

THE GREAT “I AM’S” of JESUS

by

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CHAPTER TWELVE

I AM A KING

When Jesus was brought before Pilate to be tried, the greatest concern of Pilate was the charge of the Jews that Jesus made Himself a king. The governor asked the direct question, “**Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king**” (John 18:37). In the light of the modern way of expressing it, perhaps it would more clearly represent the emphasis if one were to say it as follows, “*You said it; I am a king.*”

The royalty of Jesus was divine. The “divine right of kings” is an assumption on the part of earthly royalty, but in the case of Jesus it was heavenly truth. He was king from the beginning. Reigning in heaven, He renounced His position for a time and became man in order that He might make princes and kings of mankind.

In the presence of Pilate, royalty was with the one being tried, instead of with the judge. Pilate enjoyed his position as governor by appointment from Rome. He was a puppet ruler, subject to higher authority. The power of life and death were in his hands, but he had only temporary authority in such matters. Jesus was a king from the beginning. He had power to create life, and sought to prolong it, not to take it.

Pilate thought he would rid himself of the responsibility of making a decision in the case of Jesus, so he sent Him to the court of Herod. Herod, as tetrarch of Galilee, was of higher rank than Pilate, and a king in his realm. Royalty had been in Herod’s family but a brief time. Jesus, a king from the foundation of the world, was being tried before puppet rulers.

In comparison with the kings of Israel, Jesus was in the line of royalty from the house of David. He was the lion of the tribe of Judah. Israel’s kings had been good and bad. Saul was not of royalty and his reign of forty years terminated his dynasty. Starting out brilliantly under the leadership of Samuel, Saul became impatient with divine authority and usurped the functions of priest as well as those of king. The displeasure of God made Saul miserable.

While Saul extended and strengthened the boundaries of the kingdom of Israel, he did so by the sufferance of God instead of in the will of God. Saul’s beginning was different from the end of his reign. Envy, jealousy, littleness, superstition, and sinfulness characterized Saul’s reign and sealed his doom.

David, a man after God's own heart, was a king by divine right. God chose him and prospered him in his leadership of Israel. In his early reign David strengthened Israel's leadership and ingratiated himself to the people. He was dearly loved and signally honored by the confidence and trust of his people.

David extended Israel's boundaries and strengthened the nation's stand among neighboring countries. Under his reign Israel enjoyed prosperity and progress.

David was a great sinner; but when he sinned he was sorry. He came back to God in humble repentance and full submission. The sons of David were princes. The Davidic line was divinely approved as royalty. For generations the kings of Israel and Judah prospered as they followed the example of David.

Solomon was in many respects the greatest of the kings of Israel. He started off humbly and brilliantly with full reliance upon God. He further extended the influence of Israel until it became the outstanding nation of the world, not only during his forty years but throughout history. Solomon was a symbol of wisdom and brilliance. He was a king to be admired and followed.

And all the kings of the world have been men of human frailties in positions of great power with unlimited possibilities for good or evil. In all the kings there was good and there was evil.

Jesus was not only a king but the King of kings. He had no throne but the hearts of men. He had no armies, but His disciples are as numberless as the stars. He had no scepter but love, yet His scepter has been raised to the multitudes through centuries to bless men here and to give them assurance of the hereafter.

Jesus had no servants but His friends; yet men have counted themselves fortunate to be numbered among the servants of Christ. Jesus had no home but heaven. He had no place to lay His head but, through His ministry of suffering, He has made a place of rest for all the weary who will come to Him.

Jesus was King of truth. He told Pilate that if His kingdom had been of this world, he would have called legions to His rescue, but that His kingdom was not of this world. Pilate was confused. When Jesus stated that His kingdom was truth, Pilate wanted to know, "What is truth?"

There was no Gospel writer in the courtroom to write down the answer Jesus gave to Pilate. We wish we knew how He answered him in explaining what truth is. There is an answer which is satisfactory. He said to His disciples, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life.**" This should be enough for any of us. Jesus is the truth. Truth is a person, not a system of facts. Jesus is that person.

Jesus is King of justice. When He was tried before Pilate, Jesus was before a man who had no real conception of justice, Pilate declared to the Jews who brought Jesus in for trial, "**I find no fault in Him.**" He knew that Jesus was innocent and wanted to discharge Him, but Pilate was afraid of the Jewish mob, and sought to appease the crowd. That was not justice.

When Jesus was before Herod, king of Galilee, Herod missed the miracle of royalty. In the presence of royalty, Herod humiliated the king. He missed the miracle of justice. Herod might have said the word which would have liberated Jesus, but he mocked the king and sent Him back to Pilate. Justice needs a just one to administer it.

Jesus as the king of justice knows what is right and will enlighten men who trust Him. A king of a world domain, who will seek to know Jesus and to follow His example, will be just in his dealings with his people. Only as the king approaches his duties in the spirit of Solomon, who prayed not for riches and honor and glory but for wisdom to judge the people, can a ruler administer justice properly. The king who looks to Jesus for an understanding of justice will deal righteously with his people.

Jesus is the king of love. The treatment Jesus received at the hand of the Jews was enough to make Him hate His people, but the love of Jesus towered over the injustice and inhumanity of the Jews. He loved men in spite of themselves.

- The love of Jesus is the inspiration of His followers.
- His love is the foundation for justice and righteousness among rulers.
- His love is the power which begets man in the likeness of God.

The love of Jesus reaches out and down to sinners to save them and to empower them in witnessing for Christ.

Love conquers more enemies than soldiers can. Love opens more doors than battering-rams can burst open. Love opens doors of opportunity where money, influence, and power fail. To know the real meaning of the statement, "**God is love**," one must know Christ, who came to exemplify the love of God, to introduce the Father to mankind, to pay the price of man's sin, and to lift man into the presence of a loving Heavenly Father.

Jesus is King of kings. David looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. He was subject to the King of kings. Napoleon, in exile, paid tribute to the lowly Nazarene as a king with more armies than all the generals in the world, as a ruler without an earthly throne yet with more followers than all the kings of the world.

Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. The kingdom of truth is broader than the geography of the world. It is deeper than the philosophy of men. The kingdom of truth extends beyond the generations of man. Truth is final. Jesus not only exemplifies it but He makes it. He not only enlightens men but He verifies information.

- The scientist never finds full truth until he can discover it through the eyes of Jesus.
- The philosopher will never find the answer until he finds it in Christ.
- The sinner will never learn the way until he submits to Jesus.

I was looking out over the Tennessee Valley at Chattanooga, Tennessee. From my elevation at Lookout Point, there was a haze over the valley.

I could see Chattanooga with its skyscrapers and the winding river pushing its way toward Muscle Shoals. I took a step to my right, and a panel of amber glass changed the color of the scene. Then I looked through blue-tinted glass, and the color was different. Then a green tint in the pane of glass made the valley look still different. Through several panes of glass with different color tints, I saw the same valley but differently. There was a slight shock when I stepped farther to my right to look through another pane of glass and discovered that the pane was a mirror. I saw myself.

When I think of that experience, I am brought face to face with the fact that:

- I never see the landscape properly until I see it through the eyes of Jesus.
- I never see man in the right perspective until I can share the compassion of Jesus!
- I am not able to get a picture of heaven until I can see it through the eyes of Jesus as He describes the heavenly home.

Jesus is the King of righteousness. Through the ages men have sought to please God. Some have cut their flesh and lashed their bodies in an effort to please God through physical suffering. Some have abased themselves and isolated themselves in the hope that they could please God through self-denial.

From the foundation of the world, God planned that man's way of righteousness should be the way of Christ. He sent His Son into the world that He might make men righteous. Only Jesus has the authority to put the robe of righteousness upon man. Men have called one another good or bad, but only Jesus can make them good.

As in the kingdom of truth, so in the kingdom of righteousness, it is a matter of person and not pretense, the acceptance of a person instead of a creed that makes men righteous.

When Christ is in the heart of a man, the man will grow into the likeness of Christ. The righteousness which is Christ will become the conduct and the character of man. Jesus is the King of Righteousness.

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