 26: 14 with Psalm 2:3).

Psalm 2 testifies that all human history is affected when God speaks and acts in and through His Son. On God's behalf, this King subdues all rebellion. He acts with such momentum that resisting him equates with resisting God Himself. His wrath is the wrath of God. Yet the wrath of God that terrifies and rebukes the nations, and with which God scoffs at them can be escaped by taking refuge in the Son. As God's King, he acts as His messenger and intervenor (see also Isaiah 59 and 63, Revelation 19:11 16).

“BEHOLD THE LAMB”

The early church saw the fulfillment of this psalm in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Father’s majesty was evident to them since His Son ‘had provided purification for sins’, liberated them from their fear of death, and made them into His holy family (Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:1–2:18 and 5: 1–10). His ‘doing away with sin’ was so decisive that he ‘sits and waits for his enemies to become his footstool’ (Hebrews 7:26, 8:1, 10:12,13, Mark 16:19–20).

This is the glory and exaltation of the suffering servant who ‘will sprinkle many nations’, and who ‘will divide the spoils with the strong’. What could be more majestic than the declaration ‘Surely he bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows... He is the one who brings ‘many sons to glory’, having been crowned with the glory and honour of ‘tasting death for everyone’ (Isaiah 52:13 – 53: 12. and Hebrews 2:5–18).

He alone is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll. Because he was slain, the Lamb has made people from every tribe, nation and tongue into a priestly kingdom (Revelation 1, 5 and 7). Here the impact of overthrowing the powers of darkness is clearly visible (John 15:18ff, r6:33, I John 4:4, 5:19, Revelation 6:15–17).

In this context Paul exhorts us to be imitators of God. Paul points out that Messiah only ascended after he had descended (the opposite of the rise and fall of human empires). Through his fragrant sacrifice he rids us from our raging anger to live in this love that gives us an inheritance in the ‘kingdom of Christ and of God’ (Ephesians 4: 10, cf. 4:29 – 5:6, see I Corinthians 6:9–11). Our inheritance comes

to us from the Father with the same strength that raised Jesus from the dead and placed him in supreme authority in this age and the age to come (Ephesians 1:17–23 and I Corinthians 8:5,6).

The consequence of being one with Messiah and in fellowship with the Spirit is having the same mind–set as Jesus. This attitude is the one of the servant–king whose exaltation comes from being obedient to death on the Cross (Philippians 2:1–11, cf. I John 2:6).

Similarly, Paul exhorts the Colossian Christians to live a life worthy of the Lord, joyfully giving thanks to the Father Who ‘has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins’ (Colossians 1: 9–14). The triumph of the Cross has stripped the world’s authorities of their power and ‘made a public spectacle of them’ (Colossians 2:13–15, see also Psalm 2:4–6).

All of this equates with the instructions of Psalm 2:10–12. These call us to be wise, to serve the Lord with fear and to rejoice with trembling; all themes in the above passages. Only in Messiah’s refuge can his – and his Father’s wrath be avoided. Here is the great message of the Cross, of our being adopted into God’s family through the propitiation he has provided (I John 2:1 and 3: 1–3).

THE KING OF LOVE

Psalm 2 has God install His Son in His wrath: John 3: 16. in His love. Yet there is no conflict between God’s wrath and His love. Rather His wrath is what we experience when we reject the unceasing persistence of His love. In both

Christ the Conquering King

passages there is condemnation for those who hate the light, and salvation for those who believe in tile (John 3:16–21). Rejecting the Son leaves one God's wrath (v.36). The 'one from above is above all'; he is King (v.31). He declares the decree of the Lord as he gives his testimony, telling what he has seen and heard (v.32). Not only does this one speak the words of God, he has been given 'the Spirit without limit'; he is the Anointed One, the Messiah (v.34). He acts from his experience of the Father's love; all that he does is in the overflow of being the Father's Son (v.35).

This love is the action of divine righteousness, holiness and justice demonstrated at the Cross (Romans 3:21–26). The words at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration link Psalm 2 with the Servant who, in the Spirit, 'brings justice to the nations' (Luke 9:28–45 and II Peter 1:1.6–18). This direct action of God as King brings the kingdom to Israel and to 'the ends of the earth' (Isaiah 42 to 49; cf. Matthew 11 and 12).

The Father, through the death of His Son, gives us confidence for the day of judgement (I John 4:7–18). We are anointed and acknowledge Father and Son as we declare that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah, Anointed One). Indeed this anointing is the very Spirit that Jesus received, and the same Spirit that he pours out on his Bride from Pentecost to Parousia (I John 2:20–25). In this way, we receive Jesus' sonship and become children of God, members of the Father's family (I John 3:1, Galatians 4:3–6).

THE FATHER IS KING

Jesus' ministry began with the proclamation of his Father's kingdom (Matthew 4:17, 6:32,33). The centurion was praised for recognising the authority under which Jesus

Christ the Conquering King

worked, though the Jews did not readily accept this (Matthew 8:5–13 and John 8: 12–20).

He praised his Father when the kingdom was powerfully present with the disciples on their preaching tour (Luke 10:1–23). This is the kingdom where the Spirit brings justice to victory, where the world systems are overcome (Matthew 12:18–28, John 16:31–33). It is this kingdom that the Father is pleased to give to His 'little flock', even though they did not understand what true greatness meant (Luke 12:29–34 and 22:24–29).

The impact of Jesus' ministry was so powerful that he needed to withdraw to the desert (Matthew 12:15, 14:13 and John 6:15). Jesus' discussion concerning the crowds' perception of himself, emphasised the reality of the kingdom of the Father and His Messiah, and the centrality of the Cross to the kingdom (Matthew 16:13–28 and Luke 9:18,27).

Jesus speaks of the victory and glory of the Cross, even when detailing the sufferings involved (Luke 18:32, Mark 10:32–45, John 12:20–36, 17: 1–5). Joseph and Nicodemus were left in little doubt concerning the nature of the kingdom (Mark 15:43, John 19:39). It was in the context of his crucifixion that Jesus told of his Father's mansion and of his kingdom not being of this world (John 14:1–4 and 18:36–37).

In accord with Psalm 2, he explains much concerning the nature of the end times, and what will happen in the interim age of the Spirit (Matthew 24, 25 and John 14 – 16).

Crucified as King, his first and last words are to his Father. The repentant thief is in no doubt about who is King (Luke 23:34–46).

Christ the Conquering King

After his resurrection, the theme of his teaching was the kingdom. As King he tells of his presence with us in the Spirit as we witness to the ends of the earth. His authority is from his Father Who knows the times and seasons (Luke 24:25–27, 44–49, Acts 1:1–8, Matthew 28:16–20).

All this relates to the decree of Psalm 2 (Acts 13:33, Romans 1:1–6).

The message of Pentecost is clear: until the day of the Lord arrives and all Christ's enemies have been 'made a footstool for (his) feet', it is the day of the Spirit. The sovereign Son works through the outpoured Spirit to establish in history what has been accomplished on the Cross (Acts 2:17–36, 3:17–24). The Lord of history is crowned with glory and honour, he shares his joy with his Father, he intercedes for us. The kingdom is coming in fulness (Hebrews 7:23 8:2, 9: 24–28, 12: 1–3, Romans 8: 18–39).

As Jesus had indicated in his parables, the Son of Man will come in his glory. His glory will be seen in the righteous who 'will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father' (Matthew 13: 37–43, 24:31–46). He will have fulfilled Adam's mandate and more! He will have left all the evil schemes of the nations and the spiritual powers exploded. Death and all humanity's enemies will be finished. The whole universe will be being transformed. We will 'bear the likeness (not of earthly man) but the heavenly man' (I Corinthians 15:42–57).

The kingdoms of this world belong to the Lord and His Messiah (Christ) for ever. With the Lamb are his 'called, chosen and faithful followers who overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony'. Along with the celestial elders we will worship the Lord God Almighty because

Christ the Conquering King

'The nations were angry: and your wrath has Come'

'The accuser ... has been hurled down'

The Lamb is Lord of Lords and King of Kings; he rules 'with an iron sceptre' (Revelation 2:26–29, 11:15–18, 12:10–12, 15:3,4, 17:12–14, 19:11–18).

The drama of these days is discussed in the Thessalonian letters. Described as 'the church in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ', their hearts are directed 'into God's love and Christ's perseverance'. They have been freed 'from the coming wrath' at the initiative of the Father Whom they now serve, having been saved through His Messiah (I Thessalonians 1:1,9,10, 3:13, 5:9, II Thessalonians 2: 16, 3: 5).

We await, then, the full revelation of the Father as King. This will come when Christ (Messiah), presents the renewed and glorified creation to his Father. Every person in all history will acknowledge Jesus as the Father's King. The Father's family will celebrate the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb. The nations, in submission to their God, will bring their glory into the New Jerusalem. Psalm 2 will be completely fulfilled (I Corinthians 15:24–28, Philippians 2:6–11, Revelation 21, 22).

CONCLUSION

Just as the 'sinful woman' anointed Jesus' feet and fulfilled the command of Psalm 2 to 'kiss the Son', so too the tax collector cried out 'Lord, in your mercy, turn aside your wrath from me, a sinner'. They are part of a great multinational congregation caught up in the majestic love of the Father's anointed Son (Luke 7:36–50, 18:9–14, cf. Habakkuk 3: 2).

Christ the Conquering King

Why should anyone beat the drums of war against the Almighty? Especially since He is the Father Who 'hurls all our iniquities into the depths of the sea'. He is the Lord Who is changing the angry beating of these drums into the peaceful beating of 'swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks' (Micah 4:15, 7:18–20).

Christ the Conquering King

SECTION 6

ELECTIVES

The Kingdom of God and Social Justice
DON PRIEST

The Kingdom of God and Today's Practical Ethics
IAN PENNICOOK

The Kingdom of God and Human Suffering
GEOFFREY BINGHAM

Healing in the Kingdom of God
IAN MURDOCH

The Kingdom of God and Human Wholeness
MAURICE AND MARJORIE WELLBY

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Kingdom of God has direct impact not only on the people of God, but on all the communities of the world, (e.g. Matthew 28:16–20). God is concerned not merely with us as isolated individuals, but as persons in the corporate and collective situations in which we live. These include our social, family, religious and ethnic communities. This means that issues of social justice can only be adequately considered within the context of the sovereign rule of God in history, (e.g. Matthew 5–7).

All of us live in the aftermath of the Fall. We are caught up in earthly cities intent on expressing social justice from our grasp of the knowledge of good and evil. This secular/religious idealism helps form all societies and their organisations and colours the ethical norms of all human communities. As Christians we interact with and are often shaped by the world around us (Romans 12:1,2). Yet we are not called to be negative towards or remote from our society and its concerns. We have a clear mandate to pursue social justice and welfare even when our environment seems like Babylon itself (Jeremiah 29, Micah 6).

But we also cannot assume that God's view of society, justice and peace is very similar to that to which we are culturally conditioned even as Christians! Although He is keen for us to use what we learn about the functioning of societies, we must not blandly assume He will necessarily bless what we achieve in establishing stable frameworks of administration and government.

Christ the Conquering King

True (divine) social justice involves God's judgement as well as His gifts of prosperity (cf. Revelation 11).

Ultimately human politics and divine government are radically different. The 'politics of God', (if we may use that expression), could only be the dynamic action of His sovereign grace—working in us as per sons and peoples. The Old Testament contrast between prophet and king' helps illustrate this, (e.g. II Kings 6–7). In all our social action we are to witness to the nature of our Father's Kingdom and to His righteousness and mercy. True social justice will always flow from the majestic service of Jesus in dying on the Cross. A careful reflection on Mark 10, Matthew 12, Isaiah 42 and 53, and Psalm 2 will reveal how true Lordship functions.

We may then contrast the cosmic social justice and peace that God is accomplishing in His truth, integrity and love, with the cosmetic social justice and peace aimed for by human societies. There is a vast difference between providing behavioural norms for sexism, racism etc., which allow 'freedom' for consenting adults, and that truth which comes in grace to integrate alienated people into the wholeness of being new creations in the Spirit (Ephesians 2, Romans 14:17ff.).

As God's people we are to be active in issues of social justice even at the 'cosmetic' level, knowing that judgement and vengeance belong to God (Romans 12: 9–21), and that forbearance, patience and suffering are part of our calling. Fundamentally our concern relates to cosmic social justice – to forgiveness, to being a people liberated into true relationships with our Father–Creator–Redeemer and with each other (John 8, Romans 3). Our confidence is that this is in accord with God's eternal plan of reconciliation, and the establishing of true society and true justice (Colossians 1, Romans 5, II Corinthians 5).

Christ the Conquering King

Any human effort not consistent with and derivative from God's great plan, will be transient and futile, achieving at best, temporary sectional justice (Psalm 90, 103, Ecclesiastes). Our lives are to be prophetic expressions that God's goal in history and His administration of human affairs, relate not simply to earthly cities and societies and their concepts of justice, but to the new Jerusalem and to its welfare (Ephesians 1, Revelation 21,22). This hope stirs us in being the holy, royal and priestly people who, in inheriting the Kingdom of God, will know the full reality of true human community (see Ephesians 4–6, Romans 13–15, Colossians 3,4 Titus and Jude).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND TODAY'S PRACTICAL ETHICS

The Kingdom of God is not some special province in which Christians alone can function. The Kingdom of God is the reign of God. It is expressed in various contexts, but is in no way dependent upon the response of men and women to that reign. The truth is that God is King, has always been King and will always be King. The believer sees that the Kingdom of God was established at the Cross, but that does not mean that the Kingdom commenced at the Cross. The Kingdom was a reality from before the foundation of the world. Indeed this must be so, for God did not change at creation, or at redemption.

This means that when God created, He did so as King. The creation of the world was the expression of His sovereign purpose. It was very good, because it fitted the purposes of God for His creation. It follows then, that much of what we call ethics, 'the science of behaviour' as one has called it, ought to be seen in the light of the creational purposes of God. If something is right, it is so because it is consistent with the character of God, and His character is stamped on creation. Thus, for example, what is called sin at some later point in history is not arbitrarily so. It is sin because it is creationally dysfunctional, although the Law, which came later, may assist in defining the parameters of behaviour.

The problems caused by sin are manifold. Essentially they relate to men and women living dysfunctionally within creation, but the way the issues

appear is often complicated by many things. Ecclesiastes 7:29 says, *Behold, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many devices.* Consequently, when we come to examine many of the issues of life, we find that we have to deal with often complex rationalisations of what should be very simple subjects.

There are three areas where careful thinking is required in the light of the fact that God is King, and that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. The first is the area of relationship of the sexes. How are we to understand the present demand for 'acceptance' by the homosexual community? What of the ready acceptance of divorce as the 'easy' solution? What of de facto relationships? On another level, what of the subject of the ordination of women to the Christian ministry? While there is no place for 'slick' answers to these questions, they ought to be examined in the light of God's rule over the whole of creation.

The second area concerns the complex of environmental issues. How should we understand the subject of nuclear energy? Ought we be joining or opposing the anti-nuclear rallies? What should we be doing about the conservation of areas of 'wilderness'? Do the needs of modern society have priority over the preservation of animal life?

The third area is that of social concerns. Is Apartheid *essentially* wrong? Are the various races to be integrated because we see them as only differing in skin colour and other superficials, or ought separate development be encouraged? This is, of course, a significant question in Australia. What should we do about 'affirmative action' in employment? In the light of the terrible suffering in many areas of the world, should we be taking action to feed the starving millions, or should we rather be taking action to deal with the causes of the suffering, such as the leadership

of the governments which allow the poor to starve while buying the armed forces expensive weaponry.

Have Christians for too long' been ignoring these and many other questions? While we may not have either time or expertise to answer these deep human problems, we must begin to see that the fact of the Kingdom does give us a totally fresh perspective from which to begin.

(Recommended reading: John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 1984).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HUMAN SUFFERING

THE KINGDOM OF GOD ENTAILS SUFFERING

(i) There is teaching throughout Scripture, that the godly will suffer persecution. This happened from 'Abel to Zechariah' and still continues. See Hebrews 11:32–38. He who suffered most was Christ himself. When linked with the Kingdom of God, it means direct conflict with the kingdom of darkness. Hence 'spiritual weapons' (cf. Romans 13: 12, II Corinthians 10: 3, Ephesians 6: 10f., I Thessalonians 5:8). See Matthew 5:10–12, 6:24, Luke 11:19–23, Acts 14:22, II Thessalonians 1:4–5, II Timothy 3: 12. Hence spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6: 12, Philippians 1: 27–29, Book of Revelation). See study 15 'Living in the Kingdom – IV'

(ii) The suffering of the believer is essential to proclaim the Gospel. See II Corinthians 4: 7–15, 6:3–10, 11:21–29. This is because the Gospel is an offence to man, who has 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie'. See I Corinthians 1: 17ff.

(iii) Suffering is indispensable to human growth, maturity and ultimate glorification. See Romans 8:17–25, II Corinthians 4:16f., with II Corinthians 3: 18. The way to glory is suffering, but it is not the cost of glory, for this is a free gift. *Suffering, however, is an essential part of love.*

(iv) We need to share Christ's suffering (Philippians 3: 10). We cannot suffer *redemptively*, for that is unique to Christ, but we can share in his

redemptive suffering, i.e. bring it to the world. Ephesians 3: 13, Colossians I: 24 25. teaches that there is a suffering' we must all take our part which is essential to communicating the Gospel.

(v) As against Triumphalism, the Christian though led in triumph (II Corinthians 2: 14, I inthians 15:55-58) has to be weak. Christ won through weakness (II Corinthians 13:4, I Corinthians 1:17ff.). Thus in Revelation 13:7 10, 14:12-13. the saints must accept their weakness - 'Defeat is Sweet' - and know it is by this they can suffer for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. Only in (which is paradoxically not defeat!), can that redemptive suffering of Christ be fully revealed and become effective.

HEALING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The substance of this series of elective studies is contained in a separate booklet of the same title.

Ian says in his opening remarks, in reference to the studies, 'they are, a collection of papers on the causes and relief of diseases which afflict the human frame'.

The contents of the booklet and so the studies are as follows:-

The Kingdom of God and Sickness
Beneath God's Hand

(1) Cancer

(2) Mental Illness

(3) Abortion

(4) Euthanasia

(5) False Healings

Concluding Comments

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HUMAN WHOLENESS

True wholeness of man, as distinct from our world's concept of wholeness, is seen in Genesis 2:7 – 'Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being'. Man was made in the image of God who provided him with a home, a helpmate, food and a vocation, but above all, His own companionship. For man, wholeness was the norm, but this disintegrated with the Fall. Much was lost, particularly his relationship with God in the Garden, and his access to the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:24). Thus, he is destined to death (Genesis 3:19), and pain and toil enter to enable him to survive for his allotted span in his sinful and imperfect state in a distorted world.

But God is merciful. The God who wounds is the God who heals (Deuteronomy 32:39, I Samuel 2: 6, Isaiah 45:7). History becomes an account of the grace of God in the restoration of man to wholeness– his re–integration. God makes a Covenant with Abraham, chooses the Israelites and promises to redeem them (Exodus 6:6, Psalm 103:4, 130:8). Isaiah 53 tells of the method of redemption, the coming Messiah, 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed' (Isaiah 53:5). When Jesus appears proclaiming the Kingdom, these are the expected signs of healing and wholeness.

Isaiah 53:5 correlates wholeness and healing. Healing of what – sickness or sin? The two are inseparable (Psalm 32). Sickness came with the pain, and toil. Yet God promised to take sickness away from the Israelites (Exodus 23:25). Peace, salvation and healing are promised to Jew and Gentile (Isaiah 57:18–19, Micah 7:18–20, Zechariah 10:6); that is to all, although the promise of healing is conditional (Exodus 15:26, Isaiah 57:20–21).

The message of the Kingdom is the promise of restoration (Isaiah 33: 20–22, Zechariah 14:9). Thus through and in the Kingdom, man is again made whole. Our redemption was realized through the Cross, 'In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace which he lavished on us' (Ephesians 1:7). But it is only in the end time that our wholeness becomes fully manifest. 'For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purposes which he has set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth' (Ephesians 1:9–10). God will dwell with men, they shall be his people, and pain, mourning and death are no more, as described in Revelation 21:3–4. Our wholeness is restored to completion. The Holy Spirit teaches us these things (John 16:13).

However, we live in the last days and not in the end time. The Kingdom has come and man is enabled to live in wholeness if he so chooses. He sees around him the results of man's continuing rebellion. He is perplexed by sickness, pain and devastation, knowing that not all of it is due to sin (John 9: 1–3), but that much is brought by man upon himself. He must walk by faith in the righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

Christ the Conquering King

He knows his identity as a child of his heavenly Father, cleansed, and adopted into that family where he loves, obeys and serves. He is enabled to rejoice in his sufferings (Romans 5:3–5), as he battles all that would distract him from his destiny. He seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt 6:33).