

Adult study of Jesus Christ

We previously dealt with the preservation of the church and last week we looked in particular to the reason why Jesus spoke to people in parables and how He instructed us regarding the cause of sin and evil. We learned that there are two kinds of evil, namely, the evil of guilt and the evil of punishment, the latter being instituted by God to punish the wicked and discipline the believers. We also learned that God is not the author of evil or sin.

We continue with the study of the doctrine of Jesus Christ by dealing with the three names by which we know Him.

1. The name Jesus.
2. The name Christ.
3. The name Lord.

1. The name Jesus.

The name Jesus means 'savior' and it is the Second Person of the Godhead who assumed that human body, who received this Name, and subjected Himself to the order of nature, which included the order of the culture in which He was born with all its rites, customs, ceremonies and laws.

Many were called by that name, such as Joshua, and others. In the case of Joshua, he was a typical savior who foreshadowed the true Savior. Joshua's parents could not have known that their son would become a type of Savior, so it must have been by God's direction that they chose that name for their child. God merely conferred temporal blessings upon his people through other deliverers while Jesus frees us not only from bodily and temporal evils, but also from both evil of guilt and evil of punishment.

Other deliverers worked in the Old Testament to foreshadow the true Savior that would be our permanent deliverer. Jesus is our only true deliverer today and our salvation should not be sought by any other name.

Act 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Others, especially in the Spanish community, who received the name Jesus, have no additional benefit from receiving it than if they received any other name and we cannot by virtue of their names attach any special recognition to them.

God, however, worked immediately, which is without natural means and outside of the order of nature, in both the announcement and the conception of Jesus.

The announcement was miraculous to, firstly, ensure that Joseph and Mary would be comforted by the unconventional manner in which the God-child would come into the world (as the child of an unmarried virgin,) and secondly,

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that the future generations would read about it, and together with the many other proofs, know and believe that God indeed assumed a human nature.

Jesus' conception was miraculous (the Holy Spirit will come over you) to ensure that Jesus obtains a Divine nature together with the human nature He received from his mother.

Therefore, it is by God's specific work that Jesus is the Savior, and not by the etymology of his name.

The name Jesus, therefore, signifies the Savior, the author of salvation, whom God Himself announces to be the Mediator in the New Testament. The true meaning of Jesus the Savior's name was given by the angel when he announced,

Mat 1:21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Jesus' name, as the only true and perfect Savior, points directly to His office as Mediator because He saves and delivers us from both the evil of guilt and the evil of punishment, as we said before. The salvation that He works in the elect are righteousness and eternal life.

We can infer all that from his Name alone, because He does not have the Name without the power. The power, however, is vested in His office as Mediator and not in the Name.

Therefore, the Name and the Office are inseparable. Jesus cannot be Savior without being Mediator, and cannot be Mediator without being Jesus, the Son of God. The Name does not work without the office.

We call on that unique Name by which we will be saved and through His office Jesus works the righteousness and eternal life.

It is clear, then, that we should not seek salvation from anyone other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Acts 4:12, which we have read already.

John 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

1 John 5:11, 12 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

1 Tim 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time.

Is 43:11 I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me, there is no savior.

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What about references in Scripture saying that the Father and the Holy Spirit also save us? Does that mean that the Son is not the only Savior?

No, the Son is the only Savior. The Father, as the First Cause of our salvation, saves us through the Son. The Holy Spirit saves us as the immediate agent or accomplisher of our regeneration.

But the office of Mediator belongs to the Son only and through that office, we are saved. As Mediator, the Son saves us by his merit, as being the only Savior, paying a ransom for us, giving the Holy Spirit, regenerating and raising us up unto eternal life.

The efficacy of our salvation is therefore common to the three Persons of the Godhead, but the One who assumed a human nature is the Son only. This proves the general rule how we should understand the Godhead.

If we oppose anything in creation with God, we must see the three Persons as one; and when we oppose one Person with the other Persons, we must see them separately. When we say that Jesus is our only Savior, we exclude all creatures but not the Father and the Holy Spirit.

If we inquire who of the three Persons is our Savior, we recognize the Second Person. If we, then, inquire how that is accomplished, we see that the Father is the First Cause of our salvation through the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the immediate agent of our regeneration.

We are admonished to be careful not to infer that the Persons of the Godhead do not know themselves, God is, after all, one and only.

1Cor 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God."

Jesus is Savior in two respects: by His merit and efficacy.

HIS MERIT

He saves us by his merit, or satisfaction, because by his obedience, suffering death and intercession, He has merited for us remission of sins, reconciliation with God, salvation and eternal life.

1John 2:2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Rom 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—

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Rom 5:19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Is 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

HIS EFFICACY

Jesus also saves us by his efficacy because He grants and applies to us the whole benefit of redemption, which we obtain through the instrument of faith.

Jesus does not retain for himself that which has merited by his death but He confers it upon us. He did not purchase salvation and eternal life for himself, because, after all, He already had all of those, but, as our Mediator, He gave it to us through faith.

Therefore, through the Holy Spirit, He reveals to us the will of the Father, institutes and preserves the ministry; He regenerates us by his Word and Spirit in this life, and preserves those that are renewed, lest they fall again; collects a church, bestows all good things necessary for this life, defends the church against all her enemies and finally raises up all those who believe in him on the last day to eternal life.

These passages speak of this revelation and regeneration:

Matt 11:27 All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

Matt 3:11 I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

John 15:26 When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

Eph 4:8-13 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

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1John 3:8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

The following passages speak of our being raised up at the end of time.

John 14:1 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 10:28, 29 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

Tit 1:2 A faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.

1John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

When he shall have subjected all things unto himself, he shall present before God a glorious church, which he has gathered from the beginning to the end of the world.

It is clear that the Holy Spirit is also a part of our salvation, and that this ought to be accomplished through the Mediator. The Holy Spirit renovates the heart by abolishing sin, and when sin is abolished, death must also necessarily be abolished. It was for this destruction of sin and death that Christ came into the world.

He saves us fully and perfectly, by commencing salvation in us in this life, and consummating it in the life to come.

This he does, because his merit is most perfect, and that for two reasons:

Firstly, because He is God.

Acts 20:28 "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with his own blood."

From this passage, it is clear that Christ's satisfaction surpasses the punishment and satisfaction of all the angels.

Secondly, because of the greatness of the punishment, which he endured for us, conferring on us a salvation that is most full and complete.

Col 1: 19 - 22 "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—"

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1John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."

Rom 8:1-8 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, In order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.