

11. Presenting the King

Do you know what it means to have a King? Most people – especially those who live under a democracy – have great difficulty picturing the role of a king in their life. Since their ingrained, democracy-induced sense of independence is reinforced by their own encounters with multiple and varied expressions of parental, civic or governmental authority (which runs the gamut from beneficially benign to oppressively cruel to all points in between), many people not only have difficulty envisioning the role of a king, they find it incomprehensible that one should live and even die at the word of the king. That one can and indeed should wholeheartedly devote one's life and energies to one person is simply a mind-boggling proposition. Yet this is precisely what the true gospel of the kingdom of Christ presents to us.

It is thus very difficult to portray to one who suffers from the above blockage of perception the whole picture of who the King is, what He does in our life, what He has done in our life and why He deserves our complete and faithful obedience.

Who is this King? He is the King of the universe (or multiverse, if you prefer), the Most High God who encompasses all light, truth, beauty, goodness and love and whose kingdom is characterized by justice, equality, liberty, righteousness, peace and joy. Anyone who has experienced even a slight encounter with any of these characteristics readily recognizes their desirability even as one's experience with human versions of these concepts causes one to doubt that these things can ever reign supreme among men.

Yet it is right here that we find one of the strongest reasons upon which our devotion to our King rests: though He is fully human, having suffered all things that afflict and plague and tempt humankind (Heb. 4:15), He is also somehow fully Divine (Col. 2:9) and completely capable of implementing all the above characteristics in sovereign power. The reason we have not seen more of His kingdom on earth among men is because, even among those who claim to be His people, very few live their lives under the absolute monarchy of His Kingship. Much – far too much! – of the history of Christianity is to be understood in this light. But the infidelity and treason of those who claim to be His and to act in His name and on His behalf – but in reality traffic in a false “Christ,” a false “gospel,” speak under the power and inspiration of demonic spirits (see 2 Cor. 11:2-4) or simply pursue the “Christian” way by means of the power of the flesh – has not been overlooked nor will these go unpunished. *All* men, by sovereign decree of the King, have been granted the right to choose the course their life will take. The King is still well able to preserve those who are truly His own even as He reserves for judgment those who in truth are His betrayers and traitors and enemies to His realm. (2 Pet. 2:9)

What does our King do in our life? Though He gives us commands (some of which, quite honestly, are difficult to obey at the time), this is not the central focus of one's co-existence with Him. His commands are simply part of the process by which we are healed of and overcome the sin nature which cripples and retards each and every one of us. Nor does He rely solely on commands to communicate His will to us – He works in us to cause us to choose more wisely the events and even the course of our life. At times we want Him to give us a clear command while He waits for us to make a wise, mature choice!

It is also unwise to suppose that the kingliness of Christ is to be the central focus one should have. This really only results in a stultified, warped perspective of who Christ is and what He wants us to be. In reality, the love and comfort which Christ personally extends to us fallen, sinful creatures can cause one to almost forget that He is still King of kings and Lord of Lords, the Most High God sovereign over and above all created beings and things. But when we

do forget that He must also be our King as well as our Comforter, we begin to devolve into all manner of lawlessness, pursuing whatever is right in our own eyes, becoming our own “God” even to the point where we will “theologically” redefine “God” and “Christianity” to conform to our own agendas and preferences. So while the kingliness of Christ is not the central part of our love relationship with Him, it must always remain an underlying, foundational stone upon which our faith and conduct resides. It is simply impossible to truly love and obey Him unless we incorporate *all* (as best we are able and enabled) of who and what He is into our love for Him just as surely as it does no good whatsoever to love a “Christ” who is not the same One found in the New Testament or a “God” who does not correspond to all of the characteristics ascribed to Him in the Bible.

What has our King done for us? It is summed up in this: though He was fully divine and never sinned, He took the place of judgment and condemnation that is rightfully ours. This is for both the sins which we have *committed* and for the fallen sinful creature that we *are*. In complete contrast to what He deserved, our King was beaten, tortured and executed on a cross by the religious system and political government of His day. When He came to His own people, they rejected Him because it threatened everything the leaders stood for. The ensuing 2,000 years since His execution and subsequent resurrection and exaltation to the throne of God is simply the enacting of men’s choices of which side of the eternal conflict they will be on. Assuming that the major players in church history books or the founding fathers of a particular movement or denomination were completely following only God would be a mistake of grave proportions. God’s “heroes of the faith” are those who quietly and consistently reproduce the characteristics of His Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and His list of such “heroes” is sure to be very much different from the lists that men would make.

All these and more are the things that make it quite reasonable and appropriate that we should adore and obey our King. For those who have previously experienced a misguided or inadequate presentation of the gospel of Christ, I can only offer a sincere and humble apology – not for the King who was improperly represented but rather for the messenger who failed to convey to you the beauty, depth and importance of the real gospel of Christ. But I must also encourage you to not allow someone’s misrepresentation of Christ (no matter how high or low a title that person claimed to have nor what manner of misrepresentation was used) to keep you from finding and bowing down to the one true King.

It is precisely at this point, though, that we find the beauty of Christ’s kingdom displayed. He does not ask us to obey anyone but Him – even though many times His instructions may indeed first come to us through the words or actions of another human being. But we can know with certainty that any man who comes to steal away our resources by demanding “tithes” and “offerings,” or who comes to kill our ability to hear, obey and follow Christ for ourselves, or who comes to destroy our personal relationship with God by replacing it with a dependence upon some other man’s “wisdom,” “knowledge” (most often “sermons” or “messages”) or his “superior” “grace” or “gifting” (most often using some religious-sounding title such as “pastor,” “apostle,” etc.) is simply doing the work of the devil. (Jn. 10:10) Christ expects us to hear Him for ourselves (Jn. 10:27, etc.) – and when we hear Him (and refuse to re-interpret what we hear through our own paradigms and preconceived “understandings”), we will be able to mesh with any and all others who similarly seek the heart and mind of Christ in and above all things. Thus Christ’s kingdom does *not* resemble a corporation’s authority structure which relies on top-down command flows and blind adherence to corporate policies and procedures. Rather, because the Spirit moves on and in each individual’s heart, His presence and power is displayed when men

and women under His guidance relinquish their own agendas and display the same love that Christ displayed to everyone He came in contact with and these individuals resolve any and all personal differences into the *unity* of the body of Christ. (Jn. 17:20-23, Eph. 4:3, etc.)

That this kind of Christianity is not readily visible (though it has been practiced in every age in limited arenas or corrupted measures) does not give us reason to abandon the King. Rather it places before us the necessity to return and press in all the more so that we are certain to find and obey the real King. Any man who blindly presumes that the “gospel” he follows is the correct one is already following a usurper against Christ’s throne. Christ’s enemy is the master of deception (Jn. 8:44) and those who handle the things of God with calloused negligence or arrogant presumptiveness or blind religious-“correctness” are already the devil’s victim and perhaps even his tool. The true King still *requires* all men everywhere to turn away from sin- and self-generated agendas (even “theologies” – Acts 17:29-30) and still *insists* that those who have answered His summons and call to eternal life be faithful to Him. (Rev. 17:14) The true King will yet one day sit on a throne and judge every man according to what he has done with the life that was given to him by his Creator. (Rev. 20:12-13) On that day every knee will bow to the one true King (Phlp. 2:10) but it will be too late to change anything that will affect the verdict the King will hand down to every man. Of particular note should be those who have spent their lives doing “spiritual,” religious and even miraculous things *in the name of Christ* but who are summarily dismissed because what they really practiced was lawlessness, whatever was right and good in their own eyes. (Mt. 7:21-23) *Today*, while it is still called today, is the day that salvation and redemption and restoration to the rightful rule of the one true King is available. (see Heb. 3:12-15)

The God of light, truth, beauty, goodness and love *commands* you to bow down to Him now so that you might *live* - abundantly now and more so in eternity. Refusing to bow down to Him or bowing down to some other god (whether that be the devil, money, fame, possessions, self-rule or whatever other gods there may be) is to volunteer for death – progressive frustration and loss now and complete, ultimate rejection and loss for all of eternity in the lake of fire built for the devil and his angels. (Mt. 25:41) Be wise – choose Life. Bow to the one true King and *live!*

Let he who has ears hear.

Chapter 10: The Kingdom of God Is At Hand

<http://paidionbooks.org/girard/tgotk/10tkogiah.pdf>

Chapter 12: Opening Spiritual Ears

<http://paidionbooks.org/girard/tgotk/12ose.pdf>