



THE FATHER AND THE SON

Reading: Isaiah 45

The gift of salvation

Salvation is the gift of God. It comes only through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ:

"... there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The Bible tells us about the special relationship between God and His Son. We need to learn about this properly in order to appreciate Jesus' work of salvation.

God is One

The Bible tells us that the God of heaven is the only living and true God. We read in Deuteronomy 6:4:

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, **the LORD is one**".*

God says of Himself:

"Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no saviour" (Isaiah 43:10,11)

"I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God" (Isaiah 45:5).

The apostle Paul says:

*"To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, **the only God**, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17).*

The majesty and power of God are beyond anything we can imagine. But God is also kind and merciful. He has given the Lord Jesus Christ to take away the sins of those who truly love Him and His Son.

The Son of God

The Bible is clear that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God:

"... so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" (1 Peter 1:3).

God knows all things, even the future, and His plans are certain (Isaiah 46:8-11). God knew that Adam and Eve would sin, and so from the very beginning God planned to send His Son. This is why there are many prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament. So Jesus was in God's mind and purpose from the very beginning. The promises to Abraham and David show that Jesus was in God's plan long before his birth.

Jesus did not pre-exist – his life started when he was born

When birth takes place, a new life starts. The birth of Jesus was just the same. Some people believe that Jesus existed in heaven before he was born of Mary – but this is not what the Bible says. The Bible teaches that Jesus was part of God's plan from the very beginning, but the life of Jesus only started when he was born. Jesus did not live before his birth.

1 PETER 1:20	MEANING
<i>He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times ...</i>	Jesus was in God's mind and purpose from creation but he only appeared much later.

God told the prophet Jeremiah:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5).





Just as Jeremiah was in God’s plan before he existed, so was the Lord Jesus. From the foundation of the world God also knew about all true believers. They were in the mind of God although none of them was actually living. This is what the apostle Paul says about true believers:

“... (God) **chose us in him** (Jesus) **before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him**” (Ephesians 1:4).

So when the Bible uses similar language to describe the Lord Jesus, it does not mean that he was personally alive before his birth. It is explaining to us that Christ was in the mind of God as someone that He would bring into being at the right time:

“**But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman**” (Galatians 4:4).

It was not until Mary’s baby was born that Jesus became a living being. See also 2 Timothy 1:9,10.

Other reasons for believing that Jesus did not exist before he was born:

- we do not read of anything Jesus said or did before his birth (Hebrews 1:2)
- his name, Jesus, was only given at his birth (Isaiah 49:1)
- there is nothing in the Old Testament to suggest that the Son of God was already living in heaven and would later appear on earth
- the records of his birth never mention a previous existence.

Jesus had human nature before his death

Because Jesus was conceived by God’s power, the Holy Spirit, he is the Son of God:

“*And the angel answered her (Mary), ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; **therefore** the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God’*” (Luke 1:35).

Because Jesus had a human mother, Mary, he had a nature just like ours. The Bible is clear that Jesus was born with human nature. Jesus described himself as the Son of Man. The apostle Peter said in Acts 2:22,

“*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a **man** attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst.*”

Hebrews 2:17 says that Jesus “*had to be made like his brothers in every respect*”. The same chapter also tells us that since “*the children (believers) share in flesh and blood (human nature), he (Jesus) himself likewise partook of the same things*” (verse 14).

The verses above show that it was necessary for Jesus to have human nature. The verses below explain why.

VERSES	NOTES
<i>Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him ...</i> (Hebrews 5:8,9).	If Jesus had been born with a nature like God’s, he would not have needed to learn obedience. It was because Jesus had human nature that he could be tempted to sin. Jesus could only defeat sin by experiencing and overcoming temptation.
<i>For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin</i> (Hebrews 4:15).	During his life on earth Jesus was tempted in every way like us, yet he never sinned. It is because Jesus was tempted to sin as we are that he understands our problems.
<i>But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone</i> (Hebrews 2:9).	Angels are immortal beings, far greater than humans. But because Jesus had human nature, he was lower than the angels. It was only because Jesus had human nature that he could die.





It is impossible for men and women to see God, so Jesus showed us what He is like. Quoting the prophet Isaiah, Matthew 1:23 says of Jesus:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).”

Because of his character and godly way of life, Jesus showed us perfectly what God is like – this is why he was described as *“God with us”*. Jesus was much more than an ordinary man:

“For in him (Jesus) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (Colossians 1:19).

Jesus resisted every temptation because of his love for his Father. His special relationship with his Father helped him to overcome sin. He was also helped by a wonderful understanding of the Old Testament scriptures. But we know that it was incredibly hard for Jesus to overcome sin. He was determined in every aspect of his life to do his Father’s will and not his own. It is only because Jesus conquered sin and death that we have the hope of immortal life.

Jesus had human nature – because he could only defeat sin by experiencing and overcoming temptation, and could only die on the cross if he was mortal.

Jesus now has a nature like God

After his resurrection the Lord Jesus was given a glorious nature like his Father (divine nature). This means that he cannot sin or die. God has exalted him above the angels and he now sits at God’s right hand in heaven. Apart from God Himself, there is no greater being in the whole universe. In Acts 2:36 Peter says to the Jews,

“God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

God has given Christ Jesus authority over everything. After his resurrection Jesus said,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18).

JESUS CHRIST BEFORE HIS DEATH	JESUS CHRIST NOW
He was tempted and was able to sin.	He cannot sin or be tempted.
He was mortal – so he could feel pain, be ill and die.	He is immortal – he cannot die and no longer suffers physically.
He was lower than the angels.	He is greater than the angels.

The following passage provides a summary:

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-11	NOTES
<i>... though he (Jesus) was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.</i>	Jesus was in the form of God because God was his Father and he spoke God’s words and did His works. He accepted that God was greater than himself. He was born a man and made himself the servant of all.
<i>And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.</i>	Jesus accepted the shame and pain of crucifixion. He obeyed his Father in all things, finally in dying on the cross.
<i>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</i>	Because of his obedience, God has exalted the Lord Jesus. God wants all creation to honour and worship His Son. This will give glory to God.

A wrong idea

Many people ignore Bible teaching about God and believe what they call the Trinity. These people believe that God has always consisted of three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, all equal with each other. The Trinity claims that





Jesus is 'God the Son' and is associated with the wrong belief that Jesus pre-existed. (We will learn about the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit, in Lesson 20.)

The word 'Trinity' and the phrases 'God the Son' and 'God the Holy Ghost' do not occur in the Bible. We have already seen the plain Bible teaching that God is One, and that the Lord Jesus is His Son. In the same way that a good son is obedient to his father, so the Lord Jesus is subject to God. Jesus never claimed to be equal with God, but depended on his Father for all things. He said,

"Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing" (John 5:19).

See also John 3:35; 5:30; 7:16; 8:28; 12:49,50 and 14:24,28.

In John 10:30 Jesus said, *"I and the Father are one"*. Jesus cannot mean that he and His Father are equal because the verse before says, *"My Father ... is greater than all"* (John 10:29). Jesus meant that he and his Father were united in mind and purpose, and he prayed that in the same way his disciples would be one:

"... that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21).

In these verses from the Gospel of John, Jesus explains that God was greater than he. 1 Corinthians 11:3, written after the Lord Jesus had ascended to heaven, shows that God continues to be greater. Even at the end of the Millennium, God will be greater:

*"When all things are subjected to him, then the **Son himself will also be subjected** to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all"* (1 Corinthians 15:28).

The false idea of the Trinity is not taught in the Bible. It denies Jesus' work of salvation. If Jesus was 'God the Son', as the Trinity claims, he would have been born with a nature like God and so could not have been tempted to sin, and could not have died on the cross.

The Lord Jesus – the mediator

The Lord Jesus bridges the gap between God and mankind. He is therefore a mediator (a go-between):

*"For there is **one God**, and there is **one mediator** between God and men, the **man Christ Jesus**"* (1 Timothy 2:5).

Christians are truly thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ gave himself to save others.

Summary

1. There is only one God.
2. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, born of Mary. He is not 'God the Son'.
3. Before his death, Jesus had human nature like us. But because God was his Father, he was much more than an ordinary man.
4. After his resurrection the Lord Jesus was given a nature like God's and exalted above the angels. He now sits at God's right hand in heaven. Apart from God Himself, there is no greater being in the whole universe.

A verse to learn: 1 Timothy 2:5

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Verses to read: Deuteronomy 6:1-15; Matthew 1:18-25; 2 Timothy 1:9,10; Hebrews 2

