

Introduction

The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is at the heart of the fulfilment of God's purposes and God's revelation to man. He is God's solution to the plight of man and His provision for their full salvation. He is the Saviour of mankind, the Word of God, the Light of the world, our perfect Teacher, the Way, the Truth and the Life. As Paul puts it so succinctly: Christ in you, the hope of glory.

As God's children, it is our desire to respond well to His call. We want to fulfil His will for our lives and participate fully in the fulfilment of His purposes. To do so, it is imperative for us to deepen in our personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and identify with the primary concerns of His heart.

We must learn well from Him: His teaching, His perfect example, and the way He lived His life during His time on earth, which climaxed in His death on the cross.

This approach to life is well exemplified in the life of Paul and summed up in his testimony: For to me to live is Christ. I desire to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

It has been a burden of my heart to communicate this vast and important subject on the Lord Jesus Christ and the implications of the Cross, and for over a period of nine years, I preached a series of messages on it¹. The eight messages on which this book is based form a part of this series.

The Two Kingdoms

When we reflect on the earthly life of the Lord Jesus and ponder about our own earthly existence, we are confronted with some fundamental questions:

- If the Scriptures prophesied that the Lord Jesus would be a great king with everlasting dominion and glory, why was He born into this world in a manger and of poor parents? Why did He wear no crown except a crown of thorns? Why was He mocked at, spat on, beaten, scourged and crucified like a criminal? If He is the King of kings, what kind of a king is He?
- What is the meaning and purpose of our time on earth? Since there is so much pain, toil, sorrow and temptations in this world, is it not

¹ These messages on the Lord Jesus Christ are available on the website www.godandtruth.com under the headings *The Lord Jesus Christ* (AR118-172) and *Reflections on the Death of Christ* (AR173-274). *The Two Kingdoms* is based on eight of these messages (AR132-139).

better that we depart from this world and be with the Lord in heaven?

- How can we live well as citizens of heaven in a fallen world?
- How should we view material wealth, power and positions of status and authority in a world where people strive to be rich, powerful, successful and prosperous? What is true success and how can we live a successful life?

The messages in this book are an attempt to answer these questions and to consider the biblical teaching on fundamental issues relating to our time on earth.

To grasp the true meaning of our earthly existence, it is important that we understand the kingdom of God and the fallen world. The kingdom of God is a central theme in the Scriptures and in the teaching of the Lord Jesus. Understanding this subject can help us:

- appreciate the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus and identify with what is in God's heart
- recognise what our values, perspective and approach to life ought to be
- know how we can live well in this fallen world without succumbing to the pervasive negative influence of the spirit of the world
- reflect on issues of life and respond to them from a biblical perspective
- be effective ambassadors for Christ

To fully appreciate the issues considered in this book, it is needful that we read it prayerfully and take time to ponder over the content as we read. It is my prayer that this book will help us discover in a deeper measure the meaning and joy of living in and for the kingdom of God.