

Who is Jesus?

Can we address Jesus as "God"

You and I would have known nothing about Jesus had it not been for the apostolic records, including the very important Acts of the Apostles written by Luke, Paul's companion. In the New Testament we indeed have the apostolic epistles and the Acts to strengthen our faith, also the personal letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus, John's pastoral letters, also not forgetting the apostle John's Apocalypse (The Book of Revelations). This is not only our living testimony but the New Testament Scriptures indeed give us time and time again confirmation of Jesus should our faith in Him as risen perhaps be in jeopardy in one or other way.

The written apostolic message is then the basis from which every believer in Jesus operates. But we of course also have the four New Testament Gospels to encourage us, helping us to remain faithful. The latter contains of course the Passion of Jesus so invaluable to us for it is in and through the four Gospels that we can see the purpose of the Son of God's birth in Bethlehem.

But although we encounter Jesus in the New Testament as "Son of Man", especially in the four Gospels, we also are informed that He is the Son of God made flesh (John 1; Isa. 9.5; Jn. 3.16; Mal. 3.1; Mic. 5.1-2; Ps 2; Ex. 23.20+ Ps 18.11). The aforementioned message, depicting His heavenly identity, is indeed something the apostles of Jesus were propagating in public and wherever they were promoting Salvation in and through Him.

But what is so remarkable is that we never find, and especially in more recent translations, the depiction of Jesus (Yeshua) as "God". Even John 1.1 is a Gospel text that is often debated yet what we can and must focus on, is something that does shine through, shedding light upon Jesus' unique and very close union with His Father. In John 14 Jesus portrays Himself as the Son who is in the Father and the Father again in Him, even stating to Thomas that those who have seen the Son have also seen the Father. So deeply connected was Jesus then with his Father in Spirit – also in His projection to the world - that this is indeed a bond nobody can ever negate. And if we are prepared to dig a little deeper, comparing Matt. 28. 18 with Rev. 1.8, we will indeed be able to see the Son of God in a totally new dimension, indeed clothed with God's very own authority and status.

In Matt. 18.18 Jesus states, that is after His resurrection, "All power in heaven and on earth was given unto me"! He was clearly instructing His followers about His awesome identity. However, in His raised status He was still portrayed as "Son" by Paul, i.e. after His resurrection, yet now declared/ratified by the Spirit of God as surely possessing this divine status - having been raised from the dead by God His Father (Rom. 1.4). His Father then gave this authority to Him just as He had declared it in the presence of the Pharisees (Matt. 28.18; Jn 10.33+)

In Rev. 1.8 Jesus/Yeshua declared to John, the apostle who was sent to the Island of Patmos, that He is the Alpha and Omega (the A-Z) in our worship, and we can and must then appreciate the supreme status He was clothed with after His resurrection, and which He now exercises in heaven. God the Father raised His Son to eternal glory and praise!

This status is of course something that also proves His pre-existence for He indeed was, yet He also is and He is to come again! In other words, what we can gather from this brief, awesome statement, is that Jesus has been part of God's Plan of Salvation (to be able to save/to deliver) since the very beginning of times, i.e. when He was called forth by the Father (Gen. 1.3 compare 2 Cor. 4.6; Pro. 8.22+) He indeed shared eternal union with God, His Father, since the very beginning of times and when creation came into existence. Therefore, the Son's Kingdom will never come to and end(Ps 8)!

He is also the full expression of Truth (John 14.6) and therefore the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, rests eternally upon Him, God's Son our Saviour, and who is therefore indeed in typical Pauline depiction the radiance of God's

glory (Heb. 1.3; John 14.17)! Jesus is then indeed the Light of the world who came to dwell among us (Jn 1; Gen. 1; Phil.2; 1 Jn 4).

However, there is something we must always keep in mind, and this is that Jesus acquired His divinity from His Father (Matt. 28.18). Although the intimate bond He then does share with His Father and has always shared with Him even to the point where the Father only reaches out to mankind in and through His Son whom He has equipped with all authority in heaven and in earth (He has GIVEN this authority to the Son) – there is none other in heaven and in earth who can lay claim to this privileged status besides the Son – Jesus always acknowledged, i.e. according to the written testimony of the Lamb of God, His Father as “Father”.

However, and this is the crux, because He is clothed with all of God's immense, almighty, all-powerful Presence, He can indeed lay claim to divinity but as the Son of God. In accordance with Paul's gospel Jesus never regarded it as robbery to have been made equal to God yet He never usurped the Throne of God as Satan indeed had attempted to (Rev. 12). (Read Jn 10.32+ contemplating Jesus' words carefully - Jesus' contention with the Pharisees on Godhood, lesser gods, etcetera, correlating the aforementioned also with Moses' appointed over Aaron and Pharaoh's over Joseph).

It is in and through the Son ALONE that God the Father reaches out to man, giving him eternal Salvation in and through the Son's death on the Cross (1 Tim. 2.5). Salvation therefore is intrinsically linked to the Cross and after Jesus had paid the price for our Salvation COMPLETELY, God the Father determined emphatically that Life was only to be found in and through His one and only Son (Phil. 2; 1 John 5.12; John 14.6).

Jesus then wrought Salvation for mankind because He believed in His Father as that infallible One who had sent Him and who had placed the awesome mission on His shoulders, namely to save mankind through His precious shed blood (Ps 40.7-11).

Salvation was then not wrought because God believed in Himself as God or only God – as we sometimes read in Christological dissertations and commentaries - and that the same can be said of the Son, but because the Son honoured the Father as being “greater” than Himself and wedging Him, the Son, in as Saviour of the world (John 14.28; Ps 40)! This makes Jesus' death on the Cross - remission of sin through His sacrificial blood - for the Salvation of man, indeed both awesome and authentic!

We can then confidently accept that Jesus did not die on the Cross to draw attention to Himself**, but He came to completely conform to His Father's will (Ps 40; Phil. 2)! And what we must indeed then keep in mind is that Jesus never doubted His Father's authority, nor the purpose He was sent for, namely to work Salvation for all mankind on the Cross and so that man could have eternal life (Jn 17; Isa. 53; John 3.16; 1 Tim. 3.16 - see Aramaic translation, also the Alexandrian Codex on the latter quoted text).

Now, with this very purpose in mind, Jesus rightly stated before the Jews that He was born to testify of Himself, in other words He put on flesh to reveal His identity to the people as Son of God (Jn 1; Phil 2; 1 Jn 4.2-3). Therefore, He indeed came with Salvation in mind, that is to deliver those trapped in the bondage of sin and iniquity (1 Tim. 1.15). His words were clear and to the point when He emphatically proclaimed, in the presence of the Jews, “..... My Father will testify of me” (John 15.26)! During his trial before Caiaphas, he acknowledged that He was indeed the Son of God.

And the deeper revelation of Jesus' word was made known by Peter shortly after the crucifixion : Acts 4.12 : “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”. Any gospel bringing the contrary, is nothing but apostasy!

Jesus therefore wrought Salvation for us on the Cross through the help of His Father who strengthened Him to empty His bitter cup, i.e. to the very end, and so that we could have eternal life in and through the one and only Son of God (John 3.16; Heb. 5.5-7; 1 John 5.12; John 14.6; 1 John 3.23; 1 John 1.7)!

A remarkable testimony!

I remember a precious healing that took place in the fifties, and something I would like to testify of: A friend of my parents fell ill and he was diagnosed with leukemia (blood cancer). Treatment failed and he was hospitalized for a prolonged period after the doctors had declared his condition terminal. It was only a matter of time. My father was called upon to pray for him and God immediately led him and my mom, along with the sick man's wife, to come together, waiting upon the Lord to seek God's guidance. While waiting upon the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord came upon my father, i.e. after prayers had been said for a couple of hours. Tongues were spoken and the prophetic message then followed: "Take a cloth and anoint it, lay it on the sick person and I will prove that I am God and that My Name is Jesus!"

God's instructions were strictly followed. The anointed cloth was brought to the man who was in excruciating pain but according to his testimony later given, when the cloth touched his body (his spleen), the pain immediately vanished. Within a couple of days (!) the same man was knocking on our door, completely healed! All the signs going along with leukemia, were gone! We of course rejoiced, glorifying the Name of Jesus and the faithfulness of God! This was one of the most outstanding miracles we all could share in and this type of testimony is once again proof of the very high status our Lord Jesus is now sharing with his Father on high (=one with the Father in His exalted status, however, in being subject unto the Father). Just as the prophetic word went, he was back at work resuming his duties shortly thereafter, brimming with health! (Heb. 7.25; Heb. 3).

I think the time has come to steer away from trivialities, strife and division in the Body of Jesus, rather opting for the better way, namely to rejoice in our risen Saviour and all He has done for us. This way we will honour the Father who has sent His Son into the world to set us free from the bondage of satan (Acts 10)

Many are eager to declare the Scriptures, but let's ask God's Spirit guidance and so that we can do it the Biblical way!

How we declare the Scriptures and how to bring honour to God and His Christ

There is, what we call a "technical" declaration of the Scriptures and concerning Christological exegesis, i.e. when we objectify the (Biblical) relationship of Jesus with His Father, over against our direct approach to God's Throne in prayer (=our practical day-today worship). We then have to bide by Scripture, i.e. declaring Him in relation to God the Father, as Son of God and which stance is indeed a sound apostolic approach. However, in our practical worship, we can address Jesus as "God" seeing that He is indeed the exact image of the Father (Col. 1.15) and therefore Jesus' unseen, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Father ALWAYS finds expression in and through Him as Son, and who is that very One whom we have seen (= on the word of the apostles and Jesus' contemporaries and whose message we are called upon to believe as absolute truth - we have seen and experienced in and through the eyes of those who have indeed beheld and interacted with the resurrected Jesus (First Pastoral Letter of John).

Now, wherever the Son is called upon, He responds and acts as intimate reflection/radiance of God the Father's glory. Just as Thomas was taught by Jesus - "He who has seen me has seen the Father for I and the Father are one" (Jn 14), likewise we always see the Most High operative in and through the Son and wherever the New Covenantal Name of Jesus/Yeshua is invoked. e.g. at the laying on of hands (Phil. 2.7-11; Col. 3.17). This is the type of worship that indeed rests upon the shoulders of the Son (=the government, Isa. 9.5), and which was bestowed upon Him as Almighty (!) Son of God by God His Father (Matt. 28.18).

All the angels are now worshiping Jesus (as Lord) and therefore He, Jesus/Yeshua, who was seen by Paul on Damascus Road in his highly exalted status and stature of divinity must be revered. He, Jesus, having then been raised far above all gods and creatures, must therefore also be worshiped by us (Rev. 1; Matt.28.18: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" - by God the Father! (Also see Isa 9.5).

For this very reason we are directed by Paul to exalt the Father in and through Jesus as this is how it was done

by the apostles of Jesus (Rom. 14.11; Phil. 2.7-11; Eph. 3.14). By doing so, we worship the proper way, as the Father and the Son are always intimately acting as one (=acting in union through the Spirit) although the Son never ever relinquishes His status as Son (1 Jn 4.15; Jn 14.6; 1 Jn 14.9). Note that Jesus had received the Holy Spirit from the Father and then He poured it out upon the 120 in the upper room (Acts 2.33).

Therefore, in our practical worship, enacting our faith in God and His resurrected Son who was declared through God's power as His Son (Rom. 1.4 = heir to God's Throne), we have to execute our faith in accordance with Isa. 9.5: "He (the Son) shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace", bringing honour to God the Father as we call upon the Name of the Son of God (Col. 3.17; Phil. 2.7-11; 1 Cor. 6.11).

Doing it in this Biblical way, we still only bring glory to ONE God in and through His one and only (unique) begotten Son who became/put on flesh to bring about salvation (Jn 3.16; Gal. 4; 1 Jn 4.2-3; Phil. 2). We are then not apostatizing the faith in any way should we worship God Most High this way.

We are then to always worship the Father whom nobody can ever see and live (!) in and through the man Christ Jesus, who is worthy of all our reverence, praise, adoration and worship (1 Tim. 2.5). We can, with a clean conscience, fall prostrate before Him (the Son) for there was never anyone born of women, greater than He! "At the fullness of times, God (the Father) sent forth His Son (His one and only uniquely brought forth Son (Ps 2: Jn 1) 'born of a woman, born under the law' (Gal. 4; Ps 40.8+; Jn 17).

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NB Jesus is not only a prophet or a mere "son of God" (=applying this title properly indeed meaning "child of God" or "children of God" plural form). He is so much more and therefore so much greater than John the Baptist, and His status and stature surely calls for our utmost reverence! He is the one and only Heir to God's Throne - we receive in and through Him! - indeed the real and only Fountain of Life (1 Jn 5.12)!

*There are some Aramaic translations referring on the whole to Jesus in the Gospels as God and it seems that this type of practice has emerged from a Jewish sectarian perspective (seemingly the Judaizers who were bent on propagating exclusive monotheism) whereas the apostles of Jesus clearly preached Jesus as Son of God (the message they have received from Jesus/Yeshua in accordance with His own testimony). It is therefore good to keep in mind what was said in this brief article. Jesus declared His Father as greater than Himself and this should especially be clear from John's synoptic Gospel (10).

"God" as a title, likewise Elohim (capital G and E), depicting the highest authority in the Godhead, i.e. in heaven and in earth and which is something we can indeed ascribe to Jesus/Yeshua's Father as He is also the One who will determine His Son's return date at the appropriate time, namely His Second Coming (See Mr 13.32; Acts 1.7; Mt 24.36).

Note that Jesus did have the Cross and His shed blood in mind when He said that He would be lifted up, drawing all men unto Him this way. But Jesus surely did not imply with this scenario in mind that He was going to be crucified to draw attention to Himself, i.e. in a self-centred, self-seeking, masochistic way. He died with the purpose to redeem mankind in and through His perfect sacrifice and so that man could be freed from the power of sin and death. The Cross is then the epitome of God's love for a lost world (Jn 3.16) - we can and must perceive it this way - also the Son's utmost obedience to the Father (Heb. 4; Heb. 5.7; Ps 40; Heb. 10.7+). There just had to be a sacrifice more efficient than any animal sacrifice could ever be (Heb. 9.14), and those who believe (!) are indeed drawn to Cross (the altar) but especially to the uniquely born Man on the Cross and whose death could then indeed bring about the much longed for redemption (1 Jn 4.2-3; Gal. 4; Jn 1.13). The latter quoted text in parenthesis applicable to Jesus' immaculate birth and not, as many Christian teachers still

are propagating to this day (!), connecting it with the Christian's rebirth.

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