

JESUS CHRIST: THE POINT OF IT ALL I

Introduction

Perhaps, the best access point to more advanced teachings of the Bible is a discussion of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ since, after all, the entire Bible is about Him (John 14:6; Heb 1:1-2; Rev 19:13; John 1:1, 14). Especially because the Bible is really all about Him, this too is a very big undertaking. In fact, we will not be able to do more than a very broad, very general overview in this study. But as we study other things the Bible has to tell us, we will be learning even more about our Lord Jesus Christ.

John 5:39 NASB

[39]You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me...

Additionally, we know that it is only through the Lord Jesus that we are saved (Jn 3:16-18, 35-36; 1 Jn 5:11-12; Acts 4:10-12).

John 3:16 NASB

[16]"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

So, the Lord Jesus is both how we are saved and how we grow spiritually and attain to maturity and fulfill our ministries in the Church and reap our eternal rewards. This discussion then will look into Who He is.

Who The Lord Jesus Is

a) His Deity.

The Lord Jesus is God (John 1:1-3; Phil 2:5-11; Heb 1:8-12). That means that, like the Father and the Holy Spirit, He pre-existed all existence. He has always existed and will always exist. As John says, He was with God (that is, the Father) before everything began.

He was also the Agent of Creation. That is, the whole Creation was made by Him according to the Plan of the Father. Not a single thing exists which He did not Himself make.

He is identified from Eternity Past as The Word. But He is also called The Son. That latter appellation has a great deal to do with His Chosen Role in God's Plan for Human History.

b) His Humanity.

He became a real human being (Jn 1:14; Heb 2:9, 14). He was not always a human being. He became a human being at some point in human history. He did this in order to die for man's sin against God. This bit requires a fair bit of comment.

In Genesis 2:16-17, we learn something very important about the later humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord God gave the new human that He created one command, namely, that he should refrain from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The penalty for disobedience was death. We also find in Ezekiel 18:20 that God holds each human being accountable for their sin and that the penalty for sin is death. In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve both sinned and earned the just penalty for their treason against God. Ever since, Every single human being who has ever lived has sinned. So, as Paul teaches in Romans 5:12, death has been the lot of all humans throughout history. Only for those who believed either in God's Promise of a Savior and in the actual Savior when He came have had any escape from the Eternal Death that was the due of all sinners (Rom 6:23; Ps 49:8-9).

But how would God forgive such criminals as the human race which in its entirety has been in rebellion against God throughout history? It was human beings who sinned. And it was a human being who would pay the price for the Redemption of humanity (Gen 3:15). But since all human beings came into the world with sin in their flesh as a heritage from the first man Adam (Rom 7:17), there was no chance of humanity ever paying the price of all of humanity's multitude rebellions against God (Ps 49:8-9). Every human being was just as guilty as the next before God. How then could God's Justice ever be satisfied? A perfect human was the solution. Mankind would never produce such a person without help though Rom 3:10-18).

Romans 3:23 NASB

[23]for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

This is what the Lord God did so graciously for human beings. He gave His One and Only Son to become a genuine human being Who could pay the price of human treason so that humanity could be saved.

Hebrews 10:4-5 NASB

[4]For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

[5]Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You have not

desired, But a body You have prepared for Me.

So, our Lord Jesus had a perfect humanity prepared for Him so that He could be the perfect Answer to man's terrible predicament. No human being would be eternally saved unless a perfect human being satisfied God's Justice concerning human beings. Finally, there was Somebody Who could do that.

As we have already seen, only a human being could pay for human sins. But not only that, it would also take God Himself not only to make such a human being possible but also to make that Sacrifice possible. The reason for this is that all sins, however seemingly innocuous, are necessarily eternal in ramification. That is, there is no sin that is small because all sins are acts of rebellion against God. So, they all carry eternal weight. This is why the wage of sin is eternal death. Who can pay that kind of price and still be able to save humanity? Only God Himself. Or else, the person would be consumed. It is like trying to pay off a huge debt on somebody else's behalf. To do so, the benefactor must possess sizeable enough means to at least succeed at clearing the debt or else there could still be a heavy debt to pay after their resources have been exhausted.

God obviously possesses a large enough reserve to be able to satisfy His Own Righteous Demands. This is why it had to be God Who would become Man in order to save humanity from certain eternal destruction. We had no hope otherwise.

So, the Word put on flesh and dwelt among us, entering into our predicament and accepting responsibility for all human rebellion against God throughout human history, past, present and future.

Hebrews 2:14-15 NASB

[14]Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

[15]and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

This is a very important lesson to learn and keep in mind. God became Man to save man from man's own sins against God. This is great love. This is God's deliberate commitment to this Creation, claiming it for Himself through all eternity. This is God making human beings who are in themselves not only nothing special but in fact condemned rebels against Him not only Family but also something very special to Him.

Our Lord's Humanity was real although it was also unusual. In order for His Body to not be tainted with the sin that is present in all human bodies since Adam, His Body was

virgin-conceived and virgin-born. But even so, it was a very real human body, only completely free of the sin nature. That is, He came into the world in the same state that Adam and Eve were brought into existence. He had no sin but He possessed a free will which made it entirely possible for Him to sin if He wished to (Heb 2:10, 17-18; 4:15). He was tremendously tested and tempted, more than any human being who has ever lived or will ever live but He never stumbled at all. He was absolutely perfect in His Walk and pleased God in all things that He did (Mt 3:17; Lk 3:22; Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7). That made Him the suitable Sacrifice for our sins.

c) The Son Of God

We have already touched on this before. The Lord Jesus's Chosen Role in God's Plan for Human History was that of the Son.

It is obvious that God, having no beginning and no end, cannot be a son to anyone. For this reason, the title of "Son of God" always refers to the special, unique relationship that He has in His Humanity to God. His common theological title "God The Son" is related to this concept too.

Our Lord is the Only Human besides Adam and Eve Whose Body came about by a direct creative action from God. This is why Adam too is also called "son of God" (Lk 3:38). But this is not the only reason.

Psalms 2:7 NASB

[7]"I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

Hebrews 5:5 NASB

[5]So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You".

In human terms then, it could be said that God adopted Him as His Son. God claimed Him as His Son and therefore made Him His Heir as the context of the first passage said. This is something that was only possible because the Lord Jesus became Human. As God, of course, He already possessed everything together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. As God too, He has always existed. So His Title as Son refers to His Humanity.

The Theological Title that was mentioned earlier, namely the title "God The Son" is not a biblical term. That is, the Lord Jesus is not referred to as such anywhere in the Bible. It is a term of convenience created to reconcile the Deity and the Humanity of the Lord Jesus. From His Incarnation onward, the Sonship of the Lord Jesus is very much in view.

This is to maintain an understanding of His Uniqueness among Human Beings. Only He among us all is God's Son. But through His Sacrifice, He has made everyone who believes in Him Children of God together with Him (Jn 1:12).

He is also the Only Human Being Who is also God, hence the term God The Son.

All of this is to say that the term does not mean anything like that the Lord Jesus was "eternally generated" as some popular arguments go. He only became the Son of God in His Incarnation.

d) The Son of Man.

This too is a common title of the Lord Jesus's (Mt 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8; 12:32; Mk 8:38; 9:9; 10:45; Lk 12:40; 17:24; 18:8; 21:27, 36; Jn 1:51; 3:13; 13:31; Ac 7:56). Its meaning is rather obvious, however. The title emphasizes our Lord's Humanity.

The miracle and incredible generosity of God displayed in His Becoming Man is something that would be impossible to believe if God Himself did not affirm it, not to mention that Satan has a vested interest in attacking belief in such a thing. But the Bible affirms it very vigorously. Our Lord Himself uses this appellation to refer to Himself so much that it would be curious that He did if it wasn't also made obvious that Satan attacks faith in this truth (1 Jn 4:2).

The title means that our Lord became a true Human Being, not a phantom or make-believe of any sort. He became flesh and entered into the human condition so that He could redeem every human being from our sins.

e) A Jew.

In Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38, we see that the Lord's earthly lineage is traced to and through the Jews. Matthew particularly emphasizes this in verse 1.

Genesis 22:18 NASB

[18]In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

Galatians 3:16 NASB

[16]Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

The Lord Jesus came into the human race through Abraham's physical descendants. Both his mother and adoptive human father traced their roots back to Abraham. The genealogy in Luke is His mother's genealogy and we see that it passed through Abraham. Although the Luke genealogy emphasized His connection to the entire human race in its tracing back to Adam and therefore to God's Promise of a Savior for all mankind, not just the Jews, in Genesis 3:15, it definitely traced through Abraham as well. A word about the genealogies may be necessary at this point since it is often a stumbling block for some.

Regarding the genealogies, at a glance it is easy to see that the Matthew genealogy is different from the Luke one and this has been a stumbling block for some people. As has already been said, the two genealogies serve different purposes and are for each of our Lord's parents respectively. The Matthew one was for his earthly adoptive father and the Luke one for his earthly mother. Both parents descended from David, thus twice making him a descendant of David which is something we will discuss next. It may not be obvious that it is Mary's lineage that is traced in Luke 3 since her name was not written there but this is because a son-in-law is also a sort of adoptive son who can stand in the place of the daughter to whom he is married.

The Jews are a nation that God deliberately separated out from among the families of the earth in order to save all of humankind from certain destruction. It is analogous to the separation of land from the water on the third day of God's re-creation of the universe in Genesis 1. By the separation of this people, God created a definite "nursery" for the development of His Truth in the world. As this nation grew and went through different experiences, God guided it steadily to become His Means of bringing salvation to humankind (Rev 12:1-2, 5; Jn 4:22).

It is important to keep in mind that the Jews were not picked at random to be God's favored nation. God loves all His Creatures and would not favor one above the other unless there was reason to. We know from the Bible that God does factor in each individual's disposition to Him in His treatment of them (Ps 18:25-26; cf Lev 26:3-41). So, although God being God does possess every right to show favoritism, He really does not. Everyone has an equal chance with Him. It only happened that it was Abraham who gave Him the kind of obedience that pleased Him and which was capable of setting a standard for all of the man's natural descendants.

Genesis 22:18 NASB

*[18]In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, **because you have obeyed My voice.**"*

Genesis 18:17-19 NASB

[17]The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,

[18]since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?

[19]For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."

This is why the Jews were privileged as they were. Even so, in the Bible, it is easy to see that after Abraham, it was not always the majority of his descendants who were so obedient to God. In fact, Israel was a very rebellious nation against God. They were continually saved from total destruction by the Lord's remembrance of His Promises to the Patriarchs, that is, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But was any other nation as good? The Gentiles were notoriously ungodly. Beginning from Cain, they had a very rebellious bent toward God. Israel was constantly being seduced by them. But, at least, Israel had a heritage of Faith which was sustained throughout all the generations that she has existed with some remnant of her people always seeking out the Lord and being faithful to Him.

So it is wise to not take offence that God chose the Jewish nation through which to come into the human race. That is folly.

2. The King Of The Jews.

The Lord Jesus did not only become a Jew, He is also royalty among them. The genealogies also show this in the inclusion of David in His roots. In fact, in the Prophets and the Gospels, the Lord is very popularly referred to as the Son of David. The Psalms too are filled with references to Him as the true Successor of David and as King over Israel. See Mt 1:1; 9:27; 22:42; Lk 1:32; Rom 1:3; Rev 22:12.

2 Samuel 7:12-14 NASB

12 When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your [c]descendant after you, who will come forth from [d]you, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me.

The context of the above passage does indeed apply to Solomon in the immediacy of the moment. But, clearly, Solomon's Throne ended with his earthly life and his son succeeded him. So, the whole prophecy could not have applied to him. This is a common thing in prophecy. Many prophecies apply to multiple targets and multiple situations. A very popular example of that is Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 which both apply to the kings of Babylon and Tyre as well as to Satan too. Another sometimes debated example is in Isaiah 7:14. There was an immediate application to the contemporary times of Isaiah and a much later application to the Lord Jesus Himself. So, the above passage in 2 Samuel 7 does definitely apply to the Lord Jesus. He is the "Descendant", the Greater Son of David, in view here and the One Whose Throne will remain forever (Rev 22:1,3; Heb 1:8).

Still, our Lord never ruled over Israel during His earthly life and Jerusalem was destroyed shortly after He returned to Heaven. Only in 1947 was the nation reconstituted and even now it certainly does not consider itself ruled by Jesus Christ. So, what does it mean when the Bible calls Him the King of Israel and what did Himself mean when He told Pilate that He is a King?

Matthew 27:11 NASB

[11]Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

John 18:37 NASB

[37]Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

3. The King of All Nations.

The answer to the above is also in our Lord's conversation with Pilate preserved in John 18.

John 18:36 NASB

[36]Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

Ps 2:2-9; 9:2-8; 47:2-8; 67:4; 72; 99; 110; Dan 7:13-14, 27; Zech 14:9; Is 2:1-4; 11; 24:23; 60; Rev 19:11-21; 20:4, 6 are some of the many passages in the Bible that speak of the reign of the Lord Jesus over the entire Earth. But as He told Pilate, His Kingdom is of a different sort than this world. This world is Satan's own domain and dominion. The Lord Jesus's Kingdom does not belong in it. Rather, that Kingdom is currently attacking Satan's kingdom of this world and undermining it.

At the Return Of The Lord Jesus, the final battle for supremacy will occur with the Lord Jesus taking full control of the entire world and crushing Satan's kingdom completely. That is when His Reign over the nations will commence. And it will continue into Eternity punctuated only by the Final Uprising that will happen after one thousand years of His Reign over the Earth have been completed. That Uprising will be followed by the Destruction of this Universe and the Judgment of the Great White Throne.

Then the New Universe of Perfect Righteousness will be created by Him where all the Righteous will dwell with God eternally. In this New Universe, the Lord Jesus will reign with the Father eternally so that the prophecy will be fulfilled that His Kingdom is

forever.

The question does arise: how did Jesus Christ become King? Is He King by virtue of His Deity or by His Humanity?

The answer is that as God He is King over all Creation as well (Hebrews 1:8). But as Man He earned His Title as King over all the works of God's Hands (Hebrews 1:9; 2:9; Philippians 2:8-11). He earned this title by the Work that He did by dying for sin on the Cross according to the Will of the Father. That Work is what we shall explore next.