

PART 7: JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is arguably the most dominant figure in all history. His prominence in western civilization over the last 2,000 years cannot be overstated. As the famous British author H.G. Wells once said: “I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history.”

But just who was (and is) Jesus?

In order to answer these questions Christians have relied on the testimony of the Gospels, which they consider to be based on the eyewitness accounts of those who knew Him personally.

The Apostle Peter wrote: “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Peter 1:16)

And one of the most important and startling things we are faced with is His claim of deity. Jesus said He was the Son of God, equal to God the Father, who has existed from eternity. Jesus spoke of His deity when he told the Jews: *I and My Father are one. (John 10:30)*

With this statement Jesus does not simply claim to be just a deity (such as a god), or that He and the Father were separate deities along side of each other, but that they were one and the same. But probably the most explicit claim of the deity of Christ comes from the Apostle John: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)*

The word John uses here when describing Jesus as the “Word” in Greek is “*logos*” which according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon means “a word which, uttered by the living voice, embodies a conception or idea;”. As Wayne Grudem writes “among the members of the Trinity it is especially God the Son who in his person as well as in his words has the role of communicating the character of God to us and of expressing the will of God for us.” (Systematic Theology)

But the Apostles did more than simply claim deity for Jesus. They made the claim evident in the legacy of His life—His conception, birth, life, death, and resurrection.

Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by a supernatural act of the Holy Spirit.

*Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the*

*house of David. The virgin's name was Mary... And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God...For with God nothing will be impossible." (Luke 1:26-37)*

By the supernatural act of the Incarnation Jesus is at one in the same time fully God and fully human.

Because He was God the Son, Jesus was born sinless and as a human being He was the only one to live His life unceasingly loving God with all His heart, soul, mind and strength.

He cast out demons who testified to His authority and ultimate rule over them.

*When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (Matt 8:28-29)*

He performed amazing miracles and supernatural events that benefited those He encountered such as healing the sick, the lame and the blind, and even raising the dead.

*...and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. (Matt 4:24)*

And by His resurrection insured our eternal life.

*And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. (1 Cor 6:14)*

And most important, He forgave people of their sins, which the Jews understood as an act that only God could do.

*Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:3-7)*

Not only did Jesus claim to be God, but He also claimed to be the only way to salvation and eternal life.

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)*

But of all that Jesus did His main desire and mission was to do that which the Father wanted Him to do. For He says: *For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (John 6:38)*

Jesus' very name and the titles gives us clues to that mission. In biblical times it was often considered that a person's name said something about them and revealed something about their character and His personal name was "Jesus".

Easton's Bible Dictionary says that the name Jesus is: "the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua" And the name Joshua means a savior or deliverer. It was given to our Lord to denote the object of his mission, to save." (Matt 1:21).

But His titles were "Lord" and "Christ"

According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, the Greek word for "Lord" is "*kuros*" which is "properly an adjective, signifying "having power" or "authority," ... "Lord, 'master,'

The Lordship of Jesus is something that cannot be overemphasized. God, and God alone, has the right to be called Lord. Jesus is called Lord because He is one with God. He is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity.

And it is His Lordship that will finally be acknowledged by the whole world in the last Day of Judgment.

*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*  
(Phil 2:9-11)

The acceptance of His Lordship is one of the keys to our salvation:

*...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom 10:9)*

The title "Christ" according to the Easton's Bible Dictionary means "anointed", the Greek translation of the Hebrew word rendered "Messiah" (q.v.),"

Smith's Bible Dictionary states that this term “refers to the expected Prince of the chosen people who was to complete God's purposes for them and to redeem them”

The nation of Israel looked for a coming Messiah to deliver them from their enemies and establish the long awaited Kingdom, but in God's mind, the mission of Jesus was more than just the redemption of the Nation of Israel from its enemies. It was in truth, the redeeming of all His chosen people now held captive in the Kingdom of Darkness by sin and its power.

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)*

Finally, and most important of all, His name and His titles signify what He came to do for us personally in the life He led, in the death He suffered, and in the burial and resurrection He experienced for all that believe on Him.

*Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Cor 15:1-4)*

And what did this achieve for us? The ability to be adopted into God's own family, to have eternal fellowship with all the other children God has adopted since the time of Adam and Eve, and, most wonderful of all, to have eternal and unbroken fellowship with the eternal Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus achieved for us! Praise be to Him forever and ever!