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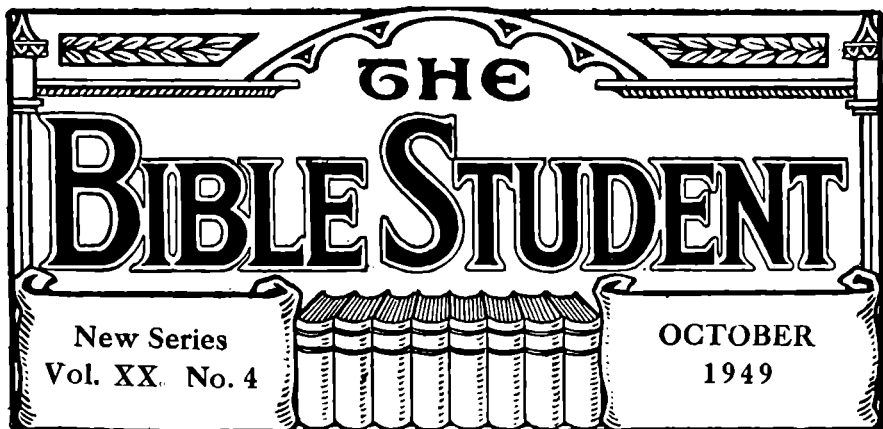
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*"The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light"*

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*Editor:* A. McDONALD REDWOOD

# The Bible Student

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## THE DUAL TITLES OF JESUS CHRIST

BY A. MCD. REDWOOD

At the predetermined moment in time "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman", and gave Him the name Jesus. It was the only name He had as a man—"Jesus of Nazareth". Every other designation by which He is known is some personal or official *title* descriptive of His divine nature or position in relation to God or in reference to His mission in the world.

He was not the first, probably not the last, to bear that name, for it was in common use in His day. But in His case it was to have its deepest meaning gloriously fulfilled as never before. Jesus is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Joshua, meaning "Jehovah is Saviour". Hence the angelic message: "Thou shalt call His name JESUS, for *He shall save His people from their sins.*" The name revealed the purpose of His coming into the world: He adorned it and raised it to its highest significance in bringing to mankind the salvation of which it spoke.

It is necessary to note with what precision and discernment the writers of the New Testament use the name, whatever the context. After the book of the Acts it rarely occurs alone. In the vast majority of instances it is attached to one or more of the divine titles. The book of Hebrews is some exception, where it is used nine times (in R.V.) by itself, and always at a key-point of the argument to stress the *human* (in addition to the divine) qualifications of Jesus to be our High Priest and Mediator with God—a subject which needs fuller treatment than we can give it here.

There is also good reason for using it by itself in the Acts. This book is a historical record of the expansion of the initial and germinal teaching of Jesus towards its fuller expression in the subsequent

*life* of the church and in its foundation of apostolic *doctrine*. In other words, it traces the transition from the Gospels to the Epistles; from the name Jesus of the one, to the title Lord of the other. This is well illustrated in the first public address of the apostle Peter, after the Ascension, at Pentecost (Acts 2: 22-36). He brings his discourse to a climax by declaring: "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made Him both LORD and CHRIST, *this* Jesus whom ye crucified" (v. 36). The exactness of the phrase is to be noted, for it is almost an introduction to the *usage* of the *divine titles* of Jesus characteristic of all later Scripture. He is no longer merely Jesus of Nazareth in humiliation, but the Lord of glory in exaltation. These and other titles become in one form or another the medium of revealing the ineffable Person, the exalted majesty, the universal dominion and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The human name, expressive as it is, is inadequate to meet the exacting requirements of all that subsequent revelation which constitutes the foundation doctrines of Christ's Church (cf. Matt. 16: 16-19). Hence they are to be used by and in the Church in her witness to the world concerning her Lord, as exemplified in Peter's manifesto: "This *Jesus—is Lord and Christ*", i.e. such is His position and such are His rightful titles.

This leads to a brief consideration of some of these great titles descriptive of our Lord, more especially the *dual titles* found mainly in the Acts, Hebrews, and the Book of the Revelation.

I. LORD and CHRIST (Acts 2:36). Logically this dual title is foundational to all the others. The apostle's address is also foundational, for it is the first official pronouncement in establishing the facts of the Resurrection and Ascension of the crucified Jesus (vs. 32, 33), as being the working of God in direct fulfilment of O.T. prophecy (vs. 31, 34).\* The Resurrection was the divine authentication of the Person, and His titles identified His Kingship and Messiahship as Lord and Christ in fulfilment of Ps. 110:1 and Ps. 16:8-14 respectively (besides many other prophecies). Peter's direct thrust at the consciences of his hearers by vividly contrasting *their* crucifying and *God's* honouring of "*this* Jesus", had its desired effect, for "when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart" (v. 37). This first harvest of repentant believers presaged the gathering in of that great

\* More than half the chapters of the Acts make some reference to the Resurrection (Cf. ch. 10: 36, 40-43; etc.).

multitude which no man can number, in a rapidly approaching Day of Consummation.

We cannot pass on without seeing something of the *practical* application of this revelation of Christ the Lord for ourselves, for it should be a dynamic force in our daily life today. Peter uses it again in his first Epistle, ch. 3:15 (R.V.)—"Sanctify in your hearts *Christ* as LORD" (an adapted version of Isaiah's challenge in Isa. 8:13, so further identifying "this Jesus" in O.T. prophecy). In other words, He must be Lord of our whole being and living, or He is not Lord at all. Therefore, sanctify Him thus, give Him that place in your heart.

There are three close parallels equally appealing to the heart's response of obedience—we quote them in the order of their normal application:

"If thou shalt *confess* with thy mouth *Jesus as LORD*, and shalt believe in thy heart . . . thou shalt be *saved*" (Rom. 10:9, R.V.).

"As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the (or, *as*) LORD, so *walk in Him*" (Col. 2:6).\*

"We *preach* not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as LORD, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5 R.V.).

The keen Bible Student will find additional interest in the above context by noting the Lord's own use of a similar twin title, in the episode of the feet-washing in John 13. After the washing Christ addresses His disciples: "Ye call me *Master and Lord*, and ye say well, for *so I am* (vs. 13, 14—note specially the article before each title in v. 14). His example of humility and condescension lays upon us His disciples not only the obligation of loyalty and obedience, but of willing, lowly *service* for His sake. The word *Master* here implies Rabbi, a Teacher of the law of God. Under His tuition and Lordship Paul found it possible to declare "I have *learned the secret* . . . I *can do all things in Him*" (see Phil. 4:11-13 R.V.).

2. PRINCE and SAVIOUR (Acts 5:31). "Saviour" is implied in the name Jesus, and does not require further comment except that of asserting the solitary uniqueness of Him who alone can be called "Saviour of the world". The title stems directly out of O.T. Messianic prophecy, specially Isaiah's, e.g. "I am Jehovah thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour" (Isa. 43:3, 11;

\* Many able commentators prefer to consider the phrase "the Lord" (in the Gk.) as predicative of the Lordship of Christ for daily life.

45:21, 22). A Saviour from sin implies suffering, and that in turn connects with Isaiah's references to the "Servant of the Lord" and His sufferings, for both designations refer to the Messiah (see Isa. ch. 42:1-4; and chs. 50-53. Also cf. Acts. 3:13, 14).

The other title Prince really means Author, Originator, also Ruler or File-leader; thus combining the ideas of originating, governing, or leading an army (see, e.g. Josh. 5:14, "Captain of the hosts of the Lord", is virtually the same word in the LXX). Beautifully suggestive are its connotations in the few other occurrences of the title:

In Acts 3:15, Christ is the "*Prince of Life*", the Leader of the redeemed hosts "who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).\* In Hebrews 2:10 He is "the *Author* of our *Salvation*", the One in whom the redeemed were chosen in the eternal counsels of God to bear His image (Eph. 1:2-5). In Hebrews 12:2 we see Him as "the *Originator* and *Perfecter* of faith". The added title Perfecter, or Finisher, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament and means the Leader who exemplified faith in its completest form ("brought faith to its sovereign power" —Westcott) in the sufferings He endured, linking Him to every member of His Body and providing assurance of their final triumph over all foes (see specially Heb. 2:10-12; 4:15). In each reference the encouragement to our faith is the fact that the Leader Himself first partakes in that which He establishes.

3. The APOSTLE and HIGH PRIEST (Hebrews 3:1). These must be viewed in their context, for they occur at a crucial point of the writer's discovery of the *unique position* Christ holds in the scheme of Revelation and Redemption. Jesus had previously been spoken of as the Messenger of God's final revelation (see ch. 1:1-4; 2:3): Also as the Author of salvation and the faithful High Priest (see chs. 2:9, 10, 14, 17, 18). These two main lines now unite in the use of this new title, "*Apostle* and *High Priest* of our confession." In the old dispensation, because of human limitations, it had required a Moses and an Aaron to act on behalf of the people, and for God. Now both offices are gloriously and supremely fulfilled in the one Person, the Son of

\* In this connection the Lord's own use of the twin appellation, "*The Resurrection and the Life*", John 11: 25, is significant. The emphasis (as most authorities agree) is on the "*I Am. . .*", indicative of His unoriginated being, the original Source of all life (the "*I AM*" of Exodus 3: 14). "Christ in the fulness of His Person does not simply work the Resurrection and give life; He IS *both*" (Westcott).

God Himself. Therefore, "consider HIM", fasten your mind's attention upon Him for He supersedes both Moses and Aaron and is greater than both.

"Apostle" means Envoy, Ambassador, and recalls the frequent use in the Old Testament of the verb *apostellein* (e.g. Exod. 3:10, 13, 14, 15; 1 Sam. 12:8) in reference to Moses. Christ, then, is in the Christian confession the Bearer of the Message, the Leader in the great deliverance out of the bondage of Satan's kingdom, the supreme Teacher and Ruler. No less is He our Great High Priest—going back "within the veil" to represent us before the presence of God, and so is "able to succour them that are tempted" in that "He Himself hath suffered being tempted". From this point two whole sections of the Epistle are devoted to the comparison of the Son with Moses (to ch. 4:1) and then with Aaron, commencing with that other yearning appeal: "Having then a great high priest who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (see the whole passage ch. 4:14-16).

4. The SHEPHERD AND BISHOP (1 Peter 2:25). The imagery of the Shepherd is so familiar that it needs little elaboration. It is surely one of the most expressive and affecting titles of the Lord Jesus Christ, appealing even to the children in their earliest years. It is only matched in vividness by the corresponding picture of the sheep—the "lost sheep" especially, straying afar, needing to be sought after and restored to the fold by the Good Shepherd: "Who His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree . . . by whose stripes we were healed".

The apostle here quotes freely from Isaiah (specially ch. 53) and other well known Old Testament Messianic prophecies referring to the Shepherd of Israel, fulfilled or to be fulfilled in Christ. And Peter could never forget that memorable discourse by His Master recorded in John 10, on the Good Shepherd "who lays down His life for the sheep." Later in this epistle he calls Him "the Chief Shepherd who shall be manifested in a coming Day" (ch. 5:4). Again in that "almost Petrine" epistle to the Hebrews we are reminded of the "Great Shepherd" (or better, "the Shepherd . . . the Great One"—ch. 13:20), the second Moses, but of "more glory than Moses" (ch. 3:3).

The other title "Bishop" (*episkopos*) is used of Christ only here, and literally means Overseer, Guardian, and bears a very

close relation to that of Shepherd. But there is a distinction without doubt. The *former* title presents more definitely the idea of *vicarious suffering* on behalf of the *lost* sheep needing to be saved. The Lord's discourse in John 10:1-18 makes this clear, and reveals the emphasis He places on this aspect. The title Bishop carries the idea a further step; that, having brought the sheep into the fold, there is the necessity of caring for them, feeding them, protecting them when assailed—in the highest spiritual sense. All this is contained in the word *episkopos*, applicable preeminently first to Christ Himself, but (and here is the practical application for us today) through such human channels as He has ordained within the Christian body. Hence later Peter exhorts: "Tend the flock of God which is among you . . . not as lording it over the charge allotted to you . . . but making yourselves *ensamples* to the flock" (ch. 5:1-4). Notice specially verse 4, which brings out clearly the supremacy of Christ as *Chief* Shepherd. Every under-shepherd whose privilege it is to oversee the welfare of souls entrusted to his care must needs one day give an account to this Shepherd and Bishop of *our souls*—note the emphasis here, for it is full of meaning.

The three remaining pairs of primary titles deserving some mention are all in the book of the Revelation, and have a setting peculiarly impressive in keeping with the character and purpose of the book itself. The Lord Himself introduces them at crucial stages of the varied theme and in each gives us a picture of His character and the principles of His divine government in the church and in the world. We can do no more than examine them very briefly, but they deserve fuller individual study.

5. The AMEN . . . the WITNESS (ch. 3:14). We begin with this though it is not the first, because strictly it is the first which refers to Christ Himself. The background reflects the same spiritual conditions as exist in the church even *today*. The Laodicean church was spiritually dead and did not know it. There is no hint of evil doctrine, nor of actual moral evil, but in the great matters of the Holy Spirit's life and power it was beggarly, blind and benumbed. Into this condition the searching scrutiny of the AMEN and the true WITNESS comes to expose, to warn, and to reveal the way of recovery. The word "Amen" derives from a Hebrew root meaning that which is sure, fixed, and true. It occurs in Isa. 65:16, for example, where "God of



truth" is literally "God of (the) Amen". Its equivalent in Greek is the frequent "Verily, verily," characteristic of John's Gospel. But here it is a substantive, with the article, "THE Amen", and occurs thus nowhere else. It expresses the righteous *character* of Him who administers the counsels of God within the Church; the One in whom every purpose of God will be fulfilled, whether it be of reward to the overcomers or of punishment to the disobedient (cf. 2 Cor. 1:20).

The second title is "The Witness—the faithful and true". That is, He judges with a profound insight into and knowledge of the secrets of the heart. He can say "I know"; and His witness is both *faithful* and *true* regarding those secrets. He spares not so that He may the more effectually heal and restore. Every rebuke comes direct from the Heart which can declare in truth "I LOVE"! Note how graciously He offers the remedy for the sin of the heart (vs. 18-22). Let us beware of turning a deaf ear or stubborn will to His witness.

6. The ALPHA and the OMEGA (Rev. 22:13). This title occurs (in R.V.) thrice only; here; in ch. 1:8, and 21:6 (there is insufficient MS evidence for it in ch. 1:11). It is just possible that the first Person of the Godhead is referred to in ch. 1:8, but other references are certainly to Christ. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are parabolically used of Christ to express the same truth already seen in the title *Author and Finisher* but in a far wider sense. All testimony on earth, in creation, in providence, in history, in grace, in redemption, and in the final glory, has its origin in Him, and culminates in Him. He is the complete, all-inclusive, exhaustive revelation of God—the fulfilment of ALL God's eternal purposes both in the earthly creation and in the New Creation. Incidentally note the article *the* before each title—*no other* can claim the dignity of *that* title!

7. The LION . . . The ROOT (Rev. 5:5). These present Christ in His Kingly character, revealing His relation to the tribe of Judah (see Gen. 49:9-10), as lineal heir of David's throne. Here we have His connection with the Jews, through whom the oracles of God were first spoken to the world; out of whom Christ came to be the Saviour of the world, and the Ruler of all the nations of earth. Hence the titles have to do with the

Kingdom rights and glories of the Lord. But with this we must connect the complementary dual titles in chap. 22:16, "the ROOT and the OFFSPRING of David", where we also get the relation to Israel, but in addition the truth that, as *Root* of David He is *Divine*, as *Offshoot* He was a *man* of David's race (see Isaiah 11:1-5, 10. R.V.). "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power" (Matt. 22:45; Rom. 1:3, 4).

It is hardly possible to close without reference being made to the last title of all; "*the Bright, the Morning STAR*"—for the "I AM" connects all three (Rev. 22:16). This is His special title for His Church, His Bride. For her He will come before ever He assumes His kingly administration on earth, even before, as the "Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings", He arises to Israel in noon-day splendour (Mal. 4:2).

"He which testifieth these things saith, Yea: I COME QUICKLY. Amen: come Lord Jesus"! (Rev. 22:20.).

## CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

### I. WHY FOUR GOSPELS

BY A. NAISMITH, M.A.

The Scriptures contain four records of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. Each and all four provide a basis for our faith, present Jesus of Nazareth as a Divine Saviour and Teacher and proclaim that in Him alone is the way of life. They tell the same story in different ways. But why four Gospels? Would not one fuller biography have sufficed? Irenaeus, one of the early Church elders who lived in the second century A.D., thus answers our objection:—"Since there are four regions of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, and since the Church is spread over all the world and the Gospel is the pillar and ground of the Church, it is fitting that the Church should have four pillars, breathing out immortality and imparting life to men". F. W. Grant in his *Numerical Bible* shows that the number 4 speaks of earthly completeness and universality, citing as proof the four beasts of Dan. 7, which "sum up the Gentile Empires, with their sovereignty over all the earth". The four Gospels, therefore, present to all the world Him Who is the Saviour of the world.