



# THE HISTORICAL JESUS

## LESSON TWO CHRIST'S SOVEREIGNTY HE IS LORD

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### LORD (SOVEREIGNTY)

A glance through a concordance will reveal the fact that "Lord" is one of the commonest titles given to Jesus. This title indicated His Deity, Exaltation, and Sovereignty.

### DEITY

The title "Lord" when used before a name, conveyed the thought of Deity to both Jews and Gentiles. The word "Lord" in the Greek "Kurios" was the equivalent of Jehovah in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, therefore to the Jews "the Lord Jesus" was clearly an ascription of Deity. When the emperor of the Romans referred to himself as the "Lord Caesar," and required his subjects to say "Caesar is Lord," the Gentiles understood that the emperor was claiming divinity. The Christians so understood the term, and chose rather to suffer persecution than to ascribe to a man a title which belonged only to One truly Divine. Only to Him who God had exalted would they ascribe Lordship and render worship.

### EXALTATION

In eternity Christ possessed the title "Son of God" by virtue of His relationship to God:-

**Philippians 2:9** *"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,"* in history He earned the title "Lord" by dying and rising for the salvation of men.

**Acts 2:36** *"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."*

**Acts 10:36** *"You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all."*

**Romans 14:9** *"For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living."*

He was always Divine by nature; He became Lord by achievement. To illustrate—a young man born into the family of a multi-millionaire is not content with inheriting what others have laboured for, but desires to possess only what he was earned by his own achievement. He, therefore, voluntarily relinquishes his privileges, takes his place as a common worker, and by laborious effort wins for himself a place of honour and wealth. In like manner the Son of God, though He was by nature equal to God, voluntarily subjected Himself to sinless human limitations by taking man's nature, became a servant to man, and finally died on the cross for his redemption.

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As a reward He was exalted to Lordship above all creatures, an appropriate recompense, for what better claim could anyone have to rulership over men than the fact that He loved them, and gave Himself for them—**Revelation 1:5** “...and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.” The claim has been acknowledged by millions and the Cross has become a stepping-stone by which Jesus has ascended to sovereignty over men’s hearts.



### **KENOSIS—EMPTIED**

Kenosis means “emptied himself” —**Philippians 2:5-8** “*In your relationship with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!*” Christ set aside some of His Divine attributes to identify with humanity.

### **SOVEREIGNTY**

In Egypt Jehovah revealed Himself to Israel as Redeemer and Saviour; at Sinai as Lord and King. The two go together, for He who became their Saviour has a right to be their Ruler. That is why the Ten Commandments begin with the declaration, “*I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,*” **Exodus 20:2**. In other words, “I the Lord, who redeemed you, have a right to rule you.”

And so it was with Christ and His people. The early Christians recognised instinctively as all true disciples do that the One who redeemed them from sin and destruction has a right to be Lord of their lives. Bought with a price they are not their own **1 Corinthians 6:20** “*You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies,*” but belong to Him who died and rose for them **2 Corinthians 5:15** “*And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*” Therefore, the title “Lord” applied to Jesus by His followers means: “the One who by His death has earned the place of sovereign in my heart, and whom I feel constrained to worship and serve with all my powers.”

When the blind man was reproved for carrying his bed on the sabbath day, he replied, “*He that made me whole, the same said unto me, take up thy bed and walk*” **John 5:11**. He knew instinctively, with the logic, of the heart, that He who had given him life had a right to tell him how to use that life. If Jesus is our Saviour, He must be our Lord.

## JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

### Jesus is the last Adam

**1 Corinthians 15:45** “So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being” the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.”

**1 Corinthians 15:47** “The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven.”

Jesus was Prophet, Priest and King. These 3 offices were made available to Adam:

- Adam (in a **prophetic role**) was responsible to mediate God’s word by trusting, keeping, and preaching it to his wife and children”
- “Adam (in a **priestly role**) was responsible to mediate God’s presence to the world by universally expanding Eden’s borders, filling it with image-bearers, and ruling over creation”.
- “Adam (in a **kingly role**) was given dominion over the world as a servant king, who was to act as God’s image, his representative and son”.

While he did not possess any explicit title or office, Adam functioned as a *prophet, priest, and king*. As the Bible’s story progresses, **these titles identify other people who carry on these original tasks—which all anticipated a greater office holder: Jesus Christ—Prophet, Priest and King.**

### Jesus is testified to by “the Law and the Prophets”

Paul is clear about Christ’s whereabouts in the Old Testament: “But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, **to which the Law and the Prophets testify**” - **Romans 3:21** “But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.”

### Jesus is greater than the Law Covenant

“Christ and His covenant are so much better!”

- A Greater Exodus. “Israel’s exodus from Egypt was more than a one-time event. It became the paradigm for all of God’s redeeming acts to follow”, culminating in ultimate liberation and redemption from sin. “In Christ, an even greater exodus from slavery has occurred”.
- A Greater Rest. “Come to me,” Jesus said, “*all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*” (**Matt. 11:28**). Through the Law-covenant “God structured foretastes of ultimate rest into the life of the nation”. But since it couldn’t deal with sin, the people couldn’t experience true rest; Jesus offers this rest which the Law-Covenant anticipated.
- A Greater Prophet. “*Moses was a great prophet, but Jesus is far greater*”. Moses himself pointed toward him in **Deuteronomy 18:15**: “*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.*” The people were still waiting for this prophet when Jesus came
- A Greater Tabernacle. Post-Exodus, the Lord instructed Israel to erect a tabernacle for him to dwell with his people, which was “a copy and shadow of what is in heaven” (Heb. 8:5). “And just as the tabernacle symbolized God’s greater presence in heaven, so its priesthood and sacrifices symbolized the greater salvation to come”. Jesus was this greater salvation and tabernacle when he “tabernacled among us in his life” and when he “tabernacled among us as he hung on the cross”

## Suffering Servant

The prophet Isaiah particularly speaks of this coming servant, “one who is from Israel but who is also distinct from Israel. A servant who represents Israel because He is Israel’s king and truly obedient son”. **Isaiah 53**

*“Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life[d] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”*

**First**, He will take what is ours, our iniquities. And **second**, He will give us what is His, His righteousness. In the prophet Isaiah, we find a vivid portrait of the future death of Messiah Jesus, our Suffering Servant.

## The Rock—A type of Christ

**Exodus 17:2-6** *“So they quarrelled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses replied, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?” But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?” Then Moses cried out to the Lord, “What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.” The Lord answered Moses, “Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. **Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.**” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.”*

**1 Corinthians 10:1-4** *“For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, **and that rock was Christ.**”*