

Redeemer OPC, Hawaii

Adult Sunday School

The Person and Atoning Work of Christ (3)

“The Names and Titles of Christ”

- I. Introduction. How many Biblical names and titles for Jesus Christ can you think of? You have just seen one of each: “Jesus,” the name, and “Christ,” the title. Often today, names for people have little meaning, even little rhyme or reason as they are made up. But the names of God’s people in Scripture, most of the time, have specific meanings. “Nehemiah,” for example, means “gift from God.” In many cases, they are significant for the meaning and full understanding of the passage in which the name and the person named appear. Names were often given based on some perceived or hoped-for character trait, or something significant about one’s family or heritage. Similarly, the names of God given in Scripture reveal various facets of His character. The same is true of Christ; His names and titles reveal various qualities of His character or work. In fact, Jesus Christ is the most named and titled Person in Scripture. Following are a few of the most prominent, along with their meanings and Scripture references where they are found.
- II. Jesus Christ. This is the most frequently used name in the New Testament. It consists of both a name and a title.
  - A. The Name: Jesus. In Matt. 1:21, an angel of the Lord told Joseph in a dream, “And she will bear a son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.” Jesus is the name by which He was to be called according to the Lord’s command given through the angel. The New Testament Greek form, *Iesous*, is a transliteration of the Old Testament, *Yeshua*. It comes from a Hebrew verb that means “he saves.” It is clear from its proximity to Matt. 1:23 and the title

“Immanuel,” as well as how the word appears in names in the Old Testament, that we are intended to understand by this name, “God saves.”

- B. Christ: the Title. “Christ” means “anointed one.” It is the Greek translation of the Hebrew term for “Messiah.” Messiah involves many aspects of the character and work of Christ. The apostle John in Rev. 5 calls Him both Lion and Lamb. Lion points to Christ as Ruler and Conqueror; Lamb points to Him as Sacrifice.
- III. Lord. This is the next most frequently used title for Christ found in the New Testament.
- A. Three Uses of the Term. 1). A form of respectful address by one man for another, somewhat like “sir.” 2). A slave’s title for his master. 3). The imperial use, such as Caesar wanted for himself, but is due only to the King of kings and Lord of lords.
  - B. Confessing Christ. The early church’s confession was “Jesus is Lord,” in contrast to “Caesar is lord” that the Roman Empire demanded. The confession of Jesus as Lord, properly understood, is necessary to being a Christian. A false confession is seen in Matt. 7:22-23. In contrast, the true confession of Christ is seen in Rom. 10:9-10.
  - C. In the Old Testament, “Adonai” (Lord) is the most exalted title for God. “YHWH” (rendered LORD) is God’s memorial name, not a title. Calling Christ “Lord,” then, affirms His Deity as well as His Lordship.
- IV. Son of Man. This is the third most frequently used term, and is a title. However, it is most frequently used by Christ to refer to Himself. He drew it from Dan. 7:14, where it pictures a heavenly Person who descends to earth with the authority of God to bring judgment to earth. It is an exalted title that indicates Deity and divine authority.
- V. Son of God. This is used in at least three senses, possibly four, in the New Testament. Which sense is being used on a given occasion is identifiable by context.
- A. The Trinitarian Sense. It refers to Christ as the second Person of the Trinity. Matt. 11:27; 22:41-46; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 1:1-3.

- B. The Messianic Sense. It refers to Christ in the office of God's Representative and Savior of His people. John 3:18; Rom. 1:4; Gal. 2:20.
- C. The Paternal Sense. It refers to Christ's conception by the power of the Holy Spirit instead of a human father. Luke 1:35.
- D. A Possible Fourth Sense: the Genealogical Sense. It refers to Christ's human descent to prove He is fully human. Luke 3:23-38. At the same time, this genealogy shows that Jesus is the focal point of the line of the covenant of grace, the promises of which He fulfilled.