

## The Lord Jesus Christ

### I Peter 1:3-9

**Introduction:** In the New Testament the phrase “the Lord Jesus Christ” is used 60 times to identify Jesus. Jesus alone or in combination with Christ or Lord is used over 1200 times. The name “Lord Jesus Christ” is not the first name, middle and last name of Jesus but titles that give us an understanding who Jesus was.

In biblical times names were not meant so much as a means of identifying someone but as a way of saying something about an individual. In biblical days many were given names to identify either a characteristic of that individual or as a prayer that the child would exhibit a given characteristic.

When we read that the Savior of the world, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas and the one in whom we are to believe, was identified as the “**Lord Jesus Christ**” we are really reading a description.

**The only name of Jesus was Jesus** or perhaps Jesus bar Joseph or Jesus son of Joseph. This was the name God wanted Him to have. In Matthew 1:21 the angel of God says to Joseph “**She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.**” He was to be called Jesus, or in the Hebrew Joshua which literally translated is Savior. God wanted this one who was God incarnate, to have that name because He had come to save His people. As John expressed it, He was “**the Word**”, that is the eternal God who became flesh so that as many as would believe on Him, God gave the authority or right to be called sons of God. According to Paul in Romans, that happens when we are adopted into God’s family, allowed to call God father, consider one another to be brothers and sisters, and to be literally a joint heir with Jesus of all the Father will give him.

When Jesus began His ministry, He emphasized that He came to be our Savior, to give His life a ransom for many, to offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins thus becoming our Savior. Jesus came for many reasons. He came to reveal God. He came to set an example of how we are to live and love. He came to tell us what God expects of us. Most of all He came to be our Savior because without redemption we cannot have fellowship with God. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God, because of the death of Jesus, is salvation or life. Jesus said that He came that we might be saved from the ugliness and penalty of our sin. The central theme of Scripture from Genesis 3 on is the redemption of sinful man and the restoration of the fellowship lost by sin. When we say the name Jesus or sing the name Jesus, we are saying “Savior” and reminding ourselves of the importance of a personal decision for Jesus and of sharing that truth with those around us.

But in God’s Word Jesus is not only called Savior, He is called or described as “**Christ**” The title “**Christ**” occurs nearly 500 times in the New Testament, almost always as a title for Jesus. The title “**Christ**” literally means “*anointed*” and is the Greek counterpart of the Hebrew “*Messiah*.” Messiah was an Old Testament title specifically used to denote the promised one who would set

up a kingdom after the kingdom of David, only His kingdom would be perfect in terms of righteousness, justice and blessing. The title “**Christ**” referred to the promised one who would fulfill well over 100 specific prophecies concerning His birth, life, death and resurrection, prophecies that clearly prove that He is the unique one who came in the Name of the Lord. There is a uniqueness about Jesus that separates Him from all others so the Bible can declare that there is no other name give among men whereby one can be saved. While the popular thinking today is that it does not matter what you believe as long as you truly believe it, that is definitely not the teaching of Scripture where Jesus is described uniquely as the promised Messiah or Christ. Because He is the only way to fellowship with God a personal commitment to Him must be made.

**He is the Lord Jesus.** In connection with Jesus, that title is used just over 100 times in the New Testament. Of the 100 plus times **Lord** and **Jesus** are combined in the New Testament, only 2 occur in the Gospels. It was not until the resurrection that the title “**Lord**” took on real meaning. The title “**Lord**,” was viewed by the Jews as a divine title. At Jesus’ birth the angel said He would be called “*Immanuel*” which means “*God with us*,” but it was not until His resurrection that the disciples begin to fully realize that He was divine, that He was, in the words of John, the Word who became flesh. It would have been more natural to call Him “Lord” following that discovery.

There is, however, something even more profound in this title than the re-statement that Jesus is God. It was a statement or title that reflects our relationship to Him. A slave always addressed his master as “*lord*” and from the very beginning the early Christians recognized that Jesus was to be the lord of their lives. In Romans 1:1 we read, “*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus.*” Paul was using a legal term of the Roman Empire in calling himself a “*bond slave*” to Jesus. On the Road to Damascus Paul met Jesus and asked, “**Lord, what would you have me to do?**” From then on Paul considered himself a bond slave of Jesus. A bond slave was one who had been granted freedom by his master and then voluntarily re-committed himself to be his master’s slave. Whereas a slave could be freed by his master, a bond slave was always a slave, there was no freedom. Paul wrote that in relationship to Jesus he was a slave and so Jesus was always addressed as his “**Lord.**” And that was the attitude in general of the early Christians. They could not conceive of accepting Jesus as Savior and not also making Him Lord. In the New Testament the option was never to make Jesus Lord, He is Lord. The challenge was to bow before His Lordship.

Too often the church today presents Jesus as a fire insurance policy taken out by faith to ensure that one doesn’t burn in hell and any other relationship is purely optional. Many believe that if you want to make Him Lord, great, but if you want to be a Sunday or Easter and Christmas Christian, well that’s your choice. That is not biblical in any sense of the word. The New Testament declares that if we want Jesus as Savior we must also have Him as Lord. By New Testament standards He cannot be the Lord of Sunday and not of Monday through Saturday. “**He is either Lord of all or not Lord at all.**”

Many Christians talk of wanting a deeper walk with Jesus. It is impossible to have that experience until we understand that the One we seek to know better is accurately described in the New Testament as the “**Lord Jesus Christ.**” *He came to be our Savior*, to pay the price for our sins, sins that otherwise separate us from God. If one has never made a personal commitment to Jesus, one is, in the words of Scripture, dead in sin and separated from the one who created us in His image so He could enjoy fellowship with us. *He is the Christ*, the unique and promised one who alone can save so no one can come to the Father except through Him. *He is Lord*. He is Lord because He is God and because He desires to rule our lives so that He can give us real freedom. Paul urged us in Romans 13:14 to “*put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*” That should be the goal of everyone who seeks to be a follower of Jesus. Initially that sounds scary until we remember that the life lived in Him is the only meaningful life and the only life that will really count for eternity. It is scary until we remember that is what we were born for and what God is so anxious to help us live. We cannot do it on our own but if we desire to know Jesus, not just a fire insurance policy but, as a friend who will stick closer than a brother and one who wishes to shower spiritual blessing untold upon us, then we will be willing to move toward making Him truly the “**Lord Jesus Christ.**”