

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

WHOEVER does not know Jesus Christ has no real knowledge of God, and, according to the Scriptures, he cannot be saved! (John 17:3) Among the creation of God, he is placed in a class distinguished beyond all others both in the heavenly realm and on this terrestrial globe. But to bring him into a line of equality with the Almighty Father is a damnable error.

From the utterances and behaviour of some people who profess to be the followers of Jesus Christ, we are convinced that they do not, in fact, know him. The name Jesus is constantly upon the lips of men. While some for good reasons call him with due reverence, others do so either because of the merest trifle or out of religious fanaticism.

During dinners or other parties or social gatherings certain people who are made merry by wine often exclaim, "O Gracious Jesus!" If they are not served with drinks in time, they shout on the attendants: "Will you please bring the bottle of beer for Jesus' sake?" When some have eaten their fill and belched, they mumble: "O Jesus my Lord!" And even there are those who, when they are struck by a remark in an ordinary conversation, would say: "Jesus me!" All these utterances do not give honour to Jesus Christ but rather they are acts of sheer irresponsibility.

Jesus Christ is the Beloved Son of the Almighty God who was sent to this evil world to show the light of life to men and shed his blood for the redemption of sinful mankind. In John 3: 16-19, it is written: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Son of God.

Some people say that God has no son in that He is not married, and so they argue that Jesus Christ is not the son of God. This is a very poor argument. The spiritual significance of the word *father* is one from whom life is derived, and *son* means one who receives life. It is in this light that Jesus Christ is the Son of God because he received life from Him. He said: "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in himself." (John 5: 26) God is also the Father of other angels in heaven as well as of human beings on earth because "He giveth to all life and breath." – Acts 17:24-28.

However, the Sonship of Jesus Christ belongs to an exclusive category and is matchless. St. Paul in his letter to the Hebrews expatiated on this issue thus: "Long ago God spoke on many different ways to our fathers...but now in these days He had spoken to us through His Son ...God's Son shines out with God's glory... He is the one who died to cleanse us and clear our

record of all sin, and then sat down in highest honor beside the great God of heaven. Thus he became far greater than the angels, as proved by the fact that his name 'Son of God', which was passed on to him from his Father, is far greater than the names and titles of the angels." The apostle continued: "For God never said to any angel, you are my Son, and today have given you the honor that goes with that name.' But that is what God said about Jesus. Another time He said, 'I am His Father and He is my Son...'" – Hebrews 1: 1-9, *Living Letters*.

The Word

The Bible clearly shows that the first thing ever created by the Almighty God was Jesus Christ, and he became the creative agent of the Father through whom all other things perfect, both visible and invisible, were created.

Jesus Christ is known as the *Word* translated from the Greek word *LOGOS*, which is significant of his role as the spokesman or one through whom the Father expresses His will to mankind. In John 1: 1-3, it is written: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Jesus Christ was created; but God the Father has neither beginning nor end but is "from everlasting to everlasting". (Psalm 90: 2) Thus the "beginning" referred to in the text is the beginning of God's creation when the Word (Jesus) was created and he who also is God the Son was with God the Father. Indeed Jesus is a God and Isaiah in prophecy called him the "mighty God". – Isaiah. 9: 6, 7.

It was the Word, NOT God Almighty that was made flesh, born on earth, and known as Jesus Christ. But the world which God gave him power to create did not recognise him when he came. As it is written: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."-John 1: 14, 10-12.

Jesus Christ is also known as "the Faithful and True Witness." The fact that he was the first creation of God is further confirmed by the testimony of John the apostle in Revelation. He stated: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." – Revelation 3: 14.

These were long hidden truths which God through His apostles revealed in the Holy Bible. Said St. Paul: "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ." – Ephesians 3: 9.

Moreover, St. Paul in his epistle to the Colossians described Jesus Christ as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature". And he added: "For by him (Jesus) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones,

or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” – Colossians 1: 15-17.

Chief Angel

In the pre-human days of Jesus Christ he was the chief of the angels of God in heaven who were sent by Him to communicate with the holy men and prophets of old, and deliver them from troubles on certain occasions. – Genesis 18: 1-33; Exodus. 3: 1-6; Acts 7: 30-34; Daniel 3: 24-28.

Jesus Christ has many other names and titles. Jacob in a prophetic declaration, referred to him, as *Shiloh* meaning a peaceful one. (Genesis 49: 10) He is also known as Emmanuel, Michael, Sun of Righteousness, the Son of Man, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David and so on. (Isaiah. 7: 14; Matthew 1: 23; Daniel 12: 1; Revelation 12: 7; Malachi 4: 2; Matthew 12: 8, 40; Revelation 5: 5.) And John the Baptist identified him as “the Lamb of God”. – John 1: 29.

As a result of the sentence of death passed upon man after he had sinned through disobedience, it became necessary that the blood of a perfect man should be shed according to God’s purpose (Deuteronomy 19: 21; Hebrews 9: 22) to redeem man from sin and restore him to perfection. It was impossible to get such a perfect blood from the offspring of Adam since they were all born in sin. (Psalm 51: 5; Romans 3: 23; 5: 12). It was to this end Jesus Christ through the infinite power of Jehovah, the Almighty Father, was transformed from the spirit plane to human in the womb of Mary the virgin and born into this woeful world.

Concerning the incarnation of Jesus Christ, St. Paul wrote: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people ” – Hebrews 2: 14-18.

Long before the human existence of Christ many prophecies were uttered about him. It was prophesied that he would be born a Jew and a prophet to whom all people should give ear (Genesis 49: 10; Deuteronomy 18: 15); that he would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5 :2); that a forerunner would prepare the way of the Lord (Isaiah. 40: 3); that he would ride into Jerusalem upon an ass (Zechariah 9: 9); that he would be hated, despised and rejected of (ungodly) men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah. 53: 1-3).

Furthermore, it was foretold that Jesus Christ would be betrayed by a familiar friend (Psalm 41: 9); that the price of betrayal would be 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah. 11: 12, 13); that he would be

given gall and vinegar to drink (Psalm 69: 21); that he would be oppressed and brought like a lamb before the slaughter (Isaiah. 53: 4-7); and it was prophesied that he would be resurrected and his flesh would not see corruption. – Psalm 16: 10; Acts 2: 24 – 27.

Truly, in God's appointed time Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary and even angels in heaven sang for joy: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2: 7- 14) All the prophecies concerning him fulfilled accordingly. When he was about the age of 30 years, he received baptism from John the Baptist at the River Jordan. On that historic occasion, the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and rested on him, and the Almighty Father declared in heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." – Matthew 3: 13-17; Luke 3: 21-23.

During the ministry of Christ on earth, he did many good works and miracles: he opened the eyes of the blind, the lame walked, the ears of the deaf were unstopped, at the village of Nain he stopped a funeral procession, raised to life a dead son and turned a widowed mother's grief to boundless joy; and most spectacular of all was the raising to life of Lazarus who had been laid in the tomb four days before and when his corpse had begun to decompose. -Luke 7: 11-16,22; John 11: 38-45.

E. E. Kellett described Jesus as "a person of amazing impressiveness, force, and charm; that even after death he yet speaketh, and that today there are millions who, reading his words and contemplating his acts, cannot explain him but as in a sense divine; they feel him working in their hearts, controlling their lives, and inspiring an undying love. As in Galilee, so in England, he 'goes about doing good'." (*A Short History of Religions*)

Primary Purposes

Some of the primary purposes of Christ's coming to the earth are:

- (1) To preach the truth or good news of God's Kingdom in order to enlighten His sheep and free them from Satan's bondage and so that they may serve God Almighty in truth and be saved. – Luke 4: 18-21; John 10: 9, 10; 18: 37; Luke 19: 10.
- (2) To give his life as a ransom by shedding his blood for the remission of sins. – Matthew 20: 28; 26: 28; 1 Timothy 2: 6; Revelation 1: 5

In character Jesus Christ was exemplary, and excellent in all virtues. He was truthful, kind, gentle, humble and lowly in heart. He never compromised with evil, and all his words and doings were characterised by holiness. He was a man of unbending faith, resisting temptation and was the very embodiment of wisdom. In zeal for the work of God and righteousness he was beyond compare. He was merciful, patient, long-suffering, loving and benevolent. To all mankind he directed his soul-consoling call: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls..." (Matthew 11:28-30).

We cannot claim to be Christians if we are not making serious efforts to follow the good example of our Master and Saviour Jesus Christ. He himself said: "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord..." – Matthew 10: 25.

Today the churches of Christendom are celebrating the Resurrection of Christ and they call it, incongruously, of course, "Easter". But is it not true that some after attending church services, would go home and drink heavily at parties? Do some not secretly indulge in idolatry? Do some not consult witch doctors and oracle men or go about wearing charms in the form of rings, necklaces and so forth in order to get promotion or be protected? Will some not engage themselves in immoral pleasures today – their Easter day – and defile ungodly girls and women? Can they say that they are true disciples of Jesus? Unless all such ones refrain from sin and mould their characters to reflect Christ-like qualities they are still far from Jesus our Lord. Indeed, they are lip-worshippers. (Luke 6: 46-49; Titus 1: 16).

Only Mediator

It pays to be faithful and obedient in the Lord's service. Jesus Christ, because of his submission to the will of his Father, has been blessed above all creatures in heaven and on earth. About this St. Paul wrote: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. " – Philippians 2: 9-11.

There was never a time Jesus Christ claimed to be equal to his Father, the Almighty God. Rather he said: "My Father is greater than I." – John 14: 28.

Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and men. (1 Timothy 2: 5) The Bible says it is through him alone that salvation to eternal life in God's Kingdom can be obtained. "Neither is there salvation in any other," declared St. Peter, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12) And Jesus himself said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." – John 14: 6.