

Looking unto Jesus

6. “Both Lord and Christ”

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IT WAS ON the day of Pentecost, after the Holy Spirit had descended and anointed the apostles, that Peter declared that “whosoever shall call on the name of the *Lord* shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). The apostle went on to challenge the people of Israel further: “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and *Christ*” (v. 36). They had just put the Messiah to death, yet Almighty God had “highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name . . . that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is *Lord*, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11). The Lord God had elevated His only begotten Son and made him “both *Lord* and *Christ*”.

This distinction of “*Lord*” and “*Christ*” is both interesting and important. For instance, Peter preached to Cornelius and his household that Jesus Christ is “*Lord* of all” (Acts 10:36). Barnabas then encouraged the new converts in Antioch to “cleave unto the *Lord*” (11:23). Then we come to Paul and Silas fervently preaching “the word of the *Lord*” (16:32) to the Philippian jailor and his household. This jailor had just asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (v. 30). The response had been simple: “Believe on the *Lord* Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (v. 31).

Therefore it is clear that the apostles in their preaching of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ emphasised both the lordship of Christ and the requirement to surrender to him completely in order to obtain eternal salvation.

Today, many say they are sincerely of the view that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The question we then pose to them is the following: Is this truly enough for salvation? Evidently, from the Word, more is required on our part for any hope of salvation; for an understanding and public acknowledgement that Jesus Christ is God’s only begotten Son is no real proof of conversion, no evidence that a person has truly repented of his or her sins. The writer to the Hebrews makes this plain when he says that the Lord Jesus “became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey him*” (Heb. 5:9). He has to be “the captain of [our] salvation” (2:10), whom we follow at all times. Therefore obedience to our Lord is essential for any hope of salvation.

Again, this teaching and doctrine is distinctly different from what mainstream Christendom teaches today. They say that one only has to accept Christ Jesus as one’s personal saviour, and that in itself is enough for salvation. Yet the apostles clearly taught that Christ Jesus also had to be *Lord* in one’s life.

But what do we mean by being obedient and subject to Christ as *Lord*? The answer is also a simple but life-challenging one. The will of the Master was the will of his heavenly Father, for he declared to his God, “not my will, but Thine, be done” (Lk. 22:42). So it is the Almighty’s will that we are to take heed of. But the will of the Father and the will of the Son are inextricably linked—we cannot separate the one from the other. For our Lord said, “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour” (Jno. 12:26). Jesus went on to say, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (14:21).

Hence the message becomes somewhat clearer: we can only be saved if we obey the Lord’s voice; and we can only obey if we know who our Lord and Saviour is; and since the Lord Jesus Christ was “the brightness of His [God’s] glory, and the express image of His [God’s] person” (Heb. 1:3), then to know him is to know his Father, the Lord God in heaven. Therefore, to have Jesus as our “*Lord* and *Christ*” it is necessary, firstly, that the Lord Jesus truly acts as Lord in our life, and, secondly, that the Lord God’s character, will and purpose—centred in His only begotten Son—is clearly understood and practised in our lives from His Word. One cannot be without the other.

Paul gives us a lifelong challenge: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the *Lord*, so walk ye in him” (Col. 2:6). Just as the Colossian believers had begun with Christ, so they were to continue in their walk with him. We too have been called to serve and follow our Lord. But do we truly treat Christ as our Lord? Is he the very centre of our lives? If not, then we are not treating him as our Saviour. He is not “both *Lord* and *Christ*”.