

Series: 'Jesus is Lord!' Summer School, 1991.

## ***Study One: He is Lord—Alpha and Omega***

### **God is Lord: Jesus is Lord**

Without doubt the One Who is called God is *the Alpha and the Omega*. This is seen in Revelation 1:8 (cf. 4:8), ‘“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who was and is and is to come, the Almighty.’ This statement is surely linked with other statements made by God concerning God, as in Exodus 3:14 ‘I am what I am’, and in Deuteronomy 6:4—through Moses— ‘Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. John the Seer would have had Isaiah 44:6-8 in mind,

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel  
and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts;  
‘I am the first and the last;  
besides me there is no god.  
Who is like me? Let him proclaim it,  
let him declare and set it forth before me.  
Who has announced from of old  
the things to come?  
Let them tell me what is yet to be.  
Fear not, nor be afraid;  
have I not told you from of old  
and have declared it?  
And you are my witnesses!  
Is there a God besides me?  
There is no Rock; I know not any.’

The ‘Alpha and Omega’ are the same as ‘the first and the last’. There are two meanings here, (i) God is immutable (cf. Mal. 3:6). He has ever been and worked consistently with His nature, (ii) God has controlled all things and we can be sure that He works all the time, again consistently with His own nature. Would we compare him with a god—even the best of them? Answer: no, because he is not like the gods. They cannot do what He does (Exod. 15:11). There is no true Rock apart from Him<sup>1</sup> (cf. Isa.26:4; 51:1 and in I Samuel 2: 2 Hannah says ‘There is no rock like our God’.

Again, ‘who is and who was and who is to come’ is not simply talking about God’s eternity but about God’s activity. He has always been, is always being, and always will be the God Who acts<sup>2</sup>. That is, all history is in His hands> His is the true action. In every thing that happens in the past, present and future God can be

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<sup>1</sup> The comparison is with God and the gods. Innately they gods have no power. So In Exododus 15:11 Moses asks, ‘Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, majestic in holiness, terrible in glorious deeds, doing wonders.’

<sup>2</sup> A quaint way of saying this is, ‘God was always was-ing, is always is-ing, and always will be-being/doing’.

depended upon. In this sense God is not only unique,, but He is incomparable, i.e. ineffable.

If, then, God is all we have said above, so *also* is Jesus Christ for in Revelation 1:17 (2:8) Jesus says to John the Prophet, ‘Fear not, I am the first and the last and the living one.’<sup>1</sup> In 22:13 he says, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.’ Here in an unequivocal insistence that he is God. He also has always been doing, is always doing, and always will be doing<sup>2</sup>. We are dealing with the mystery of the Godhead in which the Father is Lord and the Son is Lord and the Holy Spirit is Lord (see II Cor. 3:17–18) but in which there are not three Lords, but the One Lord God Almighty (cf. the Athanasian Creed).

The Son and the Father can both be Lord, since ‘I and the Father are one,’ (John 10:30), and ‘The Father is in me and I am in the Father,’ (John 10:38). When, then, we read in Hebrews 13:8, ‘Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever’, we are saying something like ‘who was and is and is to come’, but most of all we are saying he is unchangeable, he is always acting, and always acting properly.

### **The Father and the Son Always Working<sup>3</sup>**

In John 5:17 Jesus—paraphrased—said, ‘My Father has always been working, and I go on too, working with him.’<sup>4</sup> We see that the following obtained and obtains,

- (i) The Son and the Father had fellowship and intention prior to creation (John 17:5, 24; Eph. 1:4–10; II Tim. 1:9; I Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8).
- (ii) The Father and the Son worked in creation—to create (Gen. 1:1–31; John 1:1–3; I Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15–17; Heb. 1:1–3).
- (iii) The Father and the Son worked—and work—in providence, i.e. in upholding the creation (Psa. 104; I Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:3).
- (iv) The Father and the Son worked in the time following the fall, especially in regard to the patriarches and the giving of covenant (Luke 24:27; 44; John 5:45–47; Rev. 19:10).
- (v) The Father and the Son worked in regard to the Incarnation, Salvation, the defeat of all evil, the Ascension (II Cor. 5:19; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4–6; John 17L11; Acts 2:36; 3:19; 4:12; 5:30–31; Rom. 1:4; etc.)
- (vi) The Father and the Son are presently working together in the matters of reconciliation (( Cor. 5:18–21; I Cor. 15:24–28; Eph. 1:9–11; 1:17–23; etc.),, the unification of all things, including their being filled up and coming to the final consummation.

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<sup>1</sup> In the text Jesus says, ‘I died and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.’ He is saying that the one who is Alpha and Omega has himself gone through the experience of being human, dying, and living again and therefore having authority over Death and Hades.

<sup>2</sup> Whilst we rightly enough talk in a time sequence of past, present and future, the Father and Christ are not *in* this sequence although they take cognizance of it.

<sup>3</sup> Whilst we are seeking to make the point that the father and the Son have always been working together, we must not omit the work of the Holy Spirit. All working is Trinitarian, and we could include references to add to all 7 points outlined in this section.

<sup>4</sup> The occasion was a debate about working on the sabbath, and Jesus was saying his father always worked and had no respite from work, so that his healing on the sabbath was legitimate. In Genesis 2:3 it is recorded that God rested from His work of creation, but not from work itself. He nevertheless continued with His work of providence—quite a labour!

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- (vii) The Father and the Son will always be working together—in eternity. This is seen especially in regard to the Kingdom of God, i.e. the reign of God (Eph. 5:5; I Cor. 15:24–28; Rev. 11:15; Matt. 25:31f.; etc.).

### **Father and Son as ‘Alpha and Omega’ Have All History in Their Hands**

This being so the term ‘Alpha and Omega’ have enormous significance. John 5:17 is the key to Revelation 1:17; 2:8; 22:13; and Hebrews 13:8. It is the key to all these things in the light of the Father’s commission to His Son which in turn is given clear meaning by Psalm 2 (especially verses 6–8) the word of which were spoken at his baptism (Matt. 3:17) and his transfiguration (Matt. 17:5). This commission must be seen in the light of John 3:35, and Matthew 11:27, in which it is made clear that the Father has given all things (i.e. all authority into the hands of His Son.

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

All things have been delivered to me by my Father and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

So then, up until ‘the day of Jesus Christ’ God is working—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are working, and their primary theme is ‘mission’. Mission means ‘sent’, ‘being sent’, ‘going’, but going with a primary purpose and the primary purpose of God is to redeem men and women, mature them in the faith, bring them to glorification and so fit them to admitted into the mystery of the Divine Being, the great Triune Godhead, in order to have fellowship and participate in the Divine nature. This is what God planned: this is what He has ever been about: this is that in which we are involved.

### **The Love of God the Ministry and Intention of the Persons**

What we call history, is then, the wisdom, will and counsel of the Triune Godhead, that is, what we call history is really the holy love of God. This is seen in the creation—that wonderful work of giving life, creating sentient creatures—beautiful flora and fauna— doing all things well, making a glorious universe in which dwelt only righteousness. Love rejected was shown in the fall of Man, but the first proclamation of the gospel (Gen. 3:15: cf. Rev. 12:9–12) showed that love was ever present in the Creator-God. So all history became the action of God in redeeming fallen Man and renewing His creation.

This—all this—is the meaning behind ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’ This is the never-ceasing action of God, Who is love, Who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit—all on mission until ‘that great day’, ‘the day of the Lord’, ‘the day of Christ’, the day of our redemption, of our glorification and fullest revelation of the Divine mystery of God Himself.

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## ***Study Two: Jesus—Lord—Of The Heart***

### **Sanctify Jesus as Lord—in the Heart**

In I Peter 3:13–16 the writer says,

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is right? But even if you do suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, *but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord.* Always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.

‘Sanctify Christ in your hearts as Lord’. Doubtless this is linked with Isaiah 8:13,

*But the Lord of hosts, him you shall regard as holy" Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he will become a sanctuary . . .*

This kind of fear is a reverential and not a slavish one. It is a fear which time and again the writer of Proverbs says is the beginning of wisdom. So God says (Isaiah 66:2), ‘But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.’

Undoubtedly I Peter 3:15 and Isaiah 8:13 are linked together and are spoken about the situation when the enemy comes against Israel and against the believer. The principle in such cases is to sanctify or make holy the Lord in the heart. Since God is holy, and Christ is holy, we do not *make* them holy, but we recognize and confess that holiness. In fact both Isaiah and Peter are saying, ‘Worship him in you heart.’ That is, the heart is the sanctuary—the holy shrine. The principle we deduce then is that when opposition comes we should set about worshipping the Lord. It may well be best to worship with others and be even more fortified, but that is not always possible. Let us then worship him in the silence of our hearts, the centre of our being.

### **Jesus is Lord of the Heart**

We sanctify Jesus as Lord in the heart because we have come under his Lordship. How did we come under his Lordship? What does it mean to have him in our hearts as Lord? The heart—in Israel—always stood for the whole life of a person—body, soul and spirit, mind, affection and will. So the Israelite was to love the Lord with all his heart and soul and mind and strength (Deut. 6:4), and so God would circumcise his hearts to love him (Deut. 10:6).

The heart of Man separated from God in the fall. From that point onwards the heart was ‘deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt’ (Jer. 17:9). It was the

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centre of fallen Man out of which flowed all evil things (Mark 7:20–23). Yet for the person of faith it was the centre of love for God—God’s love had gripped the heart.

With the coming of Jesus a new and visible Lordship entered the world of humanity. Jesus as the incarnate Son of God was to fight the battle for Man against the forces of Satan and his hosts of evil creatures. Man was in bondage to many enemies—sin, the world, the flesh, Satan, the wrath of God, death, his own conscience, his idols—and so on. The purpose of the coming of the Son of God as Son of Man was to liberate Man from his bondage, and in setting him free, thus gain Lordship over his heart. By his atoning work Christ liberated his people, and hence they came to love him as their Lord.

Two things then make him Lord of the heart, (i) he actually achieved Lordship as Jesus, Son of Man, by what he did on the Cross and through the resurrection, and (ii) by liberating Man (cf. Rom. 10:9; 14:7–9) he won his heart and so effected submission to his Lordship—from the heart (Rom. 6:17).

We will now look at what Christ did *for* the heart of Man and *in* the heart of Man that makes each believer’s heart a place of worship.

### **Christ’s Liberating Work *for* and *in* the Heart**

Paul says that the outcome of the Cross was to pour the love of God into our hearts. See Romans 5:5–11. It is love which changes the heart. Love does it in the following ways,

- (i) It is the love that liberates. See Revelation 1:5–6.
- (ii) It is the love that cleanses. See Hebrews 1:L3; 9:14, 26; 10:19–22.
- (iii) It is the love that reveals itself, works and captures the heart. See I John 4:7–19.
- (iv) It is the love that grips, controls, and constrains to obedience.. See John 14:15; II Corinthians 5:14; I John 2:5–6; 5:2–3.

### **The Heart Now Motivated to Love and to Worship**

No worship that is not love and from love—love to the Father (John 4:20–24) and to the Son (I Pet. 1:8) by the Spirit (Rom. 5:5; 15:30; Col. 1:8: cf. Phil. 3:3) is true worship.

We are caught by his love to love him and to adore him and to worship him. Worship and service are really the one (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 7:15).

We now have that reverence which fears to displease him, to refuse obedience, and to deny submission. In love we do all things (I Cor. 16:14).

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## ***Study Three: Jesus—‘My Lord and My God!’***

### **The Personal Lord**

Galatians 2:20 says, ‘I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.’ This shows that there is a personal—though not an individualist—relationship with Christ. The whole matter of relationship is most personal. One is reminded of I Peter 1:8, ‘Jesus Christ, whom not having seen you love, whom seeing not you believe and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’ One is reminded of the hymn

*My Jesus I love thee, I know thou art mine,  
For thee all the follies of sin I reign,  
My gracious redeemer my Saviour art thou;  
If ever I loved thee my Jesus it ’tis now.*

Is there then, in all the thinking about ‘body life’ and about being the community of Christ and place for personal relationship with Christ and with his Father, and for that matter with the Holy Spirit? The answer must lie in the significance of personal human identity—something we will later discuss. If, for the present, we look at Paul as an example of a person warmly related to Christ then we can see how right it is to know and develop a personal relationship.

It is clear from Galatians 2:20—and other places—that Paul often spoke in the first person in relation to Christ and God. Galatians 1:11–6; I Timothy 1:12–16; Acts 26:1–23 are some of these passages. Certainly Paul saw each human being as relating personally to God, and the personal interest of the Father, the Son and the Spirit to that one.

The fact is that Christ related personally to Paul. The accounts in Acts show that, and the witness of the Apostle—in his letters—confirms it.

### **The Unique Identity of Every Person**

Simply being given a name speaks of identity. A name is given to identify us from others. Jesus’ name identified him, e.g. Matthew 1:21, ‘Call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins.’ In Revelation 2:17 and 3:12 we have a clear statement of the identity of each person. Also I Corinthians 13:12 indicates this. There is a general identity in which we all share—the people of God—and a particular identity which is ours, personally. Jesus always spoke to persons and had much to do with their names, e.g. to Simon son of Jonas to whom he gave a new name—*his* new

name. He asked the name of the Gadarene demoniac. He related to persons intimately—this his so-called interviews with such as the woman at the well, the woman taken in adultery, the woman who was a sinner.

### **Our Personal Identity Develops From His Personal Identification With Us**

This is clearly seen in Galatians 2:20 where each person is crucified with Christ, each lives afresh, and each lives by faith in the One who now indwells him. In this case it was Christ who took the initiative and identified with the one crucified. It was necessary that Christ first identify with us that we might then be identified with him—the reverse was impossible. Isaiah 53:1–2 show his inacceptability to humankind,

Who has believed what we have heard?  
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?  
For he grew up before him, like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
he had no form of comeliness that we should look at him,  
and no beauty that we should desire him.  
He was despised and rejected by men;  
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hides their faces  
he was despised and we esteemed him not.

This matches John 1:11, ‘He came to his own home, and his own people received him not.’ Jesus himself said, ‘Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head’ (Matt. 8:20). We know that Jesus did have places to lay his head—in his friends’ homes, but he is speaking here of a deeper rejection than the material one. Many misunderstandings and accusations came his way, but he persisted in identifying with us. This is seen in his sharing the baptism of John for sinners, and of his being one with humanity (Matt. 1:23; John 1:14; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2: 14–18). We know he was what we call ‘empathic’, weeping for Jerusalem, becoming angered at the bondage of man, e.g. the story of the raising of Lazarus where ‘he trembled with indignation’ at the indignity of human grovelling before death. That is why he was called ‘A man of sorrows and familiar with griefs’.

### ***The Personal Identification of the Cross and Resurrection***

Galatians 2:20 tells us what Christ did by way of personal identification with each one of us, and II Corinthians 5:14–15; Romans 6:6 Galatians 5:24; 6:14; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:24; 3:18; Isaiah 53:4, 5, 6, 12, tell what he did by way of corporate identification with all of us. We must understand this as a personal entering into each one of all our sins, since ‘he bore them in his own body on the tree’, In this sense there must have been in him a recapitulation of all that we ever did, so that he experienced its guilt, suffered the elements of that guilt, and expended the sting, dynamic and evil of it all. In one sense it can be said he lives each one of our lives from its conception to its death. He was one *of* us, but—more— he was one *with* us *for* us.

***Our Personal Identification with Him Through Baptism***

It is one thing for the Son of God to become Man for humanity: it is another for humanity to become one with him. In order that this might become so, the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost for only the Spirit could give revelation of Jesus (John 16:12–15), conviction of sin (John 16:7–11), and the gifts of repentance and forgiveness (Acts 5:30–32; 11:18). Thus by the work of the Cross and the work of the Spirit (Rom. 8:1–3) persons are brought to their baptism in which they are identified with their Lord (Rom. 10:9), Christ (Rom. 6:1–10; Col 2:11–15; Gal.3:26–27).

The outcome of that baptism into Christ brings each one to personal identification with Christ as both Creator and Redeemer and henceforth each is one *with* him, as all are all one *in* him (Gal. 3:26–29). When the Spirit brings revelation of all that Christ is then, with Thomas each cries, ‘My Lord and my God!’ The loneliness finishes. The intimacy begins. It is seen—as in Romans 14:7–9—that every bit of what Christ has done is to save us unto his Lordship. The whole of life is now Christ!

Thus there is abiding in the vine (John 15:1ff.), Christ living in each (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27), life hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). Nothing can be more intimate.

**The Outcome—Saved Unto True Identity**

What God created each one for—cf Psalm 139:13–18—that each be given his or her own name—Rev. 11:17—and made one with God —Rev. 3:12; Rom. 8:22, 29— has now been fulfilled. We are admitted into the mystery of the Divine Being. Each cries—in self-realization, self-fulfilment, total glorification, ‘My Lord and my God!’



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## ***Study Four: Jesus—the Lord The Servant***

### **The Lord the Servant**

Where the natural man lives to be a servant is not to be a Lord. That he was and is Lord rings throughout the Scriptures as we have seen in our study on ‘the Alpha and the Omega’. This Lordship appeared as such only fully following the Cross. Prophetic history in the latter chapters of Isaiah (40–66), in Psalms 22 and 69, In Zechariah chapter 13 and in the book of Lamentations was to prepare Israel for a Servant who would come and be ‘a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of His people Israel’ (Luke 2:32; Isa. 42:6). Jesus taught that the greatest among them would be the one who was servant (Mark 10:43)—that the least would be the greatest (Luke 22:26; Mark 10:44). He said, ‘I am among you as one who serves’ (Luke 22:27).

He showed love in serving when he took the towel and washed their feet, *loving them to the end* (John 13:1ff.). However his great announcement was *serving them by sacrifice*. In Mark 10:45 he said, ‘For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many’. How then was this to be love? The answer must be ‘to give his life’. He had many times spoken of laying down his life, giving his life for the sheep, and had said ‘if I be lifted up’—signifying by what death he should die. So in Mark 8:31; 9:3, 10:32 he foretold his death. Later the writer of Hebrews described the goal and purpose of Christ’s incarnation, his death and sacrifice, ‘But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.’

### **The Misunderstood Sacrifice (Ransom)**

Israel knew the nature of sacrifice. The first 6 chapters of Leviticus were well-known to them. They had always felt safe in this ritual. They may have made it cultic, orthodox, legal, but they felt safe in it. They may have missed the deeper dimension of sacrifice as in I Samuel 15:22–23 and Psalm 51:15–17, but they knew God demanded propitiation for the violation done to His holiness, and so they enacted sacrifice.

They knew no human sacrifice, therefore such was a scandal (I Cor. 1: 23). Abraham had been commanded it but saved from it for a ram was caught in the thicket and he could spare his son Isaac. So no one was prepared for a human sacrifice at Calvary. The enemies of Jesus saw it as a judgement on him. His friends saw it as a false judgement and execution. Psalms 22 and 69 show him as despised and Isaiah 53 as rightfully being punished. In Isaiah 52:14–53–12 he was criticized because his sacrifice was illicit. It did not follow the sacrificial order set out in Leviticus chapters 1–6.

### *It Was a True Sacrifice*

In fact, it did. He was the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world as John the Baptist proclaimed (John 1:29). Later the Book of the Revelation is taken up with this theme—the Lamb of God, certifying him as such. Paul said, ‘Christ our passover who has been sacrificed for us,’ and Peter also said, ‘the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot,’ and as Revelation 13:8 has it ‘the Lamb that was slain’—the thought being ‘from the foundation of the world’.

It was the acceptable sacrifice as Hebrews 2:17; I John 4:10 and Romans 3:25 ‘Christ Jesus, who God set forth as a propitiation’. Hebrews chapters 9 and 10 speak of this authentic sacrifice for God., ‘But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself . . . when Christ had offered for all times a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God . . . for by a single sacrifice he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.’

### **A Human Person Living Without Sacrifice**

Can we fully contemplate what this must mean? Down through the ages endless sacrifices have been offered to God, the gods, and to the self of persons. Outside of faith none of these sacrifices is valid or effective as the story of Cain and Abel so aptly shows. Sacrifices, if not of faith, as self-justifying attempts. Contemplate existentially—if you can—the human being without sacrifice, and unable—authentically—to sacrifice as the excommunicated taxgatherer of Luke 18:9–14. How insecure, how fearful, how burned with guilt, how terrified at the thought of death and judgement. Self-sacrifice often results in deeper guilts because of its rejection of the grace of God in Christ’s atonement. Something will tell us eventually that we need a special sacrifice. This will have to be the sacrifice of the Lord the Servant.

### **The Lord the Lamb, the Offerer the Victim**

So we come to Calvary—dear Calvary! Here we can make the mistake the two thieves made in blaspheming Christ. We can think with the religious leaders that the Man is a blasphemer and a deceiver. With the mob we may cry out for blood, but not for a true bloody sacrifice which redeems. We see no Lord—no ‘Author of life’ (Acts 3:14), but only a miserable offender whom God deserts. So the cries of Psalm 22: 6-7, ‘But I am a worm and no man; scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock at me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads.’ In verses 14–18 he continues the narrative of being demeaned by the mob, one of the statements being, ‘Thou dost lay me in the dust of death’—a parallel to Isaiah 53:12, ‘He (Jesus) poured out his soul unto death’. In Psalm 69 there are sad passages which speak of the pain and degradation of his ransom-sacrifice so that the Psalmist cries, messianically,

Thou knowest my reproach,  
and shame and my dishonour,  
my foes are all known to thee,  
Insults have broken my heart,  
so that I am in despair,  
I looked for pity but there was none,  
and for comforters, but I found none.

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Well had the Psalmist of Psalm 49:7 said,

Truly no man can ransom himself,  
or give to God the price of his life,  
for the ransom of his life is costly  
and can never suffice,  
that he should continue to live on for ever,  
and never see the Pit.

There is surely a great cost in ransom. Most costly is the price of propitiation (cf. Rom. 5:23; I John 4:10). God judges the sinner in Christ as Matthew 26:32 says in light of Zechariah 13:7,

‘Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,  
against the man who stands next to me,’  
says the Lord of hosts.  
‘Strike the shepherd, that the sheep  
may be scattered . . .’

So, in the judgement of God, the ransom is complete. The sinner the debtor, the sinner the slave, and the sinner the prisoner may now go free. He has been ransomed for perfect freedom.

Seeing the Lord as the Perfect Servant

When the sinner has his or her eyes opened to see the ransom and perfect sacrifice, then that one is gripped by love. The loneliness of ‘no sacrifice’ or the confusion and hardness of heart from self-atoning, self-justifying sacrifices melts in the light of this loving ransom paid in much anguish by the Servant–Lord. That is when the sinner falls at Christ’s feet and says,

‘I love I love my Master,  
I will not go our free.’

The proud sinner has become and humble servant in the following of his Lord.

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## ***Study Five: Jesus—the Lord of My Life***

### **Jesus the Lord As Creator of Life**

‘In him was life’ is a great saying of John 1:4. Equally great is I John 5:12, ‘He who has the Son has life.’ Jesus certainly spoke about bringing life into the world, ‘I am come that they may have life, and have it abundantly’. This comports with I John 4:9 where it says God sent His Son into the world so that we might have life through him.’ Christ is the Lord of life in the sense that he created all things living (Col. 1:15–17).

He is also the Lord of life in that he gives new life to fallen men and women. The first life was given in creation when God breathed into man the breath of life, and so man became a living being. This was a remarkable wonderful event. The loss of life in the fall was a terrible and tragic event (Gen. 2:17; 3:6). Human beings still do not believe they lost life: they *think* they live.. They certainly have existence but not life. Paul said the promiscuous widow was dead whilst she was still living. Romans 5:12ff. tells the terrible story of man’s death—the death he fears ‘not because he *has* to die, but because he *deserves* to die.’ All human beings shudder at the thought of the corruption of death.

It is a wonderful thing, then to move into life knowing the fact along the lines of lovely Scriptures, namely John 3:14–16, 35; 5:24, 10:10; 11:25; Romans 6:23; II Timothy 1:10—and so on. The fact that whoever believes on him *shall never die*, that he has abolished death and *brought life and immortality to life*, that those who are in him *have* life, and that *we know we have passed from death unto life* because we love the brethren, catches up all we have said in previous studies and makes them dynamically alive to us. Jesus the Son of man is certainly the giver and sustainer of life.

### **Jesus the Lord of My Life**

The fact is that the believer has no other life than Christ’s. Hence such statements as ‘I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me,’ ‘my life is hid with Christ in God’, ‘for me to live is Christ’, ‘when Christ who is our life appears . . .’ This is not just a theological notion but reality. We have no other life but his. We remember our often-repeated words of Romans 14:7–9, the essence of which is that ‘he died and rose again that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living’

Seeing that we are one with Christ in what sense then do I *further* think of him as Lord? Paul puts it clearly, ‘Paul, the slave of Jesus Christ.’ We are his to be commanded by him. Did not Christ give commands to the apostles by the Spirit (Acts 1:2) and are not these the commands the apostles are to teach the baptized nations (Matt. 28:19–20? Now some may take this to mean a series of moral commands—commands to be good and to do good—and certainly they must include these. Twice

## ‘JESUS IS LORD!’

Jesus gave the command to love one another (John 13:34; 15:12) and this must be one of the commands—perhaps the greatest (cf. Gal. 5:13; I John 2:7ff.; 3:10; 4:19–5:2), but then does not loving mean primarily *proclaiming the gospel* (Matt. 28:19–20; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:44ff.; John 20: 22–23;) and in particular does it not mean *witnessing* (Luke 24: 47–48; John 15:27; Acts 1:8; 4:33; 5:32; etc.)? The activity of the church in Revelation was linked with (a) [proclaiming] ‘the word of God and the testimony of [to] Jesus’ (1:2; 1:9; 6:9) and this was equal to ‘*keep[ing] the commandments of God* and bear[ing] testimony to Jesus’ (12:17; 14:12). All the things we have mentioned in this paragraph are the commands the willing slave obeys—from his heart—when the Lord his Master speaks.

### ***What Does Christ Have for Me Out of His Lordship?***

Put in even clearer form the Lordship of Christ is that which winds us to be willing slaves so that we may participate in the work of the Lord-the-Master, and that work is proclaiming the gospel, witnessing to Jesus, doing good to all men, and sharing in the spiritual warfare in which Christ is involved. It is sharing in winning the nations of the world to Christ. In all of this we each have a special vocation—a service which God has planned for us, and to which He calls us. This may well be being an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor and a teacher—according to his calling. It may mean something else. It may involve being an elder or a deacon, a leader or one of the flock using gifts God has given both of nature and grace.

What it is Christ has for us we must see it as *vocation*. Without *vocation* (calling) we are simply filling in time in this world. We want the overriding command of our Lord to each one of us personally, and hearing that special command we need to be doing it. What we need to see is that every believer is involved up to the hilt in what Christ is doing in this age. This can be seen in the following,

- (i) The command to proclaim the gospel in all the world and so to
- (ii) Win the nations of the world to Christ,
- (iii) Be in the action of history as depicted (a) in I Corinthians 15:24–28, (b) as in the Book of the Revelation and related NT passage. of conflict with the powers of darkness, which in turn involves
- (iv) being conquerors (Rev. chs. 2 & 3; 21:7) so that the promised heritage may be won.

In all of this we have to ask whether we are under Christ’s Lordship or are simply planning what we think is “‘good’ an ‘godly’ and ‘strategic’.

### **The Wonder of Being Under Christ’s Lordship**

The glorious thing about this Lordship is that we are one with God—Who is One—and one with ourselves. His rule not only directs us, and corrects us, but it protects us and sustains us and gives us great ‘job-satisfaction’—so that we glory in being slaves and sharing the work and victory of Christ in all history. Where history is, Christ is. Where Christ is, history is and everything becomes clear to us. Where he is and we are the meaning of life becomes clear. Christ the Lord is—in every way—our life.

The question is have we ever come under the Lordship of Christ—as glad, loving and willing slaves?

*Series: ‘Jesus is Lord!’ Summer School, 1991.*

## ***Study Six Jesus—Home at Last!***

### **Jesus the Lord—Home-Gatherer of the Family**

John 11:49–52 follows hard on the heels of Jesus’ great statement, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.’ It followed on the proof of that great claim by the raising of Lazarus from the dead—an event which awed many, caused some to believe, and some to dread thus one who had supernatural powers. So the high-priest prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation.’ John the apostle added, ‘And not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.’ Whether in hindsight or not John saw the greatness of the death, and the grand purpose of its happening, undoubtedly in his mind were the words of Isaiah 43:1–7,

Because you are precious in my eyes

These words were surely also in the mind of the apostle Paul when he said,

He predestined us 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 upon us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.

It is about this sonship John speaks in his first Letter (3:1–3) saying that it is the Father’s great gift to bestow upon us the privilege of sonship. Paul also speaks of that in moving terms from Romans 8:14–30 speaking of us being conformed to the image of His Son that His Son may be the first-born among many [like] brethren. That is because each one will be fully conformed to the image (*eikon*) of His Son. Coming into God’s presence this Family will surely manifest the glory of the Father,

Bring my sons and my daughters  
from the end of the earth,  
everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made.

Then it is that glorifying the Father they will enter into ‘the liberty of the glory of the children of God’—that utter freedom when those who have had ‘fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ’, who have been ‘called into the fellowship of His Son’, Whose lives have been ‘hid with Christ in God’, and who have already become ‘partakers of the divine nature’, now come into total

fellowship—not only by faith, but by sight—with the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Truly this is coming home, at last!

If this were not enough to show that Jesus is the Home-Gatherer of the Family we have two significant passages, namely Hebrews 2:9–17 and John 14:1–10. In the first passage Jesus is shown to be the true Man of Psalm 8, i.e. Lord over all things, but his Lordship comes through the Cross and he is given glory so that ‘he might taste death for every man’. We can scarcely imagine what it must mean—‘to taste death for ever man’. It must be that he takes into himself the death of all, and consumes it, destroys it. Paul said, ‘We are convinced that if one died for all then did all die’. Their deaths died in his death and so they were freed from the fear and dread of death. Great liberation! Great Lord!

Hebrews 2:10 is primary and powerful in respect to Jesus being the Home-Gatherer into the eternal Family,

*For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons into glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

The writer of Hebrews is clear. Just as Jesus had said, ‘I am the way to the Father’, so this writer is saying, ‘There is a trail to be blazed through a dreadful jungle and no one can blaze it but Jesus. He alone know knows where and who the Father is. So the father must lay on him fully the iniquity of the whole human race, and clear the way thereby to Himself—through the Son. Only then can Jesus bring many sons into glory.’ The glory is, of course that of Isaiah 43:6–7; I John 3:1–3; Romans 8:17–30 and Ephesians 1:4–8.

The second passage—that of John 14:1–10 is so very clear. Looking at it we see that Jesus saying to them—in the light of the coming Cross—that there is nothing to fear. They should not be afraid when in the protection of God. Now Jesus is going to that father in whose house there is room for all, and more to spare! He is going to prepare places for their homecoming to the Father’s Family. They know where that Home is, and they know the way to is. When they say in confusion we do not know, when they ask to be show Jesus is mild with understanding. How can they not know when he—the Son—has been with them, showing the Father? He is the way to the Father, the truth of the Father, the life of the Father, so that only by him may they come to the Father. What wonderful comfort, what incredible words!

### **Bringing to the Father the Children of Glory—the Nations of His Family**

How does he bring them all home? The answer is that he does this in two basic ways. The *first* is by his suffering for them on the Cross, and the *second* by the ingathering of the nations through the gospel via his Spirit, via his church.

#### ***The Ingathering by the Cross***

Only when men and women come to God through the Cross do they find the Father, and so find their own familyhood. Because the fall and consequent guilt has alienated them from God. Ephesians 2:11–22 tells us that not only was Man alienated from God, but within humanity a division had come which was a bitter one, namely that of Jew and Gentile. On the Cross Jesus ‘destroyed the hostility’. Firstly, by Christ taking the guilt of all Man was reconciled to God, and secondly, the enmity between

Jew and Gentile was also dissolved. Thus a New Humanity has been created which on the one hand is the New Man, Christ, and on the other is the corporate humanity of all who have become children of God. So all things have been reconciled by the blood of his Cross.

*The Ingathering Through the Power of the Cross*

Had there been no Cross there could have been no reconciliation. The reconciliation having taken place there must be ambassadors of God who go all over the earth—to the end of the earth—bearing the message of reconciliation. As ambassadors of God they call men and women everywhere to be reconciled to God and to one another. This is the ingathering by the power of the Cross.

Thus we must take Christ to the nations. He will take us in order that we may take him, but we must be on the move. The great Exodus from the evil Egypt, the great liberation from this corrupt age is taking place. God’s people are on the move in a mighty Exodus that has been effected by the New and Greater Moses. The story of this saga of history is shown in the poem below, but for the present we must see all the nations—all the elect nations—are the true children of God.

They are moving towards the Holy City. They will see its gates wide open. No visas needed, no passports required, no customs fees to be paid, no terror of celestial ‘Customs’, but only a pure passage into the heart of the New City, to the throne itself of God and the Lamb, their glory lighting the way to the heart of the Mystery of God and drawing into it the sons of glory. They shall drink of the river of life, eat of its fruits and know themselves to be healed by its leaves.

They shall look on the face of the Eternal One and shall become like Him when they see Him as he is. They will cry ‘Abba!’ to the Father, and ‘Lord!’ to their Jesus, and shall do it all by the revelatory Spirit as he brings them into eternal glory.

Great Caravan of holy ones,  
The saints of old, the saints anew  
Move from the days of Abel-son  
Until they reach the Father’s view.

He purposed long before the world  
To save the lost beloved sons,  
To draw them out from Egypt grim  
And bring them to the promised Home.

Full-sore they suffered from their wounds  
Full-pained they felt the scourge of sin;  
The whips of Satan urged them on  
To labours loathed—without, within.

Then came our Moses to relieve  
To break the shame and set us free,  
To bring the covenant to view  
With brightest blood of Calvary.

O glorious Lord, our Shepherd good  
Who holds us with loving hands:  
We march across the hills of time  
To meet you in the Holy Land.

When through the fires our bodies pass



**‘JESUS IS LORD!’**

The flames shall not consume our soul,  
The waters shall not drown in death,  
Nought hinders as we reach our goal.

Ah holy Home of God-Abba!  
Ah Holy Father we adore!  
Through Spirit who has made us one  
As brothers of our glorious Lord.