

Spirit and Truth

Bible studies dedicated to helping the Bible student to know and worship God as He requires His followers to know and worship Him.

The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. John 4:23,24 .

Lesson 4

JESUS:
HIS POSITION IN THE
GODHEAD

At this point in our study we have seen that there is *one* God and *one* *only*, His name being, Jehovah, or Yahweh, and this God had an *only* Son, begotten of His own body, His name being Yahshua, or Jesus the Christ. Considering the station of these two members of the Godhead we may ask what is the relationship between them both? Are they equal, or does one have authority over the other? The holy Spirit is not a consideration at this stage, we will examine this aspect of the Godhead later in this series.

From a Trinitarian perspective rank among the Godhead is untenable, but we are not consulting tradition to find the answer, we are looking into the counsel given us by God, Himself (Isa.9:6; 30:1-3; John 5:39; Psalm 19:7,8).

To the surface reader of the Scriptures there is a strange paradox concerning this subject, Jesus is said to be *equal* with God the Father, yet at the same time He is *subordinate* to Him!

Our study today is part one of a two part study on the position of Jesus in the Godhead. This lesson will focus on Jesus having received all His divine attributes and properties from His heavenly Father. We will also examine the manner in which Jesus is equal with the Father and the authority He possesses. Finally, we shall see that the Father-God, Yahweh, is the *Supreme* God of the universe and Jesus is *subject* to Him.

The following lesson, part two of this study, will look at God's declaration to the universe of the anointing, or dedicating of His Son and the purpose and function of His part in the divine Godhead. The Almighty God Has declared that He has exalted His Son to a position equal with Himself and is to receive power and, riches and, wisdom and, strength and, honour and, glory and, blessing, and that He is to rule upon the throne of heaven forever!

I and My Father are one. John 10:30

JESUS RECEIVES ALL FROM HIS FATHER

Jesus, truly is the *Son* of God in the most literal sense of the word. Begotten of the Father-God, Jesus, the Son, will have an inheritance and a definite place in the Godhead. What is His position, firstly, with respect to the Father and then, to all of creation?

When Jesus came forth from the Father, God then proceeded to inform and teach His Son all the works that He, Himself, knew and did. All that Jesus has, He received from the Father, even His life, knowledge and work.

1. What did the Father do that Jesus may have knowledge of the works of God and be able to do the same?

John 5:19,20

Luke 10:22

John 8:28

Note: It may be considered that these texts and some others we shall use refer to the education of Jesus at the time of His incarnation. The knowledge He received on earth, as a man, He learned in the same way that you and I may learn --- by study and a living connection with the Father (John 6:57; 2Tim.2:15). From the next question it will be evident that Jesus received instruction before coming to this earth and will continue to receive instructions from His Father when restored to his throne in heaven.

2. When Jesus said that He and His Father work together, what did He say that indicated a time setting for those works?

John 5:17

Note: The works referred to in this passage, Jesus outlines in verses 19-47 and makes special mention of His role as being subordinate to the Father (vv. 19,20,26,30). "Hitherto" translated from two Greek words: HEOS (Strong's 2193), meaning: *continuation, until, for however long*; and ARTI (Strong's 737), meaning: *now, this day, the present, hence(forth), here(after)*.

ARTI has also been translated "henceforth" (John 14:7) and "hereafter" (Matt.26:64; John 1:51), indicating that this word, apart from referring to the past, even until the present, may also be used to refer to the future.

The implications of this broad application of ARTI, indicates that certain instruction Jesus received (described in John 5:19-47) occurred *before* His incarnation (Zech.6:13; Acts.2:23) and that further instruction from His Father, who is also His God, will be received *after* His return to heaven (John 20:17). Notice the works to which Christ referred (in John 5) embrace infinite time, not merely the term of His earthly ministry, for God has placed on Him: – all judgement (ordained before this world and to be done in the future, John 5:22,27; 12:47,48; 2Tim.1:9); to be honoured as the Father is honoured (all time, v.23); to be the life giver (past, present and future, v.21); the life restorer (present and future, 25,28,29); and His earthly ministry (works prepared before coming to this earth and to be in effect for all time v.36-47; 1Pet.1:18-20).

3. What is one function the Father had committed unto the Son?

John 5:22,27,30

Note: Both the *ability* and the *authority* to judge were *given* to Christ by His Father. This is a Divine authority and Jesus received it from the beginning of creation!

4. What other Divine property did the Son receive from His Father?

John 5:26

Note: When Jesus came forth from the Father, He came forth *alive*. The kind of life He received is the same life as the Father has. The kind of life received by every created being is borrowed, not self sustaining and not transferable, it cannot be imparted to others. Conversely, Christ's life, like that of the Father, is a *life source*, *underived*, *unborrowed*, He is, therefore, *self sustaining* as the Father is self sustaining and, like God, He is able to impart life to His creation¹ (John 1:4; 5:21; 10:27,28).

There is one *difference* between the life of Jesus and the life of the

Father --- and that is --- the Father cannot relinquish His life, He is life itself, He cannot die (1Tim.6:16). Jesus, on the other hand, while He possesses the same indestructible and intrinsic property, or essence of life, as does the Father, that life was *given* to Him of the Father. He, therefore, has the ability and option of retaining it or surrendering it (John 10:17,18; Heb.10:10,12; Rev.1:18).

5. The Glory of the Son of God is as that of the Father. What does He say about this glory He possesses?

John 17:24b
Compare John 17:5

Note: When Jesus comes the second time to this earth, His glory (received from His Father) will be part of the indiscribable glory of the heavenly Majesties surrounded by the glory of the angelic retinue (Luke 9:26).



6. What is another God-like property Jesus received from God?

John 3:35; Matthew 28:18
Compare Colossians 2:10b

Note: Jesus has received from His Father *every* God-like attribute He possesses — His intrinsic life, His creative ability, His knowledge, His work, and now His very power and authority to rule and to judge. With all of this, God has exalted Him to a position equal with Himself, yet, notwithstanding His exalted position, He is not God in the same sense as God, Jehovah, is God. Jesus is God by virtue of possessing the attributes and qualities of God. Let us now examine this concept further in the next three sections....

JESUS IS EQUAL WITH GOD

7. The apostle Paul uses two terms to describe a comparison between God and His Son. What are these terms?

Philippians 2:6

Note: Jesus was in the "form" of God before He came to this earth whereupon He took the "form" of a man. The record also shows that He is "equal" with God; even when on earth, as a man, this equal status with the Father was not in any way lessened. He was as much the Son of God, possessing the attributes of God, when on earth, as He was when in heaven upon His throne (Matt. 16:13-17). For the purpose of our discussion, the difference between His earthly and heavenly appointments is that, on earth, while retaining His divinity, He laid aside divinity's powers in order to become fully man in man's fallen condition (fallen meaning weakened, not fallen meaning a sinner).

8. Christ's claim to be the Son of God presented a certain meaning to the Jews. How did they interpret His statement?

John 5:18b; 10:33c, 36b

Note: The Jews rightly understood the relationship between God the Father and His Son -- they were equal. However, they rejected Him and wittingly or unwittingly refused to accept that He was THE Son of God. In lesson 5, Q's. 13, 14, 15, we see that God so regarded His Son as equal with Himself as to include Him, along with Himself, as a recipient of the worship received from all created beings.

9. Jesus is so much like the Father-God, what expression is used to describe the perfect representation of the Father seen in His Son. That representation was even seen when His Son was a man on earth?

Colossians 2:9

Hebrews 1:2,3 (notice Mark 15:39)

Note: Human language fails to describe the beauty and portrayal of the great God of the universe in the form of the Son of man.

10. When speaking through the prophets, what unique characteristic did God declare about the coming Messiah ?

Matthew 1:22,23

Note: Jesus came to this earth to redeem men and, reveal the true nature of the loving heavenly Father to a world who knew Him not (Heb.1:1-3). In Christ dwelt all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

11. How does Jesus describe His revelation of the Father?

John 14:9b

12. Concerning His unique position in the Godhead, what special and distinctive title did He take to Himself?

John 8:58

Exodus 3:14,15

Note: Jesus told the Jews that He was the "I AM," a term that meant the absolute, eternal, self existent One, or Jehovah, God (Strong's 3068).

These terms for God are used in the writings of Moses, that part of the Jewish Bible, known as the "Law" (i.e. Genesis to Deuteronomy. Luke 24:27,44; 16:31). Hence, the Jews knew exactly what He meant and proceeded to take up stones to stone Him for His supposed blasphemy (John 8:59). Christ's claim to be the "I AM" does not make Him THE Most High God, as we shall now see...

JESUS HAS THE AUTHORITY OF GOD

When Jesus identified Himself as the I AM, or Jehovah, God, He was not claiming to be THE Most High God. Jesus is so invested with the power and authority of God that, such a claim is but acting within His delegated authority. So intimate was the Father's work through His Son, that when the Son spoke and acted, it was as though the Father had done the works².

13. Who is the Authority behind the works of Jesus?

John 14:10

John 5:19,20,30

14. How did God, the Father, state that His Son was fully invested with His own authority?

Exodus 23:20–22

Compare John 5:43

Note: "My name is in Him"... "I come in the name of My Father" The Hebrew word translated "name" in Exodus 23:20–22 is SHEM (Strong's 8034), meaning: *a definite and conspicuous position, a name or appellation as a mark of individuality, by implication, honour, authority, or character.* This word carries greater weight than a mere "name," the Recipient is invested with a distinctive authority, character and honour equal to that of Almighty God.

When Jesus came to this earth, He came in His Father's "name," that is, He was doing what the Father would have done had the Father been there in His place (John 5:19, 20, 43).

The Greek word translated "name" in John 5:43 is ONOMA (Strong's 3686), meaning: *a name, whether literally or figuratively, having authority or character, called.* "Called" could indicate – chosen, set apart, or anointed (Heb.5:4,5 see also lesson 5).

Concerning the "Angel of the Lord." This is a term commonly used to refer to Christ (Acts 7:30–32, 38,39; Zech.3:1,5–7; 12:8). In Genesis 22:15,16, the angel of the Lord did swear by Himself in making the promise to Abraham. The only one who is free to swear by God, without blasphemy, is God Himself, however, God has invested His Son with that same authority (Heb.6:13; Isa.45:22,23; Matt.5:34).

When we understand that an angel is a minister, or messenger (Heb.1:14), Christ, as the "Angel of the Lord," was doing the work of

a messenger as He fulfilled the will of His Father in giving the word of God to Israel.

15. To what extent did Jehovah-God give His authority and power to His Son?

Matthew 28:18; John 3:35

Note : To be *invested* with this power, *equal* to that of God, also gives the Recipient the name or *title* of God. Keep in mind that, in receiving this power, the Recipient does not *become* "The God" who gave it, but, *equal* with "The God" who gave it.

16. In further confirmation of Christ's name and authority, what supreme acclamation is given to Him?

Isaiah 9:6; compare Revelation 1:8

Note: These verses are a blend of expressions pertinent to the Father only and to the Son only.

"The government shall be upon His shoulders, his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." A clear reference to the Son of God. Jesus is truly mighty, all the power of the Godhead is invested in Him. He has the title of God and may rightly be called the "mighty God."

The "everlasting Father." While Yahweh is the Supreme God, the Father of us all, His Christ performed the actual work of Creation, In this respect Christ may also be called our Father. Malachi 2:10, referring to the "everlasting Father who created us all," may be seen as applying to either God or His Son. Interestingly, as the "Son of Man," Jesus is also our elder Brother (Heb. 2:11,16,17).

Revelation 1:1 states that the book is a revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him for the purpose of informing mankind about things to come upon the earth. The "angel," in verse 1, may either be a messenger (angel) under Christ's direction, or Jesus Himself, God's

Messenger, as the "Angel of the Lord" (Acts.7:30,32,38). Either way, it will be Jesus who directs the message to John.

Verses 4 and 5 speak of Him, "which is, which was, which is to come," and Jesus Christ as separate individuals. Verse 8 refers to Him, "which is, which was, which is to come," as "Lord" and the "Almighty." Revelation 4:8–5:10 indicates that the Person with this description is God Himself, Yahweh, the One upon the throne.

"Alpha and omega," and "first and the last" are expressions meaning the same thing, God is eternal, the beginning and the end. Jesus identifies Himself as "the first and the last." (Rev.1:17).

Revelation 1:8, *I am Alpha and Omega the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, which was, which is to come, the Almighty,* strongly implies the one referred to as being the Father, while Rev.22:13-16, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last,* with similar wording is just as clearly speaking of Jesus Christ. So who is referred to in chapter 1? The book of Revelation is the message God gave to Christ, who, in turn, gives it to man (Rev.1:1), In His closing comments Jesus says He has been the one delivering the message to John via the angel (Rev.22:13-16), which does not necessarily exclude the direct involvement of the Father and Christ in the delivery (e.g. 2:1; 3:1,14; 21:6; etc). This being the case may we deduce that it could be Christ speaking to John in Revelation 1:11, where He says "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last"? Similarly, the Figure mentioned in verse 11 is the same Person mentioned in verse 8, the One identified as "Almighty."

Here again, we see where names used when speaking of the heavenly Father, Yahweh, may actually be used when speaking of His Son, Jesus. In this case, He receives the highest appellation – "Almighty." This name does not alter Christ's relationship with His Father, nor does it make the Son to be God in the same sense as is God; but

rather, it profoundly highlights the equality the Son has with His Father-God, an equality that can only be conferred by God Himself.

17. God, or Yahweh, is the heavenly Father, yet, Jesus did the actual act of creating. What name is given to Jesus that is clearly a title shared with the Father?

Malachi 2:10; Isaiah 64:8

Note: As our Creator, Jesus is our Father. When, before His Father, He presents His heritage, those whom He has saved by His blood, He will declare -- *Behold I and the children whom thou hast given Me* (Heb.2:13; Isa.8:18).

Both the Father and His Son counseled together for the creation of the world and the redemption of the lost (Zech 6:13). There was a work for both the Father and the Son to do for the salvation of man, hence, God has an infinite vested interest in the redemption of the lost race.

While we are children of Christ, we are also children of the Father-God. He is like our Grandfather and He loves us as He loves His Only-Begotten Son (Psalm 82:6; John 14:21; 17:26). Note also that, the Son of God identifies Himself with man as his Redeemer. Jesus is one with us and, as our "Brother," He makes us one with God (Heb.2:11; Matt.12:46-50; John 17:11,24).

These few texts stating that Jesus acts in God's name and authority reveal that the Father has imbued His Son with all of the attributes of Almighty God. However, God, the Father, retains absolute authority and the Son of God is therefore subject to Him.

CHRIST'S POSITION RELATIVE TO THE FATHER

We have seen that God has greatly exalted His Son to a position alongside of Himself (Rev.3:21; Mk.16:19). But is He, that is appointed, equal with, or

greater than He, that gives the appointment? In the Godhead, Jesus is equal with God and all of His subjects rightly reverence Him as God, but how does He relate directly with His Father and what is the line of command, if such exists?

Earlier in this lesson we observed that Jesus received all of His Godlike attributes directly from His Father-God; even the very work He does and the way that He does it is subject to the Father's will (John 4:34; 2Tim.1:9). Does this give the Father a commanding lead? Notice the following...

18. What statements in the following texts reveal that the Father holds a more authoritative position than the Son?

- John 13:16
- John 14:28
- John 17:3
- John 20:17
- Matthew 20:21–23 (v.23)
- 1Corinthians 8:6
- 1Corinthians 11:3; 3:23
- Ephesians 1:3,17
- 1Peter 1:3
- Hebrews 1:9
- Revelation 1:1; 3:12

Note: As the above texts read, the Son is clearly subordinate to the Father. Jesus, Himself, categorically states that, God is His God; Bible writers who know God, under inspiration, acknowledge the *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through His word, God is indicating that, Jesus is not God in the same sense as the Father is God. This is further verified to us when we understand that Jesus has been *given all* His power, position and authority by His Father, God.

It may be claimed that some of these texts, with their indication of the subordinate position of Christ relative to Almighty God, apply to the time when Jesus was on earth and do not apply to either, the

time before His incarnation, or after His return to heaven. On earth, Jesus was just as much the Son of God and equal with God as when He was in heaven; as a man, He still had divine powers (though He did not use them and always had the option of taking them up again), was still the Sovereign of the universe and was still worshipped as the Son of God, therefore, these statements of Holy Writ, showing Jesus to be next in authority to Jehovah-God, must apply for all eternity (Col.2:9; Eph.4:8-10; Acts.1:11).

19. What Being, if any, is above the Father-God?

Ephesians 4:6

Note: God, being ABOVE ALL, there can be no-one above Him!

20. When God has made an end of sin and this world is made new, what is the final position of Christ with respect to the Father?

1Corinthians 15:27,28

Note: Even though Jesus was subject to God the Father during His incarnation, that period is not the occasion to which this passage is referring. This is evident from the context, for, at the time of His incarnation, Christ's enemies had certainly not been put under His feet. The enemies of God and of Christ are not overthrown until Jesus comes and sin and sinners are no more (1Cor.15:24,25; Heb.10:12,13; Matt.26:31-34,41; Mal.4:3; Rev.19; Ps.110:1-7).

Observe that, when God, the Father, has put all things under the feet of Jesus, His Son, Jesus will still be *subject* to the Father. It is clear that, the Father-God is the *absolute* Supreme Being, the One God, and Jesus is *equal* with Him in *all respects*, even to the point of being called "God" and accepting worship along with the Father.... Yet, the Father is above His Son, and the Son is subject unto Him.

21. What is indicated by the plain statements of the following texts concerning the deity of Christ?

John 1:1,2,3,14

Hebrews 1:8

Note: These statements clearly say that *Jesus is God*. To the cursory reader it may be understood that Jesus is God in the same way that Jehovah, Yahweh, is God. However, in the light of further Scripture this is clearly not the case; Jesus is God by virtue of His appointment and possessing all of the divine attributes of God.

The Father has even given Him His own name such that the Son, along with the Father, is called God (as in the above references), He is also called the Almighty God (Isa.9:6; Rev.1:1,8), but, He is not God in the same sense as the Father is God. The Supreme God is the God of *His Christ*, the God of Jesus (Heb.1:9; 1Cor.11:3; Rev.11:15).

CONCLUSION

The last question and note summarise the lesson expressing the principle point of the study. God and Christ are equal because God has given Him every one of His own divine attributes and has *anointed* Him God. We know not the beginning of the Supreme God, He has no beginning in the same sense as we understand His Son to have had a beginning. Man cannot comprehend an eternity of time or something existing without beginning of days.

In our following study we shall examine the anointing of the Messiah -- Why was Jesus brought forth? Why did God need Christ when He could have done all of the creating Himself? God could have done it all Himself, but, there was a specific and essential reason for bringing forth a duplicate of Himself and this we shall study in our next lesson.



Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive: power and, riches and, wisdom and, strength and, honour and, glory and, blessing. And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in them, heard I saying --- Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Revelation 5:12,13.



Superscripts -- see Appendix A

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