

Crown Him Lord of All
Romans 1:3-5

There's an old story about a young man who eagerly joined the Navy, and shortly after joining, he asked his commanding officer for a pass so he could attend a wedding. Well, the officer gave him the pass, but he told the new recruit that he would have to be back by 7:00pm on Sunday. Now, when he heard this, the young man was disturbed, and he replied, "*You don't understand, sir. I'm in the wedding.*" The officer paused, then replied, "*No, you don't understand, son. You're in the Navy.*"

This is what he had signed up for, but it hadn't quite sunken in yet. So he was taken back when his commander's orders differed from his own plans. In a similar way, if you believe in and trust in Jesus Christ, you'll find yourself confronted with commands from the Lord that conflict with your own plans and desires.

Today, the resurrection of Christ is being remembered and celebrated by so many people. He is our Savior from sin and death. We have peace with God and hope in our struggle with sin because of who he is and all He has done. We have the hope of eternal life with God. Because of Christ our Savior, we walk not in darkness, but in the light of God's truth.

But along with all of these wonderful realities, there is another for those who are born again. Those who are in Christ have a relationship with Him not entirely unlike that one between the young sailor and his commander. That's because the resurrected Christ our Savior is also Christ our Lord.

His lordship is based on certain glorious truths that are central to Christianity. They are as evident and as reliable as any historical knowledge we have of Him, they are essential to knowing the true Christ, and understanding and embracing these truths can only lead His people to love and honor and obey Him more.

So what are these great truths about Christ our Lord?

You can see them listed on page 6 in the WG. Multiple passages of Scripture communicate these things, this one at the beginning of apostle Paul's NT letter to the Romans. As he begins his brilliant explanation of the gospel, he reiterates three great realities about God the Son – the second person of the triune God – who is Christ the Lord:

1. God the Son took on a fully human nature, displayed in His conception, birth, life, and death,
2. He always possessed a fully divine nature, revealed at His powerful resurrection,
3. and He continues to have both natures as He is now exalted as Lord of all.

Someone may not realize these great truths when they first believe in Jesus Christ, but to reject them is to reject Christ Himself. So let's look at each one.

After introducing himself by his name and title in gospel ministry in verse 1, Paul describes the gospel of God as *“promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures.”* The whole OT foreshadowed and foretold the Savior to come in “good news,” verse 3, *“concerning”* (or “about”) His Son. About God’s Son.

Scripture teaches that there is only one God, and there exists in God three persons who are *“the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.”* These three are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father sent the Son into the world, and so God the Son became man. Even if you’re not a regular church-goer, perhaps you’ve heard something like that before. Paul says the Son of God became man.

Look at verse 3 again, *“concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh.”* The Greek words from which this is translated inform us of Paul’s meaning. *“Was descended”* is a good interpretation, but *“became David’s offspring”* would be as well. Paul’s wording indicates that the Son was something before He was a descendant of the great Israelite king David.

This is unique, and here’s why. Before you were conceived and born, you did not exist. Paul’s language signifies that the Son existed beforehand. He existed before He was conceived. Then he *“became David’s offspring,”* Paul says, or *“became from”* David. This was *“according to the flesh.”*

“Flesh” is a word sometimes used to refer to the sinful nature of human beings. But it’s not always used that way. It can be used simply to mean “body.” And it’s clear that Paul – along with the other apostles – affirmed that Jesus had no sin. This says that Jesus was a descendant of David according to human nature.

Luke 2 in the NT tells us that from the time he was very young, *“Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.”* He had lived from eternity past – like the Father and the Holy Spirit, the Son had always been. But He came into the world to live a human life – to have a human experience. And in accordance with normal human life, he grew up.

Parents, this is a good prayer to pray for your children; grandparents, for your grandchildren. May they grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with You and with people.

Now before He could be born and grow up, Jesus had to be conceived in a woman's womb. But this is God the Son coming into the world. And He couldn’t stop being God the Son. He would have to add a human nature to what He already was. And so that’s what He did.

In Philippians 2, Paul writes that Christ, *“though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped (or “held onto”), [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”* God the Son became a man, being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the virgin Mary. He was a human, like her, yet without a sinful nature.

This assaults the human intellect. How could it be? I understand the skepticism, but the reasoning checks out. How else could the pre-existent, eternal Son enter the world as a true and legitimate human being? He didn't have to be a sinner to experience true humanity. After all, man was not initially sinful. Jesus went on to demonstrate His humanity throughout His life, even to death. The next verse of Philippians 2 says, [8] *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

When humans do to another human what they did to Jesus on that cross, the person dies. And this is the first essential truth on which Christianity is founded and now stands, that God the Son took on a fully human nature, displayed in His conception, birth, life, and death.

What do you think about that? Can you accept it? You may wonder, *"Who came up with this?"* Was this who Jesus claimed Himself to be? The earliest NT manuscripts which we have today testify that this was the understanding of the person of Jesus Christ by the apostles and in the early church, because this is what Christ taught about Himself.

It became clearer over time, as is often the case with God's truth revealed to us. The doctrine was later clarified by church councils and it has been twisted and misunderstood over the centuries, but this is biblical Christianity.

Now look at this next verse. The Son *"was descended from David according to the flesh and"* verse [4] *"was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead."* He had always been the Son of God, but remember, as Paul said in Philippians, He *"emptied Himself."* This doesn't mean that He stopped being God; rather, His "God nature" became veiled for a time.

However, when the Father powerfully raised Him from the dead, He *"was declared to be the Son of God...according to the Spirit of holiness."* Notice that phrase *"according to the Spirit of holiness."* This is not a reference to the third person of the triune God – God the HS. This is a reference to Jesus' divine nature. Paul writes this to contrast Jesus' divine nature with His human nature.

Now, it is true that during His earthly life and especially during His earthly ministry, glimpses of His divine nature – of His divinity or His God-ness (if you will) – were shown. First of all, Jesus never sinned, and if you've ever been a child or been around one or tried to raise one, you know that their sinfulness is revealed very quickly in life!

But also, with the truth He understood and taught, and in the miracles He performed, and in the way He was with people, down to His manner and His tone and the look in His eyes and the expressions on His face, He was from God, from heaven. And yet He didn't exercise all His power as God the Son. In many ways, He hid that power. He let sinful humans mistreat Him and put Him to death. According to *"the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his*

prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son,” He endured their awful treatment to pay for the sins of those He came to save.

And their insults were compatible with His veiled divine nature. Matthew 27 says *“the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”* He died before their eyes, but He did not stay dead.

But His identity as the pre-existent, eternal Son would be shown soon enough. You see, God the Son always possessed a fully divine nature, revealed at His powerful resurrection. That is why Paul says he *“was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

He was “declared.” This is interesting. Paul doesn’t say, *“He was shown to be the Son of God,”* although that’s included in the meaning. There’s more to it than that, and it means so much for us today. Put differently, Paul says that at His resurrection the Son was *“openly appointed”* to be the Son.

NT scholar Douglas Moo notes, *“It is the Son who is appointed Son, but the [repetitive] nature of this statement reveals that being appointed Son has to do not with a change in essence but with a change in status or function.”* Not a change in essence but in status or function.

Remember, God the Son humbled Himself by taking on a human nature. He assumed a lowly status – that of a servant. He became our servant in order to be our Savior. And as His powerful resurrection, He was exalted – raised to supreme majesty, the end of verse 4, as *“Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Remember the new Navy recruit and His commander? I imagine that young man being frustrated, disappointed, but coming to terms with the command and saying to himself, “Yes, this is my life now. These are my orders. This is my duty.” Jesus is Lord of those who trust in Him.

Do you celebrate today the salvation of the resurrected Jesus Christ? If so, good! Now submit to His lordship over your whole life – because He is Lord. Back to Philippians 2, Paul says that because of His obedient death on the cross, *“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.”*

Did you notice in that statement, *“above every name...every knee should bow...every tongue confess.”* This means that the resurrected Jesus is not only Lord of those He saves. He’s Lord of all.

Now look briefly with me at verse 5. There's more here than I'll comment on today. But I want to bring to your attention one specific phrase. *"Jesus Christ our Lord, [5] through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations."*

What does Paul mean by *"the obedience of faith...among all the nations?"* He means this: that the person who trusts in Christ as Savior should seek to obey Him as Lord. God the Son continues to have both natures as He is now exalted as Lord of all. Not just Christians, but all people and all creation.

And on the Last Day, when He returns in glory, what was revealed at His resurrection, and has been revealed to His people through regeneration, will be revealed to all people – that all will call Him "Lord." Some He will gather to Himself; others, He will turn away.

Will you be gathering to Christ the Lord on the Last Day? No good works contribute to salvation from sins. We trust in the person and work of Christ alone. We receive His salvation by faith alone. But if there is no repentance, no turning from sin, no inclination or effort to follow Jesus as Lord, no conviction of sin or desire to change, no disgust or remorse when the old ways creep up, then we have to ask, *"Did regeneration truly take place? Are you really born again?"*

Now, as we go to the Lord's table, you may still wonder why Jesus had to possess both natures, why it was necessary for the Savior to be both fully man and fully God. Here it is: to stand in our place, He had to be fully human, like us. And to stand in our place – to accomplish the work of salvation – He had to be fully God. No mere human could accomplish our salvation. Therefore He alone is worthy of our praise.

Will you turn from your sins today, and give your life to Him? He has enough grace to cover all your guilt. He is risen, and He has been crowned Lord of all! Will you bow your heart before Him?

Let's bow in prayer.