

THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

1. Introduction

Who is this man Jesus? Enough, or perhaps too many books have been written on this subject, especially in seeking to answer this question. A simple reading of Scripture should make it plain, and the conclusion of the apostle John is probably the best statement. Speaking of his own written gospel he says, 'Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in his name'. (John 20:30–31).

The person and work of Christ is called 'Christology', and many Christology's have been written. This study by no means constitutes a full Christology, but is at least a place to begin for those who wish to enlarge their knowledge. Certainly no subject could be more valuable, even if none could be more controversial. Jesus is undoubtedly the man of all history. For this reason our investigations can be most elevating and practical. If he is the one he claims himself to be, then he, of all men, is the key to history, and to the meaning of life and death.¹

2. Method Of Study

In dealing with our theme, most systematic theologians have a fairly regular methodology. It is this:– They set about to coordinate the materials available, from the Scriptures, concerning the nature of (a) His Person and (b) His work. They do this in the following order:

- (i) Speak of his pre–creational existence, that is of his relationship with the Father and the Spirit, reinforcing this mode of existence by the fact that he was the mediator of creation, and in fact always upheld and upholds creation by 'his powerful word'.
- (ii) Deal with his presence and work within the framework of the Old Testament. Here he is the eternal Son, the Word, or the Wisdom of God.

¹ A list of books covering Christology, here given, is by no means exhaustive. One of the simplest, yet quite informative is Leon Morris's 'The Lord from Heaven'. Another simple one is 'The Prince of Life' by Marcus Loane. 'The Person of Jesus Christ' by H. R. Mackintosh is comprehensive. Two books by P. T. Forsyth 'The Work of Christ' and 'The Person and Place of Christ' deal with the significance of his person and work. 'The Person and Work of Christ' by B. B Warfield is also quite comprehensive.

- (iii) Cover his incarnation, life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension from the Gospels and Acts, this proceeding to
- (iv) His further operations in history which will climax at the end of this age. These actions are deduced from O.T. and N.T. prophetic and apocalyptic passages. These scriptures cover his present activities, his future triumph, and the establishing of the new age.
- (v) A full Christological picture can then be formed, and so his various ministries and offices can be defined, e.g. that of Messiah, Son, Lord, Prophet, Priest, and so on. This whole methodology is an excellent one and probably the best for systematising the materials available.

Our methodology will be somewhat different. We will go directly to the New Testament seeking to see how he is presented or ‘comes through’ to us. We will see then:

- (i) The Christ of the Gospels as he is presented in his person and work.
- (ii) The rationalisation of the Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelation, especially as they relate to the O.T. in seeing the fulness of his person and work.
- (iii) Distinctive reference to his various offices and ministries as they emerge in this rationalisation.

This methodology has weaknesses, but at least we are immediately confronted by Christ as he appeared visibly in history, and can then examine the rationalisations which were given by the apostles. It is more homely and personal to deal with acts, than with images and concepts, and offices of his person, as such.

3. The Person and Work of Christ

(i) The Christ of the Gospels

(a) Immediate preparation for his coming

The Gospels open abruptly, or, perhaps, dramatically. Firstly, there is the man John the Baptist, or rather his priest–father Zechariah. There are also angelic visitants. Zechariah, the father of John is told that John, his son, is to be the precursor to the coming of Messiah, and John grows up with this understanding. Whilst he was still in the womb of his mother an angel appeared to Mary, telling her of the unusual event to take place, the incarnation of him who is to be called ‘the Son of God’. At the birth of John, a supernatural event took place when he was named John. At the birth of Jesus angelic throngs visited the shepherds, and the visiting Magi somewhat later made their way to Jesus. Warnings came to them, and to Joseph the foster father of Jesus, and without doubt all these events confirmed the unusual nature of the birth of him who is called the King of Israel.

Grown to manhood, and being about the age of thirty years the age of maturity to begin teaching – Jesus set out to begin his ministry. Immediately prior to this, John the Baptist, having great innate authority and attracting large crowds, announced that he was the messenger of Isaiah 40:1–5, a significant Messianic passage which declared the liberation of Israel from judgement. Also an angel of the Lord had applied the messianic passage

to John, that of Malachi ch. 4, suggesting that John would go before the messenger of Malachi 3:1f., himself being in the spirit and power of Elijah, and later Jesus confirmed that John was surely this very one. (Cf. Mal. 4: 5–6, Luke 1:17–18, Matt. 11:14). John himself saw his ministry as only being preparatory to that of Jesus the Messiah, and of a lesser order. He saw Jesus as the one who would take away the sins of the world, be Messiah of the Kingdom, and bring the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the people of God. (Cf. Luke 3:15–17, John 1:19–34).

It should be noted that John's authority as a prophet, although questioned, was never overtly opposed by the leaders of Israel, much as they wished to do so. Hence, when John pointed to Jesus as the one who was coming, then Jesus did not appear as one who was previously unannounced. In fact it would be difficult to assess the great value of John's preparation for that coming. Also it would be natural for those who accepted John's announcement to turn automatically to Jesus. However, not all did this, although of course many did.

John's introduction led naturally to the first event of Jesus' ministry – the baptism by John in Jordan.

(b) The Baptism of Jesus

This baptism is later interpreted by Peter as the anointing of Jesus (Acts 10:38) and Jesus likewise interprets it as such (Luke 4:17–21). Acts 10:38 points out that it was as a result of the anointing ('with the Holy Spirit and power') that 'Jesus went about doing good, and healing all those who were oppressed of the devil'. The statement 'Thou (or, this) art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased', is a conflation of Psalm 2:7 (actually quoted as such in old MSS of Luke's Gospel) and Isaiah 42:1. Psalm Two speaks of the Son, and Isaiah 42 of the Servant of Yahweh. The baptism is God's attestation of Jesus as Son and Servant, in accordance with the Scriptures. He is officially launched as Messiah–Son. All of this, as John had said, related to the Kingdom, the ushering in of the eschaton (last age) of God.

(e) The Temptation

Seen classically, it is the same principal onslaught upon the Last Adam as on the first Adam. The first Adam hears the word of evil and accedes, the Last Adam denies the tempter by the simple use of the word of God – 'It is written', i.e. 'God has spoken'. The testing is 'If you be the Son of God...' This is not defended, since in the baptism the Father has affirmed this. Hence Satan cannot entice Jesus to receive a kingdom by means other than that innately of the Kingdom of God, i.e. doing the will of the Father. It also seals the fact that the Kingdom is won by the way of the Cross (cf. Matt. 16:21–23).

(d) The Ministry

The ministry of the Son–Servant–Messiah, issuing from the anointing, is dependent upon the Spirit of God. Jesus is led by the Spirit (Luke 4:1) to the temptation, and away from it to his public ministry (Luke 4:14). In Matt. 12:28 he affirms that he ministers only by the Spirit, i.e. it is as the anointed one, the Messiah, the King that he does what he does. Nathaniel says, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God, the King of Israel'. Peter equates Son of God and Messiah (Matt. 16:16f.) and certainly wherever Messiah goes there the Kingdom is in action. Hence Jesus says, 'If I, by the Spirit of God cast out demons. then is the Kingdom of God come upon you'. (Matt.12:28).

The ministry itself needs to be noted in all respects. It is an actional ministry, e.g. Jesus does something. When he says the word, something happens. He rebukes a demon and it is exorcised. He rebukes a fever and it departs. He rebukes the elements which are in a fury, and they quieten (cf. Luke 4:35-39, 6:19, 8:24). He speaks the word of forgiveness and persons find forgiveness. (Matt. 9:1-8, cf. Luke 7:47). Likewise his teaching is 'with authority', i.e. it is not mere static information.

It is necessary also to see that he sets about telling all Israel the Gospel of the Kingdom. He must announce it in all villages and towns in Judea, Galilee, Perea, and even Samaria. Likewise his ministry builds towards (a) The Climax of the Transfiguration, and (b) The Climax of the Cross and Resurrection. It is not that he 'fills in' for three years, as might any preacher under an assignment, but that he comes to tell the good news until all men are polarised, either for him or against him. Then inevitably (as, also, indispensably) the hour which is his time, would come. It did.

(e) The Transfiguration

Three times (in the one Gospel) Jesus warns of the Cross. In Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:32 he says he must be killed. The disciples do not listen. Two of these warnings come before the remarkable event of the Transfiguration. One follows it immediately. At this event Moses and Elijah appear with him in glory. The three, then, are in glory. We may speculate as to what was his glory, i.e. whether that of him as Son of man, or Son of God. It does not much matter, seeing Moses and Elijah show similar glory. However they talk with him of his exodus which he is to accomplish at Jerusalem. This talk of the Cross is not really heard by his three companions Peter, James and John. The Father speaks out of the shekinah, the cloud of glory of his presence, and says, 'This is my son in whom I am well pleased'² He adds, 'Hear him' and this means that the exodus which is to be accomplished through the Cross and Resurrection must be heard, and understood, for it is significant.

The transfiguration can be summed up, in its significance, as follows:

'He was transfigured that he might be disfigured, that we who are disfigured might be transfigured'.

In any case, it is from the point of the transfiguration that he sets his face towards Jerusalem. After this, his ministry heads up to the end events.

(f) The Entry Into Jerusalem

Jesus caught up a number of elements in his entry into Jerusalem. In Luke 13:31-35 Jesus addresses Jerusalem, and indicates that he must go up to that city for 'it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem'. He goes, then, as a prophet, or, better still, the prophet. He also goes as the King. The following scriptures of John 12:12-19, Matt. 21:4-11, Mark 11:7-10, Luke 19:35-38 give us a rounded picture of the nature of the entry. It relates to:

- (a) Zechariah 9:9 where the Messianic king comes to Zion, for 'triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding

² See LFS No.11 for the whole matter of Psalm Two and the Son of God. It should be understood thoroughly in order to have a full Christology.

on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass'. (Cf. Matt. 21:4–5 where Matthew quotes this statement).

(b) Psalm 2:6, 'I have set my king upon the holy hill of Zion'.

(c) The son of David, cf. Matt. 21:9, 'Hosanna to the Son of David'

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"

(d) The Kingdom. Cf. Mark 11:10, 'Blessed is the Kingdom of our father David that is coming'

The significance of the entry is underlined by his immediate cleansing of the temple, which in itself relates to Isaiah 56:7, Jesus speaking of 'My Father', and so indicating his unique relationship with God. This blends with the servant concept of Malachi 3:1–4 where the messenger of the covenant cleanses the temple to which he comes, suddenly.

(g) The Last Supper

As Jesus approaches his exodus which he is about to accomplish, he shares with his disciples in his last Passover. Whilst debate ensues as to whether this was the actual passover, or a fore-figuring of the day of the passover, on which he became the passover lamb is of little consequence. He went beyond the passover feast to inaugurate the new passover feast. It was his body and blood which was to be the means of salvation, of the new exodus, and it prefigured the ultimate Kingdom, in which his people would share, partaking of the Messianic banquet. This is seen from Luke 22:28–30. At the same time it is the feast of the New Covenant which is to be sealed in his blood. It is made clear to the disciples that he is about to die. They do not seem to hear his intimations of resurrection and entrance into glory.

(h) The Crucifixion

The followers of Jesus, including the women, must have come to Jerusalem with great expectancy. In fact they anticipated the climax to his ministry, but not the climax of the Cross. The remarkable events of his ministry which included extraordinary miracles, signs, wonders, teaching, must have raised their expectancy to the highest point of Messianic fulfilment. In fact in all this they were disappointed. The last night was a fearful puzzle to them. Undoubtedly Jesus at last got his message through, that he was going to the Father. Even then there was a limit to their understanding, hence Peter's use of the sword in the Garden. Jesus had told them they would all be offended, because of him, that night, and he quoted Zechariah 13:7 to them, of the shepherd being smitten by God (cf. Isaiah 53: 5, 10).

He had given them something of the meaning of the demeaning Cross. Firstly he had warned all would-be disciples to take up the cross daily, i.e. be prepared for a cross at the end of the road, and not a crown' He had told them the cross was with a view to the resurrection (Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:32), but they had not heard, and how could they understand this phenomenon, resurrection? Finally he had told them the death was for the sin of the world. In the same context of the last hours before arrest, he had told them of the Holy Spirit who would take his place, and of the Father to Whom he was going and from Whom he would send the Spirit. The crucifixion then was in the context of very rich teaching. Finally, when the rabble from the temple came to apprehend him he made the astonishing, but revealing statement, 'Now is your hour and the authority of darkness'.

His trial was not strictly according to prevailing Jewish law. His pronouncement by Pilate of his innocence made no difference. They had to kill this King–Prophet, and would brook no interference. So he died. He died the death of a blasphemer, a common criminal, a malefactor. Many scriptures from the O.T. were applied to this death by the Gospel writers, as they recorded the event. One of them was, ‘He was numbered with the transgressors’ (Isaiah 53:12, cf. Luke 22:37). This one Jesus himself applied, and that makes it valuable. His use of Psalm 22:1, and of Psalm 69:21 (by inference, cf. John 19:28) reinforces the Messianic nature of the Cross. The early church used other Scriptures to verify the prophetic nature of the crucifixion, and on one occasion referred it to Psalm 2 (cf. Acts 4:25–28). He actually surrendered up his life to the Father, rather than have it taken from him (cf. John 10:17–18 and Luke 23:46).

(i) The Resurrection

This seemed to be totally unexpected by the disciples. Even the faithful women did not go to the grave with this expectancy. The Gospel accounts do not fit one another smoothly, although some scholars have attempted reconciliation of the events. However, the moment he was seen to be risen, the significance of the event of resurrection was clearly apparent. (a) He had defeated death. (b) He had proved he was Son of God. (c) He had defeated sin, by defeating death. This had opened up a new road to mankind, that is, they too, in this Messiah, could have victory over sin and death. This came to be the rationale of the apostles. (d) Resurrection was with a view to ascension to the right hand of God, thus fulfilling the coronation prophecies. Such ascension would establish the Lordship of the man Jesus over the universe. He had, in any case, already defeated the evil powers, and they would be under his power.

The resurrection introduced a new era into man's history. The fear of death could now be eliminated in believing man. In fact, without resurrection, there is no effective Christology. Hence Psalm 2 is also applied to his resurrection, in vindication of both his Sonship and Kingship. Cf. Acts 13:29–33, Rom. 1:3–4.

(j) The Ascension

Jesus announced his ascension which was imminent, in these terms, ‘I am ascending to my Father, and your Father, to my God and your God’. In asserting the loftiness of God he nevertheless asserts His Fatherhood in intimate terms. The manner of his ascending is that he is taken in the shekinah clouds of glory, the same as those in which he will reappear. This glory receives him out of their sight, as it will one day disclose him to men's sight. In John 16:7–11 he says that the world will be convinced of righteousness because he goes to the Father, i.e. the Father accepts him as righteous, and his work as that of righteousness. The Epistles give great emphasis to his ascension in terms of his present reigning. The reigning is with a view to a number of things.

- (a) It is from his place of victory that he sends the Holy Spirit, ‘Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured forth this which you see and hear (i.e. Pentecost and its attendant manifestations)’.
- (b) The fulfilment of his plan, for as head of the church he directs the operations which will be completed at the end–time (I Cor. 15:24–28, Matt. 28:20, Mark 16:16f.).

Within the scope of the Ascension we can include the present work of Christ (just nominated) and include his parousia, i.e. his appearing at the end of time to close off the events of time by judgement, the glorification of his people and his universe, and the submission of all things to God the Father. This, of course, is a significant part of a full Christology, but more belongs to what he will do than what he has done. However, by what he has done in his incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension he has secured the end climax. Hence from this expected event we can fill out our Christology.

(ii) The Rationalisation of the Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelation

In Acts 2:42 we are told that the church, on the day of Pentecost began to devote itself to the apostles' doctrine. This means that, in accordance with Jesus' promise of John 16:12–15 that the Spirit would lead them into all the truth, the new people of God had their fully crystallised teaching. Jude 3 speaks of the 'faith which was once for all delivered to the saints'. Without doubt the early church knew it had the truth, and that it was dependent upon the apostles for this truth. Hence Paul's emphasis upon his apostolic authority for *his truth was as good as his authority*.

The Gospels are all written from a post–Pentecost point of view. Surprisingly enough, they scarcely ever read back into the Gospels themselves, the things of the early church and its experience, yet one thing is certain. They view Jesus in all his offices, for they portray them, not in order only to convince the readers, but because the writers of the Gospels themselves have first been convinced. Hence Mark opens with 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God'. John, as we have seen, writes his gospel to convince his readers that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. John of course, is already convinced. How then, did these Gospelwriters come to their convictions? The answer lies in the fact of apostolicity.

The apostles, from whom came 'the apostles' doctrine', were those specially given to crystallise the events of the ministry of Jesus in the light of the Old Testament, as also to interpret the Old Testament, in the light of the events of Jesus Christ. Whilst it is true from our vantage point that the O.T. comes alive, in meaning, in the light of the N.T., yet it is also true that nothing in the N.T. is intelligible except it is implicit in the O.T., or has its roots in the O.T. For example, the N.T. writers all saw prophecy as a whole entity, and supposed the events of the N.T. to be in conformity with it.

This being the case, we can see that the entire N.T. draws its reality from the O.T. We would, then, expect to find the roots of a true Christology in the O.T., and this is in fact what we find. Whilst much relating to Christ is germinal in the O.T., yet it authenticates its corresponding elements found in the N.T. For purposes of understanding, we divide this portion of our study under two headings:

- (a) *Teachings in the O.T. Concerning the Coming One.*
- (b) *Teachings in the N.T. Concerning the One who Has Come.*

(a) Teachings in the O.T. Concerning the Coming One

- (i) **The proto–evangel.** Gen. 3:15. The principle of enmity, of the One coming to 'bruise' (cf. Matt. 1:18). This spoke of enmity and conflict with victory, but no title or office is predicted.

- (ii) **The ‘Seed’ Concept.** Already mentioned in Gen. 3:15, it is repeated in the covenantal promise to Abraham – Gen. 12:7 etc. – and the theme is repeated in the Immanuel promise of Isaiah 7:14 cf. Matt. 1:22, 23. From the general covenant promise to Abraham there is a narrowing down to Isaac, and then Israel. From Israel himself comes the strange prophecy of ‘Shiloh’ (Gen. 49:10) thus narrowing the seed to Judah, and the Davidic seed is promised (II Sam. 7: 12–13). The Judaic promise is repeated in Micah 5:2.
- (iii) **The Messiah Concept.** The growth of the idea of Messiah over the inter-testamental period infuses this concept with a content not always found explicitly in the O.T. The phrase is taken largely from Psalm 2:2. Verse 6 of the Psalm shows the ‘anointed’ is the ‘king’. The anointing of kings we see in I Sam. 16:13, II Sam. 2:4, I Kings 1:39. The Servant concept, found especially in Isaiah, is also linked with anointing in Isa. 61:1. In the Old Testament God Himself is Lord or King of all the earth. This Messiah however, is set upon Zion (Psalm 2:6) as a King.
- (iv) **The King Concept.** This cannot really be taken apart from Messiah. The word Messiah is used for Cyrus the king in Isa. 45:1, for David, (Psa. 89:20) and so is basically the king concept as we have seen above. The promises of II Sam. 7:12–14, Psa. 132:11 make it clear that the king will be the son of David, and his Kingdom eternal. Linked with Psalm 2 and 110, the king is a subduer of enemies. See also Isaiah chs. 9 and 11, Jer. 33, Zech. 9 and 12. It has been suggested that the constantly battered nation of God’s people saw the figure of King–Messiah as future, dynamic and eschatological.
- (v) **The Concept of Lord.** Again it is the New Testament which lights up this term ‘Lord’. Cf. Rom. 10:9, Acts 2:36, etc. Jesus raised the question of Psalm 110 with the contemporary leaders of the Jews. It shows the high authority of the Lord (my Lord). It does not, in fact differ from that of king. The messianic prophecy of Isa. 9:6–7 is proven messianic, because its full import could not be accorded to other than a divine figure. The fact that Psalm 110 is quoted 24 times significantly in the N.T., highlights its significance in the O.T.
- (vi) **The Concept of Prophet.** Deut. 18 speaks of the prophet who is to come. He is a person to be reckoned with, since to disobey him is deadly. As Moses was a prophet who led his people, so the new prophet would be greater (a greater exodus?). Mal. 4:5 has a reference to an Elijah coming before the great and terrible day of the Lord. Acts 3:21–26 make use of the Deuteronomic promise. (Note: The Dead Sea scrolls which have an amount of anticipation of the Messiah, use the passage in Deuteronomy – ‘the prophet’ with reference to Messiah).
- (vii) **Son of David Concept.** This phrase, used a number of times in a messianic sense in the N.T., is a high concept in the O.T. See II Sam. 7:12–14, Psa. 132:11, cf. I Kings 8:25, II Chron. 6:16. However, it is fair to say that the promises seem primarily to deal with the perpetuity of the Davidic government.
- (viii) **The Servant Concept.** The figure of the Suffering Servant in the latter half of Isaiah is undoubted. He is a coming one. His person is rather mysterious, but the ministry and the claims of this are not in doubt. The Servant Songs of Isaiah 42:1–4,

49:1–6, 50:4–9, 52:13 – 53:12, speak of one who will be a powerful instrument in the hand of the Lord. He is the one who holds the mystery of suffering and its solution in his actions. His is a redeeming ministry. In one sense this coming one seems different to the more splendid messianic figure of Psalm 2 and 110. Indeed it is again that the N.T. gives the key to understanding in such passages as Mark 10:45, Phil. 2:6–7.

- (ix) **General O. T. Considerations.** Whilst there are various pictures of ‘One to come’ in the O.T. there are also other considerations. For example, there are the indications of plurality in the Godhead. Gen. 1:26, 3:22, 11:7, Isa. 6:8, etc. (See Liddon ‘The Divinity of our Lord’, p.49f.). The theophanies which from time to time occur in the O.T., do not indicate a detachment of a person from the Godhead – these are usually referred to as ‘the Angel of the Lord’ – yet the identification of these theophanies with God and a Person indicate that the One God is not a bare monolithic Being. The use in the Wisdom literature, and in particular the personification of wisdom – cf. Job 28:12, 23:27, Prov. 8:22–31. This personification would have no great point, either, without the Prologue to John’s Gospel where the concept appears to be met in developed form. Again we have the strange figure of Daniel 3: 25 ‘like the Son of God’. In Dan. 7:13–14 we have the one ‘like the son of man’ who comes near to the ancient of days and receives great honour and an eternal kingdom. In Zech. 13:7 we have one who is God’s ‘fellow’, i.e. ‘equal’ or ‘Peer’. All of these references point to the emergence of a Person whose stature is beyond that of a man as such, although his humanity must not be in doubt.

Note: New Testament Christology is deeply rooted in that of the Old. The adage ‘The New is in the Old concealed. The Old is in the New revealed’, is quite apposite. Whilst objectively speaking, a clear Christology cannot be abstracted from O.T. ‘proof texts’ and whilst a clear Christology is hidden under the veils of O.T. types and especially the covenant promises and theology, yet it is impossible to deny there is a clear Christology. Whilst anticipating our N.T. Study we may yet say ‘Christ in all the Scriptures’.

(b) Teachings in the N. T. Concerning the One Who Has Come.

Logically speaking, the elements we have seen above should flower out in the N.T. and this is, of course what they do. When looking at them we should avoid the error of making Christ into a mosaic of the various elements and offices. He is the one, total person. He is at once all the elements ascribed to him, and each is indispensable for the fulness of his person, as for the accomplishment of his work.

1. SON OF MAN

Jesus uses this term of himself a number of times. The term in its minimal use may simply mean ‘a human’, as in Psalm 8:5. Yet curiously enough this use takes on a higher note in Hebrews 2:5ff, where this ‘son of man’ is put over ‘the age to come’. In Daniel 7:13 the title is accorded to one to whom is given headship over all nations, a kingdom which shall know no end, so that its use is very high. In the N.T. he has authority over the Sabbath, and can forgive sins (Mark 2:10, 2:28), two prerogatives which really belong to God Himself. If he were the ‘son of man’ of Daniel 7:13 then this would not be at all strange.

Another set of references refers to the Son of man as having great authority. Mark 13:26 says, 'And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory'. Whilst Jesus teaches this to his disciples, he later repeats it to the high priest at the time of judgement, a statement intended to warn the high priest as to whom he really is. Again in Matt. 16:28 he says, '...shall not taste death until they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom'. This refers to Daniel 7:13 most clearly and points to a time when his coronation, so to speak, will have been affirmed, and he takes his power over all the earth.

A third set of references refers the Son of man to suffering. It is probably best to see these stemming out of Mark 10:45, 'The Son of man has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many'. This speaks of humility, and Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:32 speak of the Son of man going to Jerusalem, and being betrayed at the hands of wicked men, slain and rising again. Mark 14:21 says, 'Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed' pointing both to the enormity of the act, and the office of the Son of man. Luke 9:58 says, 'The Son of man has nowhere to lay his head'. Nevertheless the servant role of this one is shown in Luke 19:10 where Jesus says, 'The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost'.

John's Gospel (as against the synoptic³ gospels) uses the Son of man in a somewhat different way, as we see from the references 1:51, 3:13–14, 5:27, 6:27, 53, 8:28, and 12:34. They certainly link in with Daniel 7:13ff. The angels ascend or descend upon the Son of man, i.e. their rise and fall is contingent upon him. He is to suffer for man. As such he is the bread of life, and as such gives himself to be lifted up, for at such a time he will be truly known.

In the Acts, Stephen sees the Son of man at the right hand of God, in heaven (7:56). After this, the term is not used in the N.T., although Paul speaks of the 'man from heaven', or 'the last Adam', and these may well relate. Also the 'Redeemer servant' of Mark 10:45 is seen in Phil. 2:5–11, and Romans 5:12ff. They also relate to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 42 to 52.

We may conclude then that the Son of man in the N.T. accords with the picture of Daniel 7:13, and that that picture is filled out, showing that the dominion given to this person is achieved through his humility in incarnation and ministry, and through the work of the Cross. Hence not only explicit references relate to the Son of man, but also all those which speak of the Kingdom, and of his final appearing.

2. MESSIAH

The term Messiah (Hebrew) or Christ (Greek) simply means 'anointed one'. In Psalm Two it is the 'anointed one' who is both king and son, but obviously he has been anointed to be king. In Hannah's prayer there is a prophetic word, 'The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces: against them will he thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king, and exalt the power of his anointed'. (I Sam. 2:10).

³ The synoptic gospels are Matthew, Mark and Luke. Put together and synthesised they form a full account of the event of Christ, and they certainly stem from a common basis. They are obviously different from John's Gospel which is set out on a different principle of structure and purpose.

In the O.T., prophets, priests and kings were anointed (cf. I Sam. 9:16, 24:6, Exodus 28:41, I Kings 19:16, Isaiah 45:1, 61:1). The idea of the king as God's chosen one may be traced in the Messianic David kingdom theme in II Sam. 7:14, Psalms 89:3f., Psa. 45, Jer. 30:8f., as also, most clearly in Psalms 2 and 72. Ezekiel 37:21ff., speaks of the future Davidic kingdom, whilst of course Zechariah 9:9 speaks of the triumphant king-to-come, which is interpreted in the Gospels as being fulfilled by Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

In the New Testament he is acclaimed as Messiah. Perhaps because of the explosive political position, and the history of pretender-messiahs, Jesus uses the term sparingly. See Mark 8:29, 9:41, and 14:61 where he uses it and allows others to do so. We should note that 'Messiah' and 'Son of God' are virtually synonymous in Matt. 16:16 and 26:63. Notice too, that Pilate understands the Messiah to be the king of the Jews (Matt. 27:11). This would be natural enough since on his entry to Jerusalem Jesus is called, 'the King who comes in the name of the Lord', and his is 'the Kingdom of our father David'. (See Luke 19:38, Mark 11:10). It can be seen that 'Son of David', 'King of the Jews', 'Messiah' and 'Son of God' are virtually, if not wholly, synonymous terms. In Luke 4:34 and 4:41 he is called 'the Holy one of God', and 'the Son of God', and this he does not deny. Yet it must be seen that it is as Messiah he casts out demons (Matt. 12:28 and Acts 10: 38, cf. Luke 4:17f with Isaiah 61:1). We mean that the Kingdom always relates to his Messianic office. At the time of the Cross, the people and leaders are in no doubt that he claimed to be Messiah and Son of God, and he is both judged and taunted accordingly. See Luke 22:67, 23:2, 35, 39.

John's Gospel has clear enough statements concerning Messiah. John the Baptist denies that he is Messiah, but points to the one who is. In John 4:25 Jesus tells the woman of Samaria that he is Messiah. In 11:27 Martha says he is the Christ, the Son of God. In John 1:41, 45, 49 and 51 the terms 'Messiah', 'the Son of God', and 'the king of Israel' are virtually synonymous. In John 7 the people are debating whether he is the Messiah, and in 9:22 to confess him as Messiah is punishable by excommunication.

In the Acts there is no doubt about his being Messiah. The message rings forth loud and clear, 'This Jesus whom you have taken and crucified, God has raised up to be both Lord and Christ'. (Acts 2:36) From then on the Acts and the Epistles, as indeed the Revelation, accord him this high position. We have seen that his baptism makes him Messiah, and his ministry confirms this, whilst his victory over all evil, sin and death sets him up as the triumphant King of the Kingdom. Psalm Two which incorporates the king-anointed-son concepts is quoted liberally in the N.T. (See Acts 4:25f, 13:32-33, Rom. 1:4, Heb. 1:5, Rev. 2:26, 19:15, etc.) What is to be noted is that in the Acts the message of his Messiahship is greeted with fear, joy, repentance and acceptance, so much so that believers come to be called 'Christians' (i.e. 'Messiah-ites'). In addition, a rationale of his Messiahship is given, since suffering was not seen to be part of being Messiah. Jesus told his disciples that the Christ had to suffer (Luke 24:26-27, 44f.) and the apostles spell this out. (See Acts 2:23, 3:18, 17:3, 11). We may here note that this relates to the Son of man who was to suffer, as also the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 42-53.

The Epistles simply work on the assumption that Jesus is the Messiah. Terms such as 'Jesus Christ', 'Christ Jesus', 'the Lord Jesus Christ', 'one Lord, Jesus Christ', 'Jesus the Lord', or simply 'Jesus' or 'Christ', abound. Of course Christ can only be known as such, 'after the Spirit' and not 'after the flesh' (cf. II Cor. 5:16). The references are so numerous that we simply conclude that the early church saw him, fully, as

Messiah. Likewise in the Revelation there is no question of him being Messiah. Other equivalent terms are used such as 'the Lamb', the 'Alpha and Omega', 'King of kings and Lord of lords', 'the Lion of the Tribe of Judah', and so on.

We conclude then, that what was prophesied in the O.T. came to be in the person of Jesus. He is Messiah, the King, the head of the Kingdom. He is Son of man and Son of God, and these offices are held within the one Person.

3. SON OF GOD

We observe that this term comes to be used naturally and liberally of Jesus in the N.T. Yet in fact it must have its genesis in the O.T. or it will not be authentic. It is clear that in the O.T. angels are called 'sons of God', and it is agreed by many that the 'sons of God' in Genesis 6:2 are probably the descendants of Seth, whilst in Deut. 14:1 the children of Israel are the sons of God. In Exodus 4:22 and Hosea 11:1 Israel (corporately) is a son of God. In II Sam. 7:14 God says, 'I will be his Father and he shall be my son', and Psalm 89:26 has, 'He (the king) shall cry to me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation'. However the most significant is Psalm 2:7, 'Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee'.

It is Psalm 2:7, together with Isaiah 42:1 that is quoted at Jesus' baptism. An old MS. of Luke actually has, 'Thou art my beloved son: today have I begotten thee'. It must be understood that 'begotten' does not refer to Jesus becoming the Son of God at that point, so much as a declaration of his Messianic Sonship, since, as we have seen, 'Messiah' and 'Son of God', at least in the synoptic gospels, are virtually the one. We have also seen that Psalm 2 is often quoted in regard to Jesus.

At his birth the angel tells Mary he will be called 'the Son of God', 'son of the Most High', and that, 'the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David'. In this statement the Messianic, the Davidic, and the Kingdom concepts are all wedded. In Matt. 2:15 the statement of Hosea 11:1 is quoted, i.e. 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son', and this is referred to Jesus. Thus, in the N.T. the understanding of sonship is filled out. Jesus, in Luke 2:49 already has a unique consciousness of God as his Father, and of course at his baptism this is affirmed. He speaks of God, uniquely as 'my Father', whilst others must say, 'Our Father'. In Matt. 11:27 all things are given to him by his Father, and no one can know the Father save the Son. His relationship and knowledge are unique. (Cf. John 3:35, 16:15).

In John's Gospel this idea of sonship is greatly extended. He is one with the Father. He works with the Father. He does only what the Father shows him and requires of him. In fact to see him is to see the Father' Because he is Son he has great authority. He can give life, has judgement committed to him, and will go to the Father. It must be seen that the sonship in the synoptics and John is seen from varying vantage points, and we cannot in this study cover all of these. However, a quick reference to the following texts will show the high level of Sonship outlined in John's Gospel, viz. 1:14-18, 3:35, 5:17ff., 4:34, 6:38, 7:28, 8:42, 10:30, 14:1-10, 17:5, 24.

Having seen that the N.T. points to his Sonship in various ways, we still have to see that it is not simply a metaphysical relationship with God

the Father, but that it is a *functional relationship*⁴. By this we mean the Father is working out His plan for creation, through redemption and the ultimate restitution of the creation, and the Son is the Mediator of this plan. This will help us to escape the bind of trying to think in terms of metaphysics alone. Later we will draw our conclusions for the functional nature of all these offices.

4. LORD

If we wish to trace the use of 'Lord' in the New Testament from that of the O.T. we see that in the Septuagint there are uses of 'Lord' for both JHVH and Adonai. By the time of our Lord this use had become established, particularly what we might call 'Adonai-Jehovah'. The Aramaic word 'MAR' the Equivalent of 'Jehovah' or 'Lord' is reproduced in I Cor. 16:22 'Our Lord, come' i.e. MARANATHA' Of the 'Lord', or the 'Lord God' in the O.T. there is no doubt. The question is 'How does this title come to be used of Jesus, and what is its full significance?' The English translation of 'lord' in O.T. and N.T. is often referred to men, as using a title of honour.

Probably the best point to see our answer is in Mark 12:35–37 (and parallels) where Jesus clearly lifts the idea of Messiah to that of 'Lord'. How does He do this? He retains the concept of 'my Lord' being the Son of David, i.e. Messiah, but extends it. If David had not written the Psalm then the 'my Lord' would not be 'greater than David', necessarily. However Jesus and David calls Him 'my Lord'. This settles it then. If He is 'son of David' (v.35) then He is not ONLY 'Son of David' but my Lord (cf. v.37). Cullman says, 'Jesus uses here the method of proof of his time. He cites the familiar Psa. 110, of which we have spoken in another context and of which we shall speak again. The psalm glorifies the king. King David traditionally composed all the Psalms, and this tradition is the foundation of Jesus' argument. According to the original intention of the Psalmist, the Kyrios in the nominative case designates God, the Kyrios in the dative, the king – 'my Lord'. Thus the psalm originally meant, 'God spoke to my king: sit at my right hand...' The meaning of the psalm changes, however, as soon as one is convinced that it was not written in honour of the king, but was composed by him, by David himself. The Kyrios in the nominative remains God, but the Kyrios in the dative can no longer be the king, since he himself is speaking. The words 'my Lord' then come to mean the Messiah.'

In his public ministry the term 'Lord' may have sometimes been simply a courtesy title, and sometimes may have been to accord him Messianic status. An interesting contrast is seen in Luke 5:1–11. Peter uses the term 'Master', almost casually. It is a term for 'Skipper', and a light one. However, when he sees the miraculous draught of fishes he falls down and says, 'Lord' Here he sees the exceptional person of Jesus. In Matt. 7:21–23 Jesus portrays himself as Lord of the judgement. In Mark 11:3 ('The Lord hath need of him,') the same level is maintained. In John's Gospel, John 13:13 has it, 'You call me Lord and Master,' but it is difficult to determine the measure of their content. Not however, Thomas's post-resurrection cry, 'My Lord, and my God' Nothing higher could have been uttered.

We must remember that the Lordship of the Gospels is the very commanding authoritative nature and action of Christ, together with what he accomplishes. Of course the Cross and the Resurrection, as also the Ascension, seals the Lordship. Hence in the Acts the apostles and others see him as

⁴ For the work-out of this, see 'I Love the Father' (N.C.P.I.) and LFS No.11 'Fatherhood, Sonship and Family – Heavenly and Human'.

Lord, and proclaim him that way. They do not divorce this from his Sonship or Messianic office. Indeed it is at one with these offices. A rationale is given to his Lordship, nevertheless. It is this:

It is based on the event of the resurrection which leads to the exaltation at the right hand of God (Psalm 16 and 110 are both used here) and this is the place of Lordship. Such can only be understood in terms of Luke 1:71, 74 (cf. Isaiah 26:12–14) that the Lord delivers from the lords (the enemies of man) who dominate man. He, in pouring out the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:33) and so inaugurating the new era which will climax in His Day – the Day of the Lord (Acts 2:16–21, espec. v.20 and 3:20, 21) is undoubtedly Lord. This theme persists in the Book of Acts. So see Acts 10:36 ‘Lord of all’, 9:5 ‘Who art thou Lord’, 9:17 ‘the Lord (even) Jesus’, 9:27 ‘had seen the Lord in the way’, 16:31 ‘the Lord Jesus’. Innumerable references show that ‘Jesus’ has now become ‘the Lord Jesus’. It is not however the use of the title so much as the action of the Person which shows his Lordship. This is profuse in Acts.

When we come to the Epistles there is abundant use of the word ‘Lord’. The apostles preach ‘Christ Jesus as Lord’ (II Cor. 4:5). One must confess him as Lord (Rom. 10:9) for salvation. The body is for the Lord and this Lord has God raised up (I Cor. 6:13–14). Indeed he has died and risen – to be Lord both of the dead and living (Rom. 14:8–11). In this context and Phil. 2:10–11, Isa. 45:23 is quoted as to all who will submit to him the Lord. Whilst there are ‘gods many and lords many’, there is only one God (the Father) and one Lord – Jesus Christ (I Cor. 8:5, 6). One may say he is Lord only by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:3). His Lordship, not always linked with the appellation ‘Lord’, is over all the evil powers (Col. 2:15, I Cor. 2:6–9, 8:5, 15:24f.) and he is the ‘Lord of glory’. He is prayed to (II Cor. 12:8, I Thess. 3:12, II Thess. 3:2ff) or through (Rom. 1:8, 7:25, II Cor. 1:20, Col. 3:17) and these facts are significant. The fact that he is Lord of all (over all principalities and powers) is significant for the church of which, also, he is Lord (cf. Ephes. 1:19–21) for he thus may give gifts (Ephes. 4:7–11) and also subdue the principalities and powers and the kingdoms of this world (I Cor. 15:24f). The enemies of I Cor. 15:25 include Satan (Heb. 2:14–15, cf. John 12:31), the world (Gal. 6:14, cf. 1:4), death (I Cor. 15:24, cf. 55, 56) – indeed any enemy which dominates man and opposes the Kingdom of God. This ‘blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords’ is the one recognised by the Apostolic church as reigning over all history with all its powers – both good and evil.

In the Book of the Revelation (see 17:14, 19:16) he is King of kings and Lord of lords. The whole theme of this book is the outworking of this Lordship.

It is now time for us to turn again to Psalm 110 (cf. Psalm 2) out of which this concept of Lordship springs. At least 21 times in the N.T. it is quoted. ‘The Lord said unto my Lord’ with its related elements is quoted in Rom. 8:34, I Cor. 15:25, Col. 3:1, Ephes. 1:20, Heb. 1:3, 8:1, 10:12f., I Pet. 3:22, Acts 2:34f., 5:31, 7:55, Rev. 3:21, Matt. 22:44, 26:64, Mark 12:36, 14:62, 16:19, Luke 20:42f. and 22:69. A study of these passages will show that the early church saw Christ through this lense.

We conclude then that his Lordship is complete and utter, morally and otherwise over the entire universe. There is no conflict here with God being ‘King of all the earth’ (Psa. 47:7–8) since the Father has committed all things to the Son (Matt. 11:27, John 3:35) and the Father is still ‘Lord of heaven and earth’ (Matt. 11:25 cf. Acts 17:24) for when the Son is confessed ‘that Jesus Christ is Lord’ it will be to the glory of the Father, ‘because he will himself be subjected to Him Who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one’. (I Cor. 15:28).

5. SERVANT OF GOD

We have already touched on this theme, but need to develop it more. In the O.T. especially in Isaiah, we have the figure of the Servant (42:1–4, 49:1–7, 50:4–11, 52:13, 53:12). This Servant is so outstanding as to demand attention. The servant concept has been variously applied to the whole of Israel ('You are my servant Israel in whom I am glorified', Isa. 49:3), but this might easily mean part of Israel, the holy remnant or seed. It could be one man even as Israel is one man (i.e. Jacob). In Judaism the function of the Messiah is to lead God's people into restoration. This is also the function of the Servant. However in Judaism we do not see a Suffering Messiah, which is probably why the concept of suffering which Jesus identifies with his Servantship (Mark 10:45) is not understood by the disciples. Isaiah 53 is clearly a description of terrible suffering and Jesus says 'the Son of man must suffer many things'. (Mark 8:31). Matthew 12:18–21 identifies Jesus with the servant, being a direct quote of Isa. 42:1–4 (which see). Mark 10:45 is also a general identification with the Servant concept. (Isaiah 42:1 is partly quoted in connection with the Baptism (Matt. 3:17). John 1:29 is almost certainly linked with Isa. 53:6, 7. Luke 22:27 is a clear claim to be the Servant of all. Isaiah 53:12 is quoted concerning the Cross (Luke 22:37) making a further identification with the Servant of that passage. Mark 10:45 clearly equates the 'Son of man' with the Servant. Thus all the teaching of the Son of man equals that of the Servant.

In Acts (3:13, 26, 4:27, 30 R.S.V.) the term EBED YAHWEH is equated with PAIS TOU THEOU (3:13, etc.) 'the servant of God', the actual LXX translation of EBED YAHWEH. In Acts 8:32–35 Philip identifies the servant passage of Isaiah 53 with Jesus. Romans 4:25 'put to death' equates with the teaching of Isaiah 53, and Romans 5:19 speaks of the same obedience as Phil. 2:8 which with II Cor. 5:21 accord with the same Isaianic passage. In Paul (as in Mark 10:45, the locus classicus of the Servant concept) Christ's Servantship is related not statically to a state of being, but dynamically to his work, i.e. of atonement for man's sin. Even the subduing of the kingdoms (I Cor. 15:24f.) is with a view to the exaltation of God. Whilst there is a sense in which there is humiliation in the incarnation, yet the actual humiliation lies in the death of the Cross 'to be a servant and to give his life a ransom for many'.

6. HIGH PRIEST

Closely related to the Servant concept is that of the High Priest. This is seen in such incarnational elements as in Heb. 2:14, 17 which speaks of true incarnation being necessary for his being a High Priest. The use of Psalm 110 in relation to the Messiah makes it clear that Messiah is also High Priest (after the order of Melchizedek). The significance of his being High Priest and the High Priest, superseding all priesthoods previous to his, really must be seen in the light of the thesis of the Epistle to the Hebrews, namely that all prior cultus has been superseded by the Gospel, the New Covenant, by Christ. There is no aid, no representation, no efficacious sacrifice (all before were shadows of that 'to come', (i.e. come in Christ) no mediation apart from Christ. This Priest has offered the perfect sacrifice (10:10–14), has passed into the heavens (9:24) to appear for us, to exercise an unchangeable priesthood and to intercede for us, forever (Heb. 7:24–25). He is not only Priest but King–Priest (Psalm 110:1–4, cf. Heb. 5:5–6, 7:17, 8:1, etc.) and as such, also, the Son (Heb. 5:5–6f.).

If this concept of Priest were simply figurative or speculatively attractive, that would be one thing. However, the writer of the Hebrews is

convinced of an eternal and divine cultus which is the reality, thus all other 'comparative religions' become automatically null and void, including that of the O.T. economy which was a 'shadow of things to come'. This element of Christology, then is extremely valuable and, as the others, indispensable to salvation.

The fact that Jesus quoted Psalm 110 and undoubtedly related it to himself (see Matt. 22:41f.) makes it significant. When the writer of Hebrews uses the phrase 'to bear the sins of many' (Heb. 9:28) this is a direct reference to Isa. 53:12 thus linking Messiah–King–Priest with the Servant of the Lord who 'offered up himself' (Heb. 7:27). The various elements of Christology cannot be divorced one from the other.

7. THE WORD

The description of the 'Word' in John 1:1f. undoubtedly speaks of an Eternal Being. It speaks of pre-existence. It speaks of this Word as the Creative Word. Then (1:14) John says 'the Word became flesh'. Thus the Word incarnate is a Person. The concept of Logos did not begin with John. The personified concept of Wisdom in Prov. 8 and the creative and revelatory character of the Word (Psa. 33:6, Isa. 55:10f., 11:4) with the concept of 'the Word of the Lord said' of the Rabbinic understanding (e.g. Gen. 3:9) and also the personified idea of law in Deut. 30:11–14 (cf. Isa. 2:3) shows that John's Logos is not an idea of John. That the Word is the Son, is born, and by comparing John 1:14 and 1:18 a similar thought is in Heb. 1:1–3 where He speaks (in this epoch) by the Son. As the utterance (Word) of God calls creation into existence (Gen. 1:1f.) so the Word that is enfleshed speaks of God in all its actions. It declares the Father. Cullmann says 'One cannot say 'God was with the Word' because the Logos is God Himself in so far as God speaks and reveals Himself. The Logos is God in His revelation. Thus the third phrase of the prologue can actually proclaim 'and the Word was God.' (p.265 op. cit.) When Thomas finally says 'My Lord and my God' he is acknowledging the deity of the Word. The Word, however, is always God communicating or revealing Himself.

Other Scriptures which relate to the creative and sustaining attributes of the Word such as in I Cor. 8:6, Col 1:16, Rev. 3:14 and Heb. 1:2 are not there described as attributes of the Word but of the Son or Jesus Christ the Lord. It is as the Word, however, for in John he is equated with the Son. In John, as in other N.T. writings, it is the Son who reveals the glory of God.

8. THE PROPHET

Earlier we discussed the idea of the prophet to come who would be like Moses, Deut. 18:15f. There is no doubt that Jesus was thought of as a prophet, Luke 7:16 (cf. Matt. 16:14, 21:46) 'a great prophet'. At the same time, John the Baptist is looked upon as a great prophet (Luke 7:28) where Jesus says there is not a 'greater prophet than John the Baptist'. Undoubtedly Jesus pointed to John as 'Elijah already come' (Mark 9:11ff., Matt. 17: 10ff.) but it would seem at the same time that 'greater than a prophet' means John is 'the prophet' of Deut. 18:15f. If this is so then it means

- (a) That John's words must be heeded under deadly peril of rejection, and
- (b) That there can be no prophet greater than John – not even Jesus.

(Notice in Luke 7:16–19 that John, on hearing that Jesus is ‘a prophet’, seems to doubt the ministry of Jesus as being that of Messiah.) John has already been called ‘the prophet of the Most High’ (Luke 1:76). Yet John denies he is Christ (John 1:20, cf. Luke 3:15, John 3:28) as he seems to have been thought to be. He also denies he is Elijah and ‘that prophet’, this latter being the prophet of Deut. 18:15. He makes it clear here and elsewhere that he is subordinate and inferior to Jesus, so that no matter how great he is as a prophet, Jesus is greater. It is obvious that the prophet of Deut. 18:15 is greater even than John, which is possibly what Jesus is inferring in Luke 7:26–28.

In the Transfiguration a voice is heard ‘This is my beloved (or elect) Son, hear him’ The ‘hear him’ almost obviously refers to the prophet of Deut. 18. It is following this that the disciples debate ‘Elijah redivivus’ and Jesus points out that he has come in John the Baptist. This then makes Jesus ‘that prophet’. The moment we think of him being as Moses, the idea of the Servant reappears and indeed in Mark 9:12 the Son of Man (as the Suffering Servant – cf. Mark 8:31) ‘must suffer many things’, in accordance with Isaiah 53. In Matt. 21:10f. he is called ‘the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee’ and probably means he is the prophet of the end time, seeing he is here seen as the King, or the Messianic One, the Son of David.

Finally in Acts 3:22 (cf. 7:37) it is clear that the apostles considered Deut. 18:15 fulfilled in Jesus, and for this reason they link him (3:26) with the Son of God. The passage (3:19–26) shows the serious nature of refusing this (ordained) prophet of God. In this passage, Peter places the prophet in the ‘end time’ and actually speaks of the universal blessing he will bring in accordance with the Abrahamic Covenant, another interesting link with the (now) universal prophet.

(iii) The Work of Christ

All the offices of Christ determine what is his work. They relate to all that he did, as to all that he was, and is. Hence his birth, baptism, temptation, ministry, transfiguration, death, resurrection and ascension, as also his current reigning and eventual appearance, are the work of Christ. However this whole work must be seen in relation to his entire person, and not simply from his incarnation. We will then seek to relate these elements of his pre-creation being with his work of creation, redemption, and restitution, in the following manner:

(a) The Pre-Creational Work of the Son

The plan of God as stated in Ephesians 1:3–14, and referred to in many other Scriptures, seems to be the thrust of Jesus' high-priestly prayer of John 17. In this he speaks of being Son with the Father, before creation, to have been given glory, and to have been loved by the Father, and one with the Father. We assume that the plan of God is what makes creation both rational and purposeful. Hence hope (in the Scriptures) is the dynamic of those who understand that creation is not a static continuum, but a dynamic operation of God and destined for a good and triumphant end.

(b) The Creational Work of the Son

Naturally follows the thesis we have immediately above. Col. 1:15–17, John 1:1–3, I Cor. 8:6, and Hebrews 1:2–3 tell us that all things were created in him, that they subsist (or, cohere) in him, and that he upholds them by his powerful word. It is natural when man falls, and creation is

subjected to frustration and futility (Romans 8:18–23) that the Son, the mediator, should wish to redeem all things he has created. Add to this the Satanic rebellion and angelic opposition to God and His universe, and the Son (or, the Word) must seek to defeat evil and bring creation back to purity, love and righteousness. This is called ‘the restitution of all things’ (Acts 3:21, cf. Romans 8:18–23, Matt. 20:28, Rev. 10:7). In this sense, all his work can be called creational.

(c) The Redemptive Work of the Son

This may be studied under the two Living Faith Studies:

- (a) No. 11 ‘Fatherhood, Sonship & Family – Heavenly & Human’, and
- (b) No. 15 ‘The Christian Doctrine of the Atonement’

We cannot here enter into the total work of the Cross and Resurrection, except to say that Christ's defeat of Satan, sin, the flesh, the world and all enemies of man and God was totally complete. The point we wish to see is that as a man Christ would not have ultimately proved to be the Son of man, Son of God, Messiah, Lord, Suffering Servant, Prophet and High Priest unless he had borne the sins of man, cancelled the guilt of sinners, and set them free from their ‘lords many’ so that they could ‘serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of their life’ with the expectancy that they ultimately would be like Him, conformed totally to the image of the Son.

(d) The Restitutional work of the Son

As we have seen in I Cor. 15:24–28 plus the passages of Christ's commission to preach the Gospel, Jesus will be with his people to the end (or, consummation) of the age. At that time all evil will finally have been defeated, and the universe, including elect man, will be glorified. In this sense, God's plan which He determined before time will be fulfilled. Thus creation will be renewed and the Father vindicated through the work of the Son and the Spirit.

4. CONCLUSION

We are now in a position to sum up our study. The principles are these:

- (i) God plans His creation, making provision for man's redemption and the restitution of all things affected by Satanic and human rebellion.
- (ii) By His prophets He tells that part of the plan which man needs to know. In prophecy He indicates the figure of one who, in history, is veiled from being seen with any clarity.
- (iii) This Son of man, Son of God, Prophet, Lord, Messiah–King emerges from the partial obscurity of the O.T. times and prophecies, into the clarity of the N.T. revelation. All his offices are essential and indispensable to the fulfilment of God's plan. Had they not been foretold they would have seemed novel and incongruous at the time of his incarnation.

As it is, they all appear glorious when rightly understood. They are the provision of God for His people and His own vindication. All offices combine in Christ to make that person, who in his humanity, by the power of the Spirit effects what the Father commanded him. This is the marvel of the Fatherhood, of the Sonship, and of the grace and love of God.

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