

TEACHING GOAL

To study the kingly office of Christ, with special attention to the universal nature of His kingdom.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

Q. How does Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies.

S.C. 26; L.C. 45; W.C. of F. VIII; Savoy 8; Young 68, 71

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Corinthians 15:20-28

Support Passages: Psalm 8:6; Ephesians 1:20-23, 6:10-13;
Philippians 2:9-10; Hebrews 1:13, 2:8, 10:12-13

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 4:1-11; The Lord Jesus is tempted by Satan but is able to conquer the Devil because He is all powerful.

.MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

Philippians 2:9-10

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

APPLICATION

Nowhere do we find a higher concept of Jesus than in Ephesians 1:20-23. Without hesitation or reserve we must worship and serve this great King.

SUMMARY

King Jesus has immense power and authority beyond measure and His kingdom in Paul's terms is all things under His feet and all things to the Church both in this age and the one to come (Ephesians 1:20-23). When concepts like this and the Lord's own statement that all authority in heaven and earth was given to Him (Matthew 28:18) are taken seriously we cannot escape the conclusion that Jesus' kingdom is universal. One wonders, in light of this, whether we may defer His occupying the throne of David and His reign over the house of Jacob forever (Luke 1:32-33). He certainly is great now and is now called the Son of the Most High. May we therefore stop short of the sweeping statements of Scripture in acknowledging the full extent of His kingdom? The age to come is heaven, the age of glory, and He has no less power and authority now as then.

Let us notice the all inclusive statement of Paul, "Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:9-10). To confess that Jesus is Lord is to confess that He is King and more than this it is to confess that He is YAHWEH because the name of Jesus which is above every name is YAHWEH. Moreover, every rational being in the universe is included here including Satan. But we must be careful to note the word should in the text. The Greek mood here indicates that it is proper for everyone including the Devil to worship Christ as King and YAHWEH but not necessarily actual or even probable that they will do so. This text does say that Jesus is a universal King, but as He told Pilate "My kingdom is not of this realm" (John 18:36) or world. Jesus does not take the throne away from civil government but He puts civil government upon it and regulates and controls all the authority and power of it. Jesus is not a mere civil ruler like Caesar but infinitely greater He is Caesar's ruler. Like Satan, whom Jesus rules and limits, civil government may well be hostile to the Kingdom of Christ. Ungodly governments might not promote the good of the Church nor restrain evil nor even lead away from anarchy. The Christian must oppose such governments but on the other hand he must seek to establish godly governments that will punish evildoers and reward righteousness. Neither can the Christian obey laws of governments that require him to sin, bearing for Christ's sake whatever such disobedience might bring to him. In the words of R. L. Dabney, "There may be obviously a point then where 'resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.'" ¹

Jesus exercises His universal dominion for another reason mentioned in Psalm 110 and it's New Testament quotes. For example, Paul notes that after making our sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God which is the seat of highest authority, "waiting from that time onward until His enemies be

made a footstool for His feet" (Hebrews 10:23-24). Notice this concept in our study text in verse 23 and following. Jesus was first to arise from the dead and then His people, the elect, will be raised. "Then is the end." Some translations may read, "Then comes the end" but there is no Greek word in the original text which we may translate as comes. Therefore we have the freedom to make other choices within the constraints of the context. This text place the resurrection of the saints, the second coming of Christ, the end, and the abolishment of all rule and power in coincidence. All civil rulers and authority will cease to exist at that instant for Jesus must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. Death is said to be the last enemy which Jesus conquers at the last day (verse 50ff). The Messiah's reign in His messianic kingdom began at His first coming, foretold by the prophets, and continues until all His enemies are defeated. The subduing of enemies is, of course, the function of a king and Paul states clearly that God has put all things in subjection under Jesus' feet. So inclusive is this statement that Paul excepts only God the Father.

In view of these Scriptural statements of Christ's kingly office, let us not be restrained in according to our Lord His due as ruler of the universe. Let us worship Him and serve Him as our great God and King.

¹ Robert L. Dabney, Lectures in Systematic Theology, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1972, p. 872.