

The Kingship of Christ¹

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Part I – The Kingship of Christ in His Glory

Series I – Christ’s Kingship Eroded

Chapter 1: Christ and Mohammed

Nothing baffles Christians more about Islam than the loyalty and devotion its followers give to “the Prophet.” For the full impact of their unquestioning allegiance and undying love, witness the reverence and adulation with which the memory of the Prophet is treated in the cradle of Islam, in cities like Damascus, Mecca, Cairo, Istanbul or Alexandria. The pulse of life will always beat to the martial anthem: *“Allons, marchons, chantons en l’honneur de Dieu et son Prophete.”*

Faithfully each day at the morning hour of prayer, the Muezzin ascend the gallery of the minaret or stand at the most public place near the mosque to recite in clear, ringing chant their *azan*, the familiar call to prayer. And, as if on cue, the response is heard from the lips of tens of thousands, in every city, town or country hamlet:

God is great, God is great, God is great, God is great, God is great!

I confess there is no other god than God. I confess there is no other god than God.

God, of course, is Allah. But then follows the eulogy to the Prophet:

I confess Mohammed is the emissary of God. I confess Mohammed is the emissary of God.

¹ This article appeared originally in Kuyper’s *Pro Rege*, published in the Dutch language in 1911. The history of this translation is shrouded in history. We do not know who translated it or who edited it, except that Frances A. Boer-Prins and Jan H. Boer did a final touchup, mostly of punctuation. The document was sent to me by a friend who is no longer communicating. You will find a number of irregularities to which we occasionally draw attention in footnotes. All the footnotes in this article are by Jan H. Boer, proprietor and creator of this website, kind of post editing.

Come to prayer, come to prayer. Come to Allah, come to Allah.

And early morning recitations add:

Praying is better than sleeping.

Once the devotees are massed together in the mosque, the prayers are introduced by the same eulogy, called the *Iqamah*:

I confess that Mohammed is the emissary of God. I confess that Mohammed is the emissary of God. The prayer will now begin.

This veneration of Mohammed is underscored by the tone which is always at a high pitch. Initially there is the cry: "In the name of Allah, the Protector, the Merciful!" followed by the *Fatihah*:

Glory to Allah, Lord of all the world. The Protector, the Merciful.

The King of the Day of Judgment. Thou alone we worship and on Thee alone we rely for aid.

Lead us in the straight path. In the path of those who may experience Thy mercy.

Against whom Thou art not wrathful. And who do not lapse. Amen.

The high pitch is retained throughout up to the individual *Rak'ahs*, often composed of nine different pleas, such as in the *Nafil*. And after every two *Rak'ahs* comes the commemoration of Mohammed, introduced by:

For God is the adulation of all tongues. For God is the worshipful demeanor of our bodies. And for God is the worship that lies in our alms.

Then, in honor to the Prophet:

Peace unto thee, O Mohammed, with the peace of God and his blessing!

That's not all. Added to this is further honor to the Prophet:

I confess that there is no God than God. And I confess that Mohammed is the ambassador of Allah.

In addition there is the *Darud*, a further eulogy to Mohammed, and more extensive as well:

O God, bless Mohammed and his descendants, as thou blessed Abraham and his descendants. Thou, O God, art praiseworthy, for Thou art great! O, bless Mohammed and his descendants, as Your blessing rested on Abraham and his seed. Thou art praiseworthy, for Thou art great!

These prayers are compulsory, not once but five times a day; even then, pious Muslims supplement the regular, compulsory prayers with two or three optional prayers, the so-called *Ishraq*, *Zuah*, and *Tahajjud*.

Altogether, that yields eighteen hundred prayers per year, in some instances more than twenty-five hundred; and in each of these prayers Mohammed is commemorated anywhere from four to ten times. It means that each suppliant commemorates Mohammed at least ten thousand times per year.

There is, of course, something mechanical about this. And yet, throughout all these prayers, the suppliant has to observe rigid rules pertaining to the position of his body, rules that are designed to prevent prayers from becoming purely habit forming and that also combat drowsiness. But seeing the extensive, inclusive form of prayer in the mosque, together with the serenity, the gravity and devotion conveyed by these moments of prayer makes one realize that the suppliant is motivated by genuine dedication, not merely by external mechanics.

I once saw a bell ringer at work in the belfry of the Hagia Sophia mosque in Istanbul. The man did not realize anyone was watching him. For more than twenty minutes he prayed fervently and wholeheartedly, displaying a zeal and warmth that would be the envy of many a Christian.

But there is more. It's not just that the devout Muslim constantly remembers Mohammed; the same honor is shown to all his descendants. That, too, illustrates how the Prophet is venerated and why his memory is still so very much alive among his followers.

More striking perhaps is the fact that Westernized Muslims will defend the Prophet to the bitter end. No one is allowed to belittle him. It is considered a disgrace, unpardonable even, for a Muslim not to come to the Prophet's defense.

Whether out of fear or embarrassment, Christians often feign indifference toward Jesus Christ; such cowardly indifference, however, is entirely alien to the Muslim when it comes to an assault on the Prophet's position or reputation.

Admittedly, the Chodchas in Persia and India put Ali above Mohammed, but the Chodchas form a sect that include various tenets from Buddhist religion, such as the transmigration of souls. But it is generally true, even now, that Islam in its purest form puts Mohammed above everyone else.

Of course, not even Islam is immune from decadence, not so much in the countryside but in the metropolis, in cities like Istanbul, Cairo, Alexandria and Algiers.

The more affluent and sophisticated make repeated visits to the West or study at one of the famous universities in the West. Predictably, upon their return they often import elements of Western culture and try to apply them to their own civilization. Some of the more austere ethics and observances have been compromised, such as the ban on drinking alcoholic beverages and eating pork.

But, however modern or accommodating some Muslims may be while under the influence of Western mores, they will never compromise the position and reputation of the Prophet or fail to honor his memory.

Despite their seeming indifference and incongruence with regard to strict observance of Islam's many rules, they are keenly aware of the difference and polarity between Christianity and Islam. And without exception they believe Islam to be superior. Even in the upper echelons of society, no one, no matter how powerful and influential, would dare to criticize or ridicule the Prophet.

In upper circles there is a good deal of tolerance and freedom of expression and even a Christian can express his feelings without fear of retaliation. But no one, Christian or otherwise, can attack the Prophet with impunity. The prophet is sacred to Islam. Even a hint of criticism meets with instant resistance and suddenly all Muslims present will mobilize in the Prophet's defense. Needless to say, this is more true in conservative Muslim circles, but that's true in Christian conservative circles as well. But however liberal certain wings of Islam may be, and however much they may differ on points of doctrine and observance, they are all united in their unquestioning allegiance to the illustrious founder of their religion.

And they are not all defenseless if Mohammed is attacked. They are aware of weaknesses in Christian doctrine and they know thoroughly the strength of their own belief. Even the common man is well equipped with the values of his own religion to be able to hold his own in a debate. Of particular importance to Islam

is the fact that Mohammed was born many centuries after Jesus which to them is proof positive that Mohammed is also more exalted.

Every attempt to downgrade or slander Mohammed meets with staunch and fanatical resistance. Opposition may not be vulgar, because in most instances a Muslim will remain polite, but it will be decidedly firm. A Muslim will not tolerate Mohammed's character to be defamed. Every one of his followers will invariably rise to his defence. He will always remain the ultimate historic personage, one who commands respect and reverence from all.

This attitude of loyalty, so characteristic among Muslims, is very striking for a Christian, because he is painfully aware that his own attitude toward his Lord, Jesus Christ, is so very different. When I returned from my trip to the Middle East, I was considerably ashamed of our lack of reverence for our Lord. I deplored the degeneracy, the lack of vigor of the Christian religion in so-called Christian countries. And I was dismayed and incensed by the chilly indifference if not blatant hostility, toward our Savior and King.

Of course, a Muslim is just as aware of that indifference and hostility toward Jesus as I am. To him, loyal and respectful toward Mohammed, it is inconceivable that people who call themselves Christians can be so arrogant and merciless in their criticism of Christ. What is even more baffling to him is that official Christian confessions place Christ even higher than Muslims place their Prophet. In Islam, Mohammed is an emissary, a prophet, an apostle, but his followers do not deify him. And since he knows that Christians deify Christ, he naturally expects Christians to be much more uncompromising in their reverence for Jesus.

Instead, much of the literature in Christian countries deliberately maligns and disgraces Christ. Rather than testifying to a love for Christ, many books betray unrelenting hostility and implacable hatred toward Christ! Whole sections of the so-called Christian population studiously avoid any mention of Christ or else discuss him critically and sneeringly. Among the intelligentsia and in artistic circles the hostility may not be as overt, but, instead, there is a subtle denial and dismissal of Christ. In many places opposition to Christ is most striking simply because He is never mentioned. Or, if He is, it is only to credit Him with a certain religious genius that was applicable only to His own time but that has since lost its relevance, even in an ethical sense.

In parts of the world once colonized by Western nations the greatest obstacle to effective mission work is the irreverent attitudes and unbiblical behavior of Westerners who are supposedly Christian. They are often people whose social-economic position enables them to profit from certain tenets in Christianity, but who in reality show not the slightest regard and reverence for Jesus Christ. That has always baffled the Muslim. It is not surprising that he is reluctant to give up his own religion and embrace Christianity when he sees that the followers of Christ show little respect and dedication for the very person they are supposed to follow.

That is baffling but also offensive to the Muslim. He suddenly realizes that within the Islamic religion, in addition to Mohammed, both Moses and Jesus occupy places of honor. It dawns on him that Islam, much more so than Christianity, appreciates Jesus Christ as a prophet sent by God, recognizes His coming as something divine and miraculous and never reduces Jesus to the status of an ordinary teacher. In fact, the Koran itself devotes many pages to Jesus. And when it occurs to the follower of Islam that Christians have considerably less respect for Jesus Christ than Muslims do, he naturally draws the conclusion that Christianity must be an inferior religion and it becomes next to impossible to try to convince him to abandon his own faith in favor of Christianity!

I have entitled these writings *PRO REGE*; they will serve as an appeal to live for the glory of our King.

While the Muslim testifies to his Prophet, we bear testimony of our Saviour, a testimony which confesses that He is not only our greatest teacher and our only high priest but that He is also our eternal king.

“Lord of lords and King of kings” is His title of honor. And it is our constant yearning, as kings appointed and anointed by Him, to rule jointly with Him in His kingdom.

He is called our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Surety, and we benefit from the reconciliation and deliverance He brought; still, that only refers to His efficacious work, an act designed to save us from damnation. But the Christ is much more than that. As the Christ, He is the Anointed, anointed by God to be our King. It is through His kingship that He attains His glory and it is His kingship that determines our relationship to Him. Moreover, we are not permitted to opt out of that relationship. As such, his kingship places a demand on us, a demand for our

loyalty, our discipleship, our subjection to His rule. It demands, first of all, that we confess Him as King, declare for His cause and honor and defend His name within an environment that professes to be Christian.

On the surface that would seem obvious. Yet that's exactly where most Christians fail. The difference between the Muslim's total dedication to Mohammed and the Christian's cool reserve toward Jesus Christ is both striking and appalling. It is, at the same time, an indictment of Christianity.

I refer not only to the people who have abandoned the faith of their fathers, but more directly to those circles which still profess to believe in the kingship of Jesus Christ but which have diluted the message of Christ's kingship to the point where it receives only scant mention even in the proclamation. Admittedly, in Christian circles there is still recognition for Jesus' prophetic and priestly functions but wholehearted fealty for God's anointed King, true allegiance in both word and deed, has been compromised by most. It is precisely the idea of Christ's kingship that has undergone serious erosion, even among the most devout Christians.

Hence these writings. They are for Christ as our King, although I realize that a few books cannot undo the damage caused over the centuries. I should at least like to make an attempt to testify of Christ's kingship, for Jesus Christ "must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet." It will be an attempt on the basis of God's Word and for the sake of that Word to renew our loyalty and dedication to His glory which in our land and in our lives has been steadily and increasingly abused by the open hostility of his enemies and the cowardly surrender of so many of his so-called friends.

Until several decades ago, the monarchies of the Netherlands and England ruled the majority of the Muslims in the world. As a colony of the Dutch, the island of Java alone counted more Muslims than European and Asiatic Turkey combined. Therefore, a comparison between Islamic attitudes toward the Prophet on the one hand and Christian attitude toward God's anointed King on the other is not at all inappropriate. The comparison is not a happy one for Christianity. While on the one hand Islam has remained true and faithful to the memory of the Prophet, despite all kinds of internal sectarian movements and inevitable compromises, Christians, on the other hand, have largely forgotten or chosen to ignore the kingship of Christ. There is every reason, therefore, for an urgent appeal to return to the kingship of Christ!

Islam's religious dedication and loyalty to the Prophet is still so powerful and pervasive that even now heads of state throughout the world consider it possible that sooner or later Islam will declare a holy war. Should that happen, there will almost certainly be universal support for such a war in the Muslim world. And while the non-Muslim world may consider the idea of a holy war unreasonable and fanatical to the extreme, it is nevertheless an article of Islamic faith and can be expected to meet with general and enthusiastic approval among the devotees of Islam.

Compromise and secularism may, on occasion, dampen that enthusiasm, but never for long. The religious fires burning in the heart of Islam can never be successfully extinguished even though various influences, both internal and external, may make it appear as though the fire has gone out.

God forbid that we should be motivated by a malevolent fanaticism. Still, it would be to our credit if we could feel and show a similar loyalty for our King, a loyalty that would ignite our hearts and lives, mobilize and motivate all like-minded Christians to declare openly and positively for Christ's honor and glory!

Even in times of relative peace, during periods when Christianity was not under attack, such loyalty and motivation for our Christ would stand us in good stead. But the twentieth century is not a period of peace; Christianity is under constant attack. Throughout the world, but most especially perhaps throughout the so-called Christian world, relentless attempts are being made to dethrone Christ from His place of honor which is rightfully His throughout the ages.

PRO REGE!