

CHAPTER 3 SUMMARY: "AN UNMATCHABLE KING"

Seek First: How the Kingdom of God Changes Everything, by Jeremy Treat

JESUS THE KING OF THE KINGDOM

- "To genuinely embrace the kingdom, we have to keep the focus on Jesus the king" (p. 46)
- "The Jesus of the Bible is a king, a loving and gracious king. That's why Jesus is called the 'Christ...'. 'Christ' is a title that means *messiah*, which refers to his position as the promised savior king of Israel" (p. 47).
- "The kingdom of God is good news because the king reigns with grace.... The essential message of the kingdom of God is not good advice about what you need to do to clean up your act and win God's approval. It's good news about what God has done for us in Christ" (p. 47).
- "Christianity is not ultimately about a system of beliefs or principles of morality but about a person—Jesus—and how he accomplished something in history that will shape all of eternity. Jesus doesn't give us instructions to build a kingdom; he announces that he is the king, and that in knowing and belonging to him, God's reign comes through God's people over all God's creation" (p. 48).

THE SERVANT KING

- "Jesus is the kingdom personified.... Whatever image comes to mind when you hear the word 'kingdom,' replace it with a mental picture of a person, Jesus. Imagine Jesus healing the body deteriorated by disease. Think of Jesus removing the burden of guilt and shame. Picture Jesus setting free the oppressed. When you hear 'kingdom,' don't imagine a palace in the sky, think of a person on the ground bring restoration the world marred by sin" (p. 48).
- "Jesus reigns, but not like other monarchs. He reigns by serving rather than demanding to be served. He is powerful, but his power is guided by his love. He is just, but it's justice is coupled with mercy. He is wise, but his ways are so counterintuitive to our selfish hearts that the world perceives his wisdom as folly" (p. 49).
- "Jesus is not a magician who came to entertain; he is the Messiah who saves. The miracles, healings, and exorcisms of Jesus are all glimpses of that comprehensive salvation" (p. 49).
- "Jesus didn't come to make the world a better place. He came to make the world new by grace. Like rays of sun that pierce through the dark clouds, the healings and miracles of Jesus our God's reign breaking in on earth as it is in heaven. Each miraculous act is a microcosm of what God's power will one day do for the whole universe" (p. 50).
- "Through his perfect life, Jesus was redoing what Adam and Israel failed to do. Adam chose his own way in the garden of Eden. Jesus chose God's way in the garden of Gethsemane. Israel failed a test in the wilderness. Jesus was faithful and tempted in the wilderness. Adam and Israel abandoned the mission of the kingdom of God. Jesus embodied the kingdom of God. Jesus is the 'second Adam' and the 'true Israel' who fulfills every promise of God. And yet his perfect life is *for us*" (pp. 51-52).

THE CRUCIFIED KING

- "The cross is the greatest display of Christ's reign as power controlled by love.... The cross is the throne from which the king of the world rules with grace... The cross did not derail Jesus and his kingdom work. Jesus is king *on* the cross: forgiving sin, defeating evil, and establishing God's kingdom on earth as it is in

heaven. The cross is neither the failure of Jesus's messianic ministry, nor is it a prelude to his royal glory. It is the apex of his kingdom mission. The splendor of God's royal power shines brightest through the sacrificial death of the Son of God. The cross is the crowning achievement of Christ kingdom mission" (pp. 52-54).

- "Through the cross...God demonstrates his love. God reveals his justice. God satisfied his wrath. God displays his wisdom. God magnifies his glory. We are redeemed from slavery. We are forgiven of guilt. We are cleansed of shame. We are declared righteous. We are ransomed from death. We are adopted into a family. Death is defeated. Satan is conquered. Demons are vanquished. Evil is eradicated. The world is reconciled. Creation is renewed. Heaven and earth come together. The death of Christ is a multifaceted accomplishment within the narrative of God bringing his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven" (pp. 54-55).
- "While the accomplishments of the cross are unending, the heart of the cross, out of which everything else flows, is substitutionary atonement.... In the entirety of his life, Jesus was perfectly obedient, faithful, and righteous. Through the cross, Jesus offered his perfect, covenant-keeping life as an unblemished sacrifice on our behalf. He's the only one who did not have sins of his own that deserved judgment. Nevertheless, Jesus voluntarily went to the cross in our place to bear the judgment for our sins" (p. 55).
- "... substitutionary atonement is not only a pardon but an exchange. Christ takes our sin; we receive his righteousness. He takes our shame; we receive his honor. He takes our guilt; we receive his perfect record. The innocent was condemned as guilty so the guilty could be declared innocent.—the Holy Spirit. It's for good reason that the early church called this 'the sweet exchange'" (p. 56).
- "The cross shaped-kingdom of Christ provides a framework for those who would follow Christ as king... To follow the king, we have to take up our crosses. The kingdom was established through the self-giving love of Christ, and it will be advanced through the self-giving love of his people. The kingdom comes through suffering and service" (p. 57).

THE RESURRECTED KING

- "Jesus died for our sins. But Christianity rises or falls on whether or not Jesus still has a heartbeat" (p. 57).
- "The cross is not a defeat that is made right by the resurrection but a victory that is revealed in the resurrection. Christ resurrection is the *vindication* of his mission" (p, 58).
- "The resurrection means the Christianity isn't based merely on a historical figure but on a living savior.... If Jesus is alive, it means that there is power available to us that is greater than any challenge or obstacle we will ever face. This power is not a force to be welded, though; he's a person to be known. The power for the Christian life is found in knowing Christ" (p. 59-60).
- "...when Jesus rose from the grave, the new creation broke through into the middle of the story. The bodily resurrection of Christ is the beginning of a worldwide resurrection.... The resurrection of Christ is the beginning of the renovation of the cosmos" (p. 60).

A KINGDOM TAKES THE SHAPE OF ITS KING

- "Apart from Christ the king, Christianity becomes a self-help spirituality, a hobby, a family tradition, or an escape mechanism from the difficulties of life. Apart from Jesus, doctrine is mirror theory, good works become religious badges, and the church turns into a social club" (p. 62).
- "But with Christ the King the kingdom is unstoppable... With Christ as the source and center, the kingdom has abundant life, sacrificial love, and resurrection power" (p. 62).