

## Conclusion

*Our task, as Christians, is to orientate ourselves constantly to the vision of reality which we have seen in the Bible. Jesus Himself had a wonderful vision – a vision for which He lived, worked, suffered and died. He has commissioned us to carry on this vision, and to make the Kingdom present wherever we live and work.*

*Jesus does not guarantee success; but He does expect us to witness to this Kingdom, and to make it felt by our concern and action for “justice, peace and joy” (Romans 14:17). We do this in our homes, in our community and in the places where we work. Our task is to be faithful to the vision of Christ ourselves, and to radiate it in a world that often seems depressed and even hopeless.*

*God takes our cooperation seriously. Our actions here on earth do count. The new Heaven and the new Earth is not predetermined. What happens in and to this world is not irrelevant. What is to be transformed is our world – the one that humans have designed or co-created. It is from this that the new earth and the new heaven will emerge in God’s own time - at a time when He decides to put an end to the old.*

## Society of African Missions (SMA)



# Living Faith Means Living Justly

Session 2: Justice in the Bible  
The New Testament

# Justice in the Bible – the New Testament

**Jesus Christ: “our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification and redemption”** (1 Cor.1:30)

Jesus is the culmination of :

- The Mosaic Law which tried to impart justice and promote cult
- The Prophets who looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, who would be the definitive act of redemption
- The Old Testament literature, which imparted human-divine wisdom.



*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him”.....* (John 3: 16-17).

**Jesus came - not to abolish the [Old Testament] law and the prophets - but to fulfil them.** (cf. Matthew 5:17).

He came to announce the “*gospel of the Kingdom*” (cf. Matthew 9: 35).

## The “Kingdom of God”

This phrase occurs 122 times in the Gospel and 90 times on the lips of Jesus. The Semitic meaning of “Kingdom” signifies a *process* of reigning or ruling – a state of being King.

Jesus changes expectations of the Kingdom of God from exclusively at the end of times (the Last Day) to one that had already started and was “*on its way*”

Signs that the kingdom had come.

- the healing of the sick (Matthew 11: 4 - 6),
- feeding the hungry (Mark 6: 33 - 44),
- confronting the powers of evil (Mark 1: 21- 28 and Matt: 10:1- 23).

St. John’s Gospel places emphasis on the “*here and nowness*” of salvation, rather than on the salvation that is to be accomplished in the last days. The clear implication is that wherever justice, peace and joy is present (cf. Romans 14: 17), there the Kingdom of God is present. But, many parables of Jesus are

about the final judgement - a tension between “*the already*” and the “*not yet*” – between the initial fulfilment and the final completion.

## The Teachings on the Kingdom of God

- The Beatitudes the *foundation statement* of the Kingdom (Matthew 5: 3-11; 29). *Magnificat* (Luke 1: 46-55) - roles of the rich and poor, of the mighty and oppressed reversed.

- The *programme* of Jesus ministry is announced (Luke 4: 16 - 19).

-**preference for political and social outcasts** (cf. Luke 5: 24-32 “*sinners*”; 7: 36-50 “*the sinner woman*”; 15: 1- 10 “*outcasts*”. Mark 5: 25-34: the “*haemorrhage woman*”; Mark 1: 40 “*leper*”)

- **critical of the “established order”** (Luke 11:39-44, Mark 10:42-45)

- **critical of wealth** (Luke 6:25) and warned against its dangers (Luke 12: 15-22, Matthew 25: 31-46).

- **scant concern for any norms, legislation and ritual that obstructed human contact.** (Matthew 23: 23-27), “*The Sabbath was made for man*” (Mark 2: 27)

- **emphasis on the spirit needed to bring about of the Kingdom of God** (cf. Matthew 18: 1, 3-5: “*the little child*”) and John 13: 3-17: “*the washing of the feet*”).

- **James speaks of the just individual** (James 1: 27).

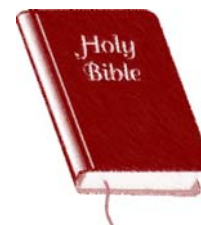
- **James speaks about the use of wealth** (James 5: 1-6; 2: 5-17).

**Acts of the Apostles:** “*And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings, and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need*” (Acts 2: 44-45). -**The basic concern was that no one should be in need.**

**Saint Paul:** freedom from oppressive structures of the Law - (Galatians 5: 1).

- All are free and equal – whether Jew or Greek, slave or freeman, man or woman (cf. Galatians 3: 28)
- Redemption is about the removal of barriers that separate people (Ephesians 2: 14-16)
- Salvation is integral, encompassing inanimate creation (cf. Rom 8: 21-23)

The humility of the Son of God (cf. Philippians 2: 5-8). He speaks of the emptying out (*kenosis*) of Jesus Christ Himself in the incarnation. **Has solidarity with the poor ever taken a more radical form?**



Paul tried to emulate this “*kenosis*” – making himself the “*slave of everyone*” (cf. I Cor. 9: 19). It is clear that in the practice of justice, an *attitude* of humility and service is essential. It is often the key to winning the minds and hearts of people.