

## LESSON 17 - THE NATURE AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

*"Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise partook of the same" -- Hebrews 2:14.*

THERE are two extremes of belief concerning Jesus in the world of traditional Christianity. One extreme places him equal to the Father in all respects from all eternity. The other holds him to have been a mere man, simply a good and godly example. The Truth of the Scriptures lies between these two extremes of error.

The traditional concept of the "Trinity", placing Jesus on an eternal equality with God, is opposed to the whole tenor of Scripture. This is illustrated by the following quotations, which show the *Son* completely separate from, and dependent upon, the *Father* --

*"I (Jesus) can of mine own self do nothing. As I hear I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father Who sent me" (John 5:30)*

If Jesus were (as according to the Trinity theory) an integral part of the "One God" there could not possibly be two different wills - his will and that of the Father. The scriptures are very clear that there were two separate wills:

*"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matthew 26: 39)*

*"My doctrine is NOT MINE, but HIS that SENT me" (John 7:16).*

*"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the ONLY true God, AND Jesus Christ, whom THOU hast SENT" (John 17:3).*

*"There is but ONE God, the Father . . . AND one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:6).*

*"There is ONE God, AND one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).*

Note that this last quotation, specifically distinguishing Jesus from the "One God" and calling him a "MAN" was written *long after* Jesus arose and was glorified.

The Bible clearly teaches that -

***The Father is eternal and underived.***

***The Son is a manifestation of the Father in a man begotten by the Spirit's operation upon Mary, born a babe and growing up and developing and learning as all other men.***

***The Holy Spirit is the concentration of God's power, His 'free spirit' which fills heaven and earth. 'Holy' simply means separated for a special divine use.***

God is supreme above all, even above Christ -

*"The Head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3).*

*"Then (eternally) shall the Son be subject unto Him (the Father) Who put all things under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL" (1 Corinthians 15:28).*

The man Christ Jesus subject to God, that God may be over all: that is the final picture that we are given in the Scriptures.

Again, God stately knows ALL things -

*"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15:18).*

Contrast this with Jesus, who in the days of his mortal flesh taught that he would one day return to the earth in glory, but clearly states that NO PERSON, not even HE HIMSELF, knew the time of his return, and that such time was known *only* by the One true God -

*". . . but of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, NEITHER THE SON, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).*

**BibleKEY fact:**

“ The traditional concept of the "Trinity", placing Jesus on an eternal equality with God, is opposed to the whole tenor of Scripture ”

**BibleKEY fact:**

“ God knows ALL things; contrast this with Jesus, who clearly states that NO PERSON, not even HE HIMSELF, knew the time of his return ”

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This is fatal to those who subscribe to the Trinity theory. They try to evade its force by inventing two different Christ's: one who is God and knows all things, and at the very same time does not know some things that the other does! This is an absurdity of which the Scriptures are totally ignorant and innocent.

The "Unitarian" theory - the other extreme to the "Trinity" theory - is that Joseph was the actual father of Jesus. But God indicated to Joseph himself that he (Joseph) was not Jesus' father. Joseph intended to put away Mary, to whom he was betrothed, when she was "found with child", but was otherwise directed by the angel -

*"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20)*

Mary had previously been shown that God was to be the Father of Jesus -

*"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).*

Unitarians are even less reasonable than Trinitarians. While Trinitarians ignore passages, or try to explain them away, the Unitarians deny altogether the authenticity of any passages that conflict with their theory. Because of the present faithless attitude in the churches toward the Bible as the infallibly inspired Word of God, this cavalier method of blue penciling and re writing Scripture is growing.

The Truth lies in a balance between the Trinitarian and Unitarian errors. The Truth is that Christ was a special man, begotten directly in Mary by God through the power of the Holy Spirit; especially strengthened by God for a special purpose - a man in whom God dwelt and manifested Himself to mankind - a perfect man who perfectly obeyed, and perfectly overcame the "motions of Sin", "Sin in the flesh", the "*diabolos* that has the power of death".

This was a work that no mere, unaided, will-of-the-flesh-born man could accomplish. Christ's perfect life and death sacrificial work was God's work in him - to which he perfectly submitted, even unto a horrible death, totally emptying himself of his own will, never for a moment ever allowing the flesh to have its way.

The declared purpose of God in bringing Jesus into the world was for the removal of sin from the world:

*"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).*

And how was this accomplished?--

*"He taketh away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews. 9:26).*

Here is the Divine key to the meaning and purpose and efficacy of his death -- *he PUT AWAY sin BY sacrificing himself*. He totally and perfectly during his entire life resisted, overcame, subdued, conquered, immobilized the "Sin-in-the-flesh," "motions of sin," "law of Sin in the members" he shared with all mankind -- with the entire Adamic race of which he was a part and which he himself embodied as the One True Representative Man -- the Perfect, Ideal Man.

And then, in his voluntary death, lovingly submitting to the Father's will, he nailed that Sin-defiled, Sin-cursed flesh, that "Body of Sin", to the tree -- in total condemnation and repudiation of Sin's Flesh, and in total justification and glorification of God's righteousness and holiness in requiring the moral and physical crucifying of that flesh as the only narrow doorway -- through the Death that has been brought on the race by Sin -- into Eternal Life beyond, free from Sin and Death.

He, *in* himself, and first *for* himself (but *for the sake of* his brethren) -- by offering the divinely required cleansing sacrifice for the race -- broke the iron grip of Sin upon the race, shattered the gates of Death, and rose to triumphant sin-free immortality -- no longer oppressed by the motions of Sin's flesh.

**BibleKEY fact:**

“The Truth lies in a balance between the Trinitarian and Unitarian errors.”

**BibleKEY explanation:**

**"Sin in the flesh"** - "Sin-in-the-flesh" is a difficult term for many to understand, in that they feel that somehow it is saying that there is a literal act of transgression in the flesh, or that the mere possession of sin in the flesh is transgression. Not so. This phrase employs the secondary use of the word sin, by the use of the figure of speech called metonymy. Perhaps the best illustration of how we are to understand the term comes from the pages of the Bible itself, as in 2 Kings 4:40:

*"... it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they (the sons of the prophets) cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is **death in the pot**. And they could not eat thereof."*

Now, this did not mean that somehow there was a literal dead corpse in the pot. It simply meant that there was something contained in the pot that would inevitably make a corpse of any living man. "Death" meant literally "that which would lead to death". The same principle of interpretation applies to the saying that there is "sin in the flesh". It does not mean that the flesh contain literal acts of transgression. "Sin", used in that sense, means literally "that which would lead to sin". **It means simply that there is contained in the makeup of our nature that which will inevitably cause or lead every possessor of it to commit acts of transgression** (the only exception to this rule being Christ, who flawlessly and consistently counteracted it's impulses by the constant application of the scriptures in loving obedience to his Father's will throughout his life).

"Sin in the flesh" is synonymous with other terms found in scripture such as "motions of sin", "law of sin in my members", "devil", "the old man", "the flesh", "body of sin", etc.

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And, in God's mercy and love, all who repudiate themselves and become entirely and wholly one with him, and faithfully remain so unto death, share in his victory, his sacrifice-bought redemption and cleansing, his resurrection, and his glorious life for evermore.

Jesus said:

*"I lay down my life for my sheep" (John 10:15).*

Paul said:

*"Jesus Christ hath abolished Death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10).*

And Peter:

*"There is NO OTHER NAME whereby we can be saved" (Acts 4:12).*

In effect, there is absolutely no possibility of life outside of Christ --

*"He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath NOT life" (1 John 5:12).*

*"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man . . . ye have NO LIFE in you" (John 6:53).*

*"No man cometh unto the Father, BUT BY ME" (John 14:6).*

Salvation is directly connected with the first appearing of Jesus. And this is not just a "moral example" which Jesus set for all men to follow, but *on the basis of his once-for-all actions and accomplishments in relation to Sin and the Sin-nature -- "Sin-in-the-flesh" -- "the law of Sin in the members" -- by the course of his life and death, and the resurrection and glorification that followed.*

The very use of the word "Son" as applied to Jesus -- so frequent and so strongly emphasized -- indicates that his existence was **obtained** from somewhere, and that he was not from eternity. The expression "Son of God" indicates the source of his life and existence. God declared to him prophetically --

*"Thou art My Son: THIS DAY have I begotten thee" (Psalm 2:7).*

Here is a *specific beginning*. Though Jesus *now* has inherent, endless life, it has been given to him by God:

*"As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He GIVEN THE SON to have life in himself" (John 5:26).*

It was GIVEN to him -- so clearly there was a time he did not have it.

Jesus was not born of the will of the flesh, but directly of the will and operation of God. Mary gave birth to Jesus through the begetting of the Holy Spirit. This is how he was "Son of God", as we read in Luke 1:35-

*"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."*

But though he was Son of God by begetting, he was flesh and blood of Adam's race --

*"Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same . . . He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Hebrews. 2:14-17).*

*"He was MADE SIN (of the Sin nature) for us, who knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 6:21).*

In character and action he was absolutely sinless: *therefore this could only apply to his mortal, sin cursed constitution, which from Mary was the Sin-nature of Adam. Therefore Paul could say of Jesus --*

*"God sent His Son in the likeness (identicalness) of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3).*

*"He was sent forth made of a woman" (Galatians 4:4).*

*"Of the seed of David, according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3).*

Christ's great work and task was to deliver mankind from sin by a perfect, total victory over the Sin nature: a holy, sacrificial life culminating in a divinely ordained sacrificial death to purge and cleanse that nature he bore in common with all mankind, and which made him one with us all. This is God's beautiful provision whereby Christ, as one of us - our Representative and embodiment - achieves in himself for the whole race the victory over, and cleansing from, Sin: so that we -- totally obliterated of "self" personally, and totally absorbed into him -- can in God's wisdom, mercy and love, share that eternal life giving victory over Sin.

**BibleKEY fact:**

“ The very use of the word "Son" as applied to Jesus -- so frequent and so strongly emphasized -- indicates that his existence was **obtained** from somewhere, and that he was not from eternity. ”

**BibleKEY Definition:**

**"repudiate"** - to refuse to accept as valid or true; to not have any part of

**"sacrifice" & "sacrificial"** - as an English word it means simply a "sacred work" or "holy work". However in Biblical Hebrew & Greek it has actually two meanings:

(1) causing to ascend, offering up to God, bringing near to God

(2) slaughter, put to death

**BibleKEY fact:**

“ This is God's beautiful provision whereby Christ, as one of us--our Representative and embodiment--achieves in himself for the whole race the victory over, and cleansing from, Sin ”

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If we lose this concept, we have lost a fundamental key to understanding God's message and purpose.

Jesus is repeatedly and consistently referred to as a "man" --

*"A **man** approved of God . . . by miracles which GOD did BY him" (Acts 2:22).*

*"The **man** Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5)*

-- there distinguished from the 'One God':

*"God will judge the world in righteousness by that **man** HE hath ordained" (Acts 17:30).*

Note that all these statements wherein he is called a "man" were made *after* his resurrection, glorification and ascension to heaven. He is always called a man -- even in his present condition and position -- **NEVER is he called God**: though, as we have observed in Lesson 16, in answering the Jews who objected to him calling himself the "Son of God" he pointed out to them that ALL who are related to God and who in any way represent Him are given the name "god" (Hebrews: *elohim*, Mighty Ones) in a derived sense --

*"Is it not written in your Law, 'I (God) said, Ye are GODS'? If He called them 'gods' unto whom the Word of God came . . ." (John 10:34-35).*

And he promises to bestow the Name of God upon all who are faithful -

*"Him that overcometh . . . will write upon him the Name of my God" (Revelation 3:12).*

But this is quite different from saying that Jesus is one of three co-eternal co-equals in a three part so-called "Trinity," and it must be carefully distinguished from it.

Jesus was tried and disciplined as was Adam, succeeding where Adam failed --

*"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8).*

Consider that long and deeply he LEARNED obedience through suffering. It fits beautifully into the true Bible picture: it is an absurdity in the Trinity view.

Jesus was the manifestation of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, but was not God Himself. The Holy Spirit descended from God upon Jesus in the bodily shape of a dove when John baptized him in Jordan. Thus we read (Acts 10:38) --

*"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power."*

Again, this quotation shows . . .

- 1) that God is above Jesus: He is the Decider and Giver; Jesus is the receiver and obeyer;
- 2) that Jesus is dependent on the Father, and is not part of a co-equal "Trinity"; and
- 3) that the Holy Spirit is not a Person and is not co-equal with God, but is a power with which God can anoint others in various measures and degrees (see John 3:34).

Jesus did no miracles before he was anointed with the Spirit power. He had no power of himself. He said --

*"I can of mine own self do NOTHING" (John 5:30).*

*"The Father that dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works" (John 14:10).*

*And his own expression of helplessness on the cross -- "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).*

Again, a dreadful, insoluble enigma for the traditional Trinity theory: but a clear, simple, beautiful facet of Divine Truth. God both **bestowed** the Holy Spirit, and, as it suited His Divine purpose, God **withdrew** the Holy Spirit from the *man* Jesus.

Jesus was the "body prepared" for the Divine anointing, and for the fore-ordained Divine work of salvation by overcoming, destroying and publicly crucifying the *Diabolos*, "Sin in the flesh" (Hebrews 10:5-7) --

*"Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do THY will, O God:"*

This is the "man Christ Jesus" addressing the One Eternal Uncreated God

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Who had created him, and in obedience to Whom he repudiated his own will, and lovingly submitted to the Father's will. His own natural human will was to not suffer and die on the cross --

*"Abba, Father! All things are possible unto Thee! Take away this cup from me! Nevertheless, not what I will, but what THOU wilt" (Mark 14:36).*

*"My soul is troubled: what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour! But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name!" (John 12:27-28).*

After Jesus was anointed, he was the full manifestation of God in flesh

*"ALL THINGS are of God . . . God was IN Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)*

When Jesus was glorified, his human nature was changed to immortal nature: the flesh and blood nature was changed to Spirit nature. Thus, as he now exists -

*"In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead (divinity, divine nature) bodily" (Colossians 2:9)*

But he has not lost his identity with his brethren and sisters, his memory and feeling of the probationary trials of learning and overcoming. He is still a MAN -- though now a glorified, immortalized man -- as all his brethren hope to be --

*"We have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities." (Hebrews. 4:15)*

Therefore we can approach God through our mediatorial High Priest who knows our weaknesses and infirmities:

*"For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Hebrews. 2:18).*

We know, of course, that God cannot be tempted --

*"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:" (James 1:13).*

Therefore, simply on the strength of that one verse, Jesus is not God.

During the days of his first advent, as testified in the Gospel records, he always did the things which pleased his Father. He always manifested the Father's character and holiness and perfection. He was Immanuel, "God with us", i.e. --

*"God manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16).*

Therefore he could say to Philip --

*"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).*

Paul declared:

*"Christ is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15).*

*"He is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His Person" (Hebrews. 1:3 ).*

Those who saw the Anointed Jesus saw a perfect representation of God, open to human sight. And Christ is the embodiment of the Divine Purpose, the manifestation among men of the Divine Spirit and Power -

*"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).*

*"God gave not to him the Spirit by measure" (John 3:24).*

*"In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead (divinity) bodily" (Colossians 2: 9)*

The basic facts concerning Jesus Christ are these. He --

- Was a man, of the Adamic race, begotten in Mary of the Holy Spirit, a helpless babe, born in Bethlehem.

- Grew up to manhood, increasing in wisdom, learning obedience.

- Remained a private individual, a carpenter, until anointed with the Spirit by God at his baptism by John the Baptist.

- Was put to death in weakness, after performing the things recorded in the Gospels (God's works in him, reconciling the world).

- Was deserted of God's power when on the cross.

- Was raised from the dead by the Father, and is now alive for evermore a glorified and immortal man, as his brethren hope to be.

These are the consistent teachings of Scripture concerning Jesus. Such passages as . . .

*"Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58)*

. . . are in full harmony with the overall revelation. Jesus was the pivot

**BibleKEY fact:**

“ he has not lost his identity with his brethren and sisters, his memory and feeling of the probationary trials of learning and overcoming ”

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point of the Purpose of God. He was "before Abraham" in the Plan. Furthermore, God spoke through him; he spoke God's words as the Divine manifestation and mouthpiece, as he said. God, Who was in him and spoke by him, was the Everlasting Yahweh: the "I Am," or more correctly, the "I Shall Be."

Abraham, realizing the need of the race, and that God would "provide a Lamb" to take away the sin of the world (Genesis 22:8), could look forward to the coming of Jesus, and "was glad" at seeing Christ's Day (John 8:56).

This is the sense in which Jesus had "glory with the Father before the world was" (John 15:7); even as, in a subordinate sense, his Body, the Redeemed, the Multitudinous Christ, had similar "glory" with God "before the world began" --

*"God hath CHOSEN US in Christ before the foundation of the world . . . having predestinated us unto the adoption of children" (Ephesians 1:4 5).*

*"His grace which was given us in Christ before the world began" (2 Timothy 1:9).*

Similarly, God said to Jeremiah:

*"Before I formed thee in the belly, I KNEW THEE . . . and sanctified thee" (1:5).*

And He called Cyrus by name, as if he existed, over 100 years before his birth (leading bemused and confused commentators to divide the book of Isaiah into 2 parts) --

*"Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose hand I have holden" (Isaiah 45:1).*

Truly he said, and it is a glorious fact:

*"I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).*

Christ and the Father were always in perfect unity and harmony. He could not have been "God manifest among men" if they were not; nor could he have been the perfect sacrifice required for the cleansing of the race from Sin in all its ramifications and aspects. He is now even more so "one with God" than when he made that statement, for he is now one with Him in glorious Divine nature.

Oneness with God is the goal and prize set before all. He himself prayed concerning his brethren and sisters of all ages of the world --

*"That they all may be one, AS Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be ONE IN US" (John 17:21).*

Jesus did not exist before his literal birth of Mary. We must accept the plain, literal, recorded facts of his conception and birth and growth to knowledge. But he was, from the beginning, the fore-ordained means of salvation to be provided by God, as manifested in the Garden of Eden, and through all the Scriptures.

The deep and symbolic sayings, based upon his central place in the Divine Purpose, and God's dwelling in him and speaking through him, must be understood in the light of the undoubted, literal, revealed FACTS of his birth as a babe, gradual growth to manhood, "increasing in wisdom," "learning obedience," being "made perfect," "overcoming", etc. (Luke 2:52; Hebrews 5:8 9; 2:10; John 16:33).

And he will return to earth in the Second Advent, soon to come, when he will subdue all nations to righteousness and the will of his Father. And when the work is completely accomplished, at the end of the Millennium, he will submit himself unto the Father, that God may be "All in All" --

*"When all things shall be subdued unto him (Christ), then shall the son himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL." (1 Corinthians 15:28)*

### **BibleKEY** definition:

"subordinate" - secondary, lesser, inferior

"Multitudinous Christ" - a term used to describe the multitude of those who are redeemed through Christ and stand with him after resurrection and judgment.

### **BibleKEY** fact:

“Oneness with God is the goal and prize set before all”

# THE NATURE AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

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Name Mr/Mrs/Miss .....

Address ..... Postal Code .....

\* You may need an additional sheet for your answers if there is not enough space below. Your answers to the following questions will help you - and us - to determine how much you have discovered about your Bible. Please return this form in the envelope provided even if you are unable to answer all the questions. On receipt of it we will forward a further study, as well as some comments on your answers.

1. What two unscriptural theories are commonly held about the position of Jesus in relation to God?
2. Was it possible for Jesus to do the works and miracles of himself, without God's power?
3. Who was the Father of Jesus?
4. Was Jesus born with total knowledge, as he would have had if he had been part of an everlasting, co equal, omniscient 'Trinity'?
5. What scriptural passages indicate that Joseph was not the father of Jesus?
6. What was God's purpose in bringing Jesus into the world?
7. In what way did the putting to death of a perfectly righteous and obedient man declare and manifest the righteousness and justice of God, and give God glory?
8. What had to be sacrificially condemned and publicly put to death before Christ could attain to immortal life and become an Ark of Safety for his people to enter?
9. How do we share the cleansing and redemption Christ accomplished for himself?
10. Is salvation attainable simply by following the good moral life of Jesus, without his sacrificial death and resurrection? (Give passages)
11. What does the description 'Son of God' teach about Jesus' existence?
12. Did Jesus have the same sin defiled flesh and blood nature as we do?
13. Was Jesus lineally descended from David, Abraham and Adam?
14. (a) Was Jesus a man? (Give passages).  
(b) Is he still a man?
15. (a) How did Jesus 'learn obedience'?  
(b) How was he 'made perfect'?
16. When, and from whom, did Jesus obtain power to perform miracles?
17. How did Jesus come to have possession of the Holy Spirit?
18. In what way could Jesus say, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'?
19. In what way was Jesus 'before Abraham'?
20. (a) How was he 'one with the Father'?  
(b) For what does he pray for his brethren concerning this?
21. What will be the position of Jesus in relation to God after the Millennium?