

This Jesus— Who is He?

by

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PLAN OF STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION

Historically speaking, even for a non-believer, Jesus must appear as a very significant person. For a believer, his importance is paramount, not just for the last 2,000 years, but for eternity.

There is much to know about him. The Gospel of John concludes with the words: 'But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written'. (John 21:25).

This booklet sets out to look at him from five different viewpoints, each one the subject of a separate study. There is no claim that they cover all there is to learn about him: that is matter for a whole lifetime.

In the final analysis, merely learning about him can be a very barren exercise, unless in the learning we actually become involved in a personal relationship with him. If we are genuinely willing to know and be known by him as friend, then he meets us more than half-way. Allowing that relationship to grow is to be led deeper into the truth: that is to know all we need to know; to experience the richest of experiences; and to become what we are designed to be.

It is the prayer of the writer that the material of the studies will lead those who use them into that kind of constantly deepening relationship.

Max Winter.

STUDY ONE:

JESUS— THE WORD

1. There are several references in Scripture to Jesus as the 'Word'. Examples are :- John 1: 1- 5, John 1:14, I John 1:1.
As he is the 'Word', he is 'telling' something' on behalf of someone and for some purpose.
 - As the 'Word of God' (Revelation 19:11-15), he is communicating on behalf of God.
 - His communication is the revealing of God himself.
2. Part of our purpose is to explore the details of what he is telling:
 - (a) About God (John 14:6-10, Ephesians 1: 3-10).
 - (b) About the Kingdom of God (Matthew 12:28, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:17-20).
 - (c) About sin (John 15:18-25).
3. When did the earliest recorded activity of the 'Word' occur? (Colossians 1:16-17).
4. The role of the Word in creation is worthy of close study (John 1:1-5. Colossians 1:16 17).
Is any genuine creativity possible without Jesus?

5. God speaks by means of his creation. He has also spoken through prophets (Hebrews 1:1–4). In fact, many prophets pointed towards God's clearest and most direct word – Jesus Christ himself (Isaiah 53, Luke 24:44, Acts 8:32–34).
6. Jesus became man to be God's most' effective statement. He was expected (see above) but few knew him for what he was (John 1:11).
- (a) Why did many not recognise him?
- (b) Is it possible that the same might happen in the churches today?
7. The 'Word' continues to speak in the present. What is he saying?
- (a) About God ?
- (b) About the Kingdom of God?
- (c) About sin?

STUDY TWO:

JESUS – THE SON

Last time, we saw some of the significance of Jesus having the title of 'The Word of God.' What the Word has to say is vital to our under-standing of God. It is also vital to our very existence, as the Word (God's utterance) is the agent of all creation (Hebrews 1:2,3.)

It is quite clear that the 'Word' and the 'Son' are the same person (Hebrews 1:2.)

Yet the two terms, 'Son' and 'Word' are not merely alternatives with the same meaning; each has special significance.

Just as Jesus has been the 'Word' for all eternity, so he has been the 'Son' (Heb. I: 2.)

Since Jesus is Son of God for all eternity, then God has been Father for eternity too. Their relationship is important and unique. The very uniqueness makes it hard for us to understand completely, because we have nothing with which to compare it: Yet there are some things about which we can know clearly.

- (a) Their unity is extremely close (John 14: 10, 11).
An important ingredient in their unity is love (John 5: 20, John 14: 31.)
An aspect of their unity is that for us to love the Son is to love the Father and to dishonour (or hate) the Son is to dishonour

(or hate) the Father (John 5: 23).

There are examples of people who have deceived, thinking they loved God and yet hating Jesus. What has Jesus to say about them? (John 8:39–47)

- (b) The Son has been sent to do the work and satisfy the purposes of his Father (John 8:29,42, John 5:17, John 17:21.) All that the Son does is under authority from and in obedience to the Father (John 5:19) It is important within the Son's purpose to reveal and bring glory to the Father (John 17:1, John 11:31).
- (c) It is not surprising then, that our relationship with God depends on the Son (John 14:23).

5. For all who believe in him, Jesus is our 'elder brother' (Romans 8: 29).

What then, in our relationship with our Father, are we destined to be? Of what quality are the works we are destined to do under the Father's authority? (John 14: 12–14).

6. Jesus the 'Son of God' is also 'Son of man' (John 8: 28).

So in him, the divinity and humanity are brought together. There are exciting implications in this fact.

(a) Dignity is restored by the Son to the whole human race. Satan, and the effects of sin in human life are destroyed (Luke 10: 17–20, Hebrews 2:14, Romans 8:3).

(b) He is the Father's declaration of peace and

goodwill towards men. The communion of God and man is restored (John 14:27. Luke 2: 14. Romans 5: 1).

7. The fact that it is through his Son that God restores that peace is very significant. It says something of:
- (a) The high cost of that restoration.
- (b) Our high value to the Father (John 3: 16).
8. Small wonder that the Son is declared worthy of worship (Revelation 4: 11, Philippians 2: 5–11).

STUDY THREE:**JESUS – REDEEMER**

1. Our two earlier studies on ‘Jesus the Word’ and ‘Jesus the Son’ have led us to see, among other things, just how vital in God’s whole plan this Jesus He, as ‘Son’, is united in love with the Father in a closeness beyond our imagining, and so must be closely involved in the achieving of his purposes. As God’s ‘Word’ he speaks to us of the Father’s nature and purposes.
2. In the gospels we read how in achieving God’s purpose the ‘Son’ frees people from slavery (of sin) (John 8:34–36.)
It is this function for which we call him ‘Redeemer’. The word contains the idea of paying a debt (a ransom).
 - (a) It is a word and idea frequently used of Jesus in the New Testament (Galatians 3:13, Luke 1: 68).
 - (b) And it was used to foretell the work of Jesus in the Old Testament (Isaiah 59: 20).
3. This paying of the ‘slave–price’ is necessary for every individual person (Romans 3: 23).
There is no escape from the penalty unless the price is paid (Romans 6: 23).
No one can pay it himself (or herself): only

Jesus can (Revelation 5:4–7)

4. The means by which the price is paid is by his death and suffering’ (I Peter 2:24)
In relation to that, it is important to see:
 - (a) The high cost to Jesus – he experienced all the sin and heart–break of all people for all time (Isaiah 53:2–6, Mark 15:34)
 - This does not however mean that God is harsh and unrelenting and that Jesus seeks to appease him (Ephesians 1:3–4).
 - God himself takes the initiative (Romans 3: 21–26).
 - (b) Jesus’ willingness to accept it (John 10: 17, 18)
 - (c) The completeness of his ‘payment’ (Romans 6:10, John 19:30 Hebrews 7:24–27)
5. In becoming our ransom, he is spoken of as the ‘Lamb of God’ (John 1:36).
Many Jews would have understood what that meant, because of the importance of the lamb as sacrifice since the institution of the Passover (Exodus 12:21–23). (Much of this passage is suggestive of Jesus and his role as Saviour). The ‘Lamb’ as Saviour also appears in the ‘end times’ (Revelation 7: 10).
The ‘Lion of Judah’ and the ‘Lamb’ are the same one: the only one worthy to open the scroll (Revelation 5: 4– 7).
6. In willingly taking’ all our sin upon himself, Jesus has exhausted it taken out all its sting (Romans 6:12 14, I Corinthians 15:55–52).
This does not mean that there is no sin anymore

as we grow in our relationship with God, we will be increasingly conscious of it. Even at times when our walk with God is closest, it still threatens and we will fall into its traps (Mark 8: 29–33. Romans 7: 19).

BUT it does mean that sin no longer has any power over us. We are totally forgiven; the full penalty is paid; we no longer have to carry any burden of guilt (Romans 8:1–4).

We are free to relate openly to God as his children.

STUDY FOUR:

JESUS – GIVER OF LIFE

1. The action of Jesus the Redeemer on the Cross, re-establishes the relationship between us and God. (We are no longer slaves ...)
Another way of saying this is that we are brought to life (Luke 15: 32).
That is, to know the Father is to have life (John 17:3).
2. Jesus describes himself as ‘the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me’ (John 14:6).
The gospels describe him as having ‘life’ (John 1:4).
3. This kind of life has a different quality from the life with which we were originally created. (He was the means of that, too, as we saw in our studies on ‘Jesus – the Word’).
 - (a) The key to this kind of life is in his relationship with his Father.
 - We saw a great deal of the love, closeness and richness of that in our study on ‘Jesus – the Son’.
 - An important aspect of it is in Jesus’ choosing to perfectly obey his Father’s will. (Philippians 2:5–11, John 10:18, Matthew 26: 39).
 - That obedience is extreme (Philippians 2:8).

- It is 'from the heart' (Romans 6: 17).
- 4 We can understand something of the quality of that life, which grows out of Jesus' relationship with his Father, from the information about 'the consummation of the age' (Revelation 21: 1-7, Revelation 22: 1-6).
- What kind of life is it?
- 5 Jesus has life: it is his purpose in coming to pass it on to us – not just at the end of time either, but right in the present (John 10: 10).
So all the benefits of it are ours:
- (a) We are heirs of the Father and joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8: 14-17).
 - (b) We are given the same Spirit which is in Jesus (Galatians 4: 1- 7).
 - (c) All the comfort, guidance, power, joy etc. of the Spirit are ours to know.
6. Jesus has done all that is necessary to make this life available (II Corinthians 5: 17-19, Romans 6: 4).
All we have to do is accept (John 5: 24, I John 5: 12).
7. Once we are brought to life by this belief and acceptance (by the way, understanding the idea of 'new life' helps us understand Jesus' references to being 'born again', John 3' 3-8) Jesus himself even supplies the means by which we grow and mature (Romans 5: 10).
- (a) He is the bread of life (John 6: 35).
 - (b) Drink of him and never be thirsty again (John 4: 13,14).

STUDY FIVE:

JESUS – LORD

1. Our last two studies have concentrated on the enormous benefits which Jesus has won for us. Now, we should see how the winning of those has contributed to his being 'Lord'. In addition, we will consider what it means for us to accept him as such, remembering that the very word 'lord' contains the idea of someone to whom is owed devotion, loyalty and obedience.
2. Many references in the New Testament give Jesus the title, Lord. One is (Philippians 2:5-11). This particular passage gives us some important insights into his Lordship. It tells us:
 - (a) Something of the process of his becoming Lord. What of his own personal qualities and acts were important in this process?
 - (b) How extensive is his Lordship: Does it include even those who do not respond in obedience?
 - (c) Something of the purpose of his being Lord. What is this purpose?
3. Why is he Lord? There are two parts to the answer:

(a) He is Lord of creation because he is the ‘Word’ through whom creation was effected. (We saw this in earlier studies) (John 1: 1–4). In other words, he is Lord because he is divine; because he is God

(b) He is Lord in another way, to which the Philippians chapter 2 reading gives us a clue.

He is Lord because he has conquered (Revelation 5: 5).

Specifically, he has conquered death (Romans 6:9–11, I Corinthians 15:54,55).

- Sin (I Corinthians 15:56).
- Satan (Hebrews 2: 14,15).
- The world (John 16: 33).
- The flesh (Galatians_5: 16–24).

In a phrase, anything that can do any real harm.

- This Lordship was prophesied in the Old Testament (Daniel 7:13–14).
- It is important to note that in conquering in this way he was conquering as a man (Hebrews 2: 14–18).

So a man, our brother, sits on the throne (Matthew 19:28 Matthew 25:31).

- His obedience to his Father is vital (Philippians 2: 8, 9)
- His resurrection is vital, too (I Corinthians 15: 17–19).

4. There are exciting implications in the fact that he is Lord.

(a) He unifies his people (Ephesians 4:1–6).

(b) Those who call him Lord, have received the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12: 1–3).

(c) Our acknowledging of him as Lord must be genuine (Luke 6:46–49).

So we must be ‘doers’ as well as ‘hearers’. To do is to obey – that is to respond to God’s love and to love our fellows (I John 5: 1–3).

5. If we do genuinely acknowledge him as Lord, then we share in every aspect of his victory (Romans 8:37–39, I John 5:1–5).
This victory extends to every moment and detail of our lives, now and for eternity.