

The **Bible** Unpacked

Comprehensive Study Series

A compilation of the Bible's teaching
for believers established in the faith

paul mallison

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A compilation of the Bible's teaching
for believers established in the faith

3. Jesus Christ

Composed by Paul Mallison

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Contents

A Quick Word	iv
Suggestions for Study Groups	iv
I. General	
a) Jesus Christ's Eternity	2
b) Jesus Christ's Pre-Eminence	4
c) Jesus Christ's Character	7
d) Jesus Christ's 'Name'	10
II. Jesus Christ and God	
a) Jesus Christ Is the Son of God (I): General	14
b) Jesus Christ Is the Son of God (II): Testimony	16
c) Jesus Christ and God Are One	19
d) Jesus Christ Is Related to like God	23
e) Addendum: The Concept of Subordination	26
Topics in This Series	31
Overview of <i>The Bible Unpacked</i>	33

A Quick Word

This series of studies aims to present a compilation of the Bible's teachings in a clear and readable order. There are 40 booklets in the series, based on the 40 chapters of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Comprehensive Edition*. Each booklet has two sections, which can be used for two or more studies.

See *Topics in This Series* towards the end of this booklet for a full listing of all the topics. Note that studying booklets alternatively from the two major sections (*What to Know* and *What to Do*) would add variety.

The material contains Bible verses. Before the verses are headings, which reflect what the verses say – in particular the parts of the verses in *italics*. The verses are sometimes followed by a comment.

The verses often have a brief introduction. Usually these state who is speaking and often who they are speaking to. Apart from God and Jesus Christ, the main speakers are:

- Moses – who led the Israelites out of Egypt and taught them God's laws;
- David – Israel's greatest king who wrote many of the psalms, most of which are essentially prayers;
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and other prophets – who spoke to the people of Israel on God's behalf; and
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

Much care has been taken in order to correctly interpret the verses. Nevertheless, if you encounter a verse that is used to teach something that is contrary to or goes beyond your understanding, assess its use by doing such things as: reading the passage it is from; and considering how its teaching fits in with Scripture as a whole (e.g. interpret OT teaching in the light of NT teaching).

For more information on *The Bible Unpacked* and free downloads, go to the website: www.thebibleunpacked.net

Suggestions for Study Groups

Preliminary matters:

- Beforehand the leader should: check the context of any verses they are not familiar with; and review the questions. If need be, they should compose questions more applicable to the group.
- Each person should have a Bible, for things such as checking a verse's context. It would also be helpful to have Bible commentaries on hand.
- Pray before beginning the study. Ask God for help in understanding the meaning of the verses and to affect your lives through them. Also pray together at the end.

Doing the study:

- Ideally, read the material and answer the questions prior to the meeting. Then share answers and discuss any issues arising from the material in the meeting.
- Alternatively, read the material and answer the questions in the meeting – reading either aloud as a group or individually (prior to sharing answers). If reading as a group, **try having one person read the headings, another read the verses and another read the comments.** Additionally, a fourth person could read the Bible references.
- Answers need not be limited to only what is mentioned in the material.
- The group should feel free to diverge from the study if related issues arise.

General or concluding questions:

If time permits, conclude with one or more of the following questions:

- What is something that you either: **did not know** before; gained **greater insight** into; or **needed reminding** of?
- What verse would be helpful to memorize and bear in mind during the next week?
- In taking the verses seriously, is there anything you should change in:
 - (a) how you relate to God or to other people; or
 - (b) any other area of your life (e.g. attitudes, values or behavior)?

If so, are there any specific steps you could take to do this?

I. General

The NT makes remarkable claims about aspects of Jesus Christ's being and his character. In doing so it shows Jesus Christ's nature to mirror that of God, and so points to his deity (his "God nature"). The NT also often refers to Jesus Christ's "name", making it a further concept that is important to grasp.

a) Jesus Christ's Eternity

Jesus Christ is alive

ROM 6:10 [PAUL, SPEAKING OF JESUS:] For the death he died, he died to sin once for all, but *the life he lives, he lives to God*.

Jesus Christ existed in the beginning . . .

1JN 2:13A [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] I am writing to you, fathers, because you know *him who has existed from the beginning*. GNT

Jesus Christ existed in the beginning, before all time.

. . . Jesus Christ was before all things

JOHN 17:5 [JESUS, TO GOD:] And now, Father, glorify me at your side with *the glory I had with you before the world was created*.

Jesus Christ will be alive forever

HEB 7:24–25 But because *Jesus lives forever, he will never stop serving as priest*. ²⁵*So he is able always to save those who come to God through him because he always lives*, asking God to help them.

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Jesus Christ is self-existing – he is “the life”

JOHN 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so *he has granted the Son also to have life in himself*. ESV

JOHN 11:25 Jesus said to her, *“I am the resurrection and the life*. The person who believes in me, even though he dies, will live. ISV

Descriptions of Jesus Christ as “the life” reflect the fact that he has life inherent (cf. 5:26 ↑) as part of his essential nature, and as such is self-existing. Primarily they point to Jesus Christ as the source of life – the one who gives life – as the latter part of this verse suggests.

Jesus Christ remains the same

HEB 13:8 *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever!*

How is Jesus Christ associated with “life”?

In what way or ways do you think that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb 13:8)?

How does – or how should – the fact that Jesus Christ is everywhere encourage you?

b) Jesus Christ's Pre-Eminence

(➔ *Jesus Christ Is Lord of All*, in 14. *The New Order*)

Jesus Christ is greater than all people . . .

JOHN 3:31 [JOHN THE BAPTIST, SPEAKING OF JESUS:] *The one who comes from above is superior to all.* The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things. *The one who comes from heaven is superior to all.*

. . . In fact, Jesus Christ is greater than all things

COL 1:15–18 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, ¹⁶for all things in heaven and on earth were created by him – all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers – all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things and all things are held together in him. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church, as well as the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead, so that he himself may become first in all things.*

The term “firstborn” (v. 15) points to Christ’s pre-eminence. It alludes to the privileged status of a firstborn son in a Jewish family.

Jesus Christ has divine glory

MATT 25:31 *When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.*

Note that “the Son of Man” was the title Jesus used for himself the most – approximately 80 times. It is a messianic title (cf. Dan 7:13–14), but it also underlines his humanity.

A vision of Jesus Christ, indicative of his surpassing greatness and glory

REV 5:11–13 [JOHN, DESCRIBING A VISION:] *Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels in a circle around the throne, as well as the living creatures and the elders. Their number was ten thousand times ten thousand – thousands times thousands –¹²all of whom were singing in a loud voice: “Worthy is the lamb who was killed to receive*

power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and praise!” ¹³*Then I heard every creature – in heaven, on earth, under the earth, in the sea, and all that is in them – singing: “To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be praise, honor, glory, and ruling power forever and ever!”*

The “Lamb” (vv. 12, 13) is a name for Jesus Christ, alluding to his sacrificial death which in a number of aspects mirrored the offering of a lamb at Passover and/or as a sin offering.

Jesus Christ has mighty, sovereign power

EPH 6:10 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of *his mighty power*. GNT

PHIL 3:20–21 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But our citizenship is in heaven – and we also await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform these humble bodies of ours into the likeness of his glorious body by means of *that power by which he is able to subject all things to himself*.

Jesus Christ has superlative knowledge and wisdom

JOHN 16:30 [THE DISCIPLES, TO JESUS:] Now *we know that you know everything* and do not need anyone to ask you anything. Because of this we believe that you have come from God.

LUKE 21:15 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] For *I will give you the words along with the wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict*.

Jesus Christ has wisdom far superior to that of any adversary that believers may encounter.

Jesus Christ is everywhere

EPH 4:10 So Jesus came down, and he is the same One who went up above all the sky. *Christ did that to fill everything with his presence*.

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MATT 18:20 [JESUS:] For *where two or three are assembled in my name, I am there among them*.

Jesus Christ is with all believers everywhere – always.

What does Jesus Christ's glory show about him?

What are some implications of Jesus Christ's sovereign power for believers?

Choose one verse or phrase from Colossians 1:15-18 that you find particularly significant - and say why.

c) Jesus Christ's Character

(⇒ *Jesus Christ's Personality* [in his mission], in 11. *God's Promised Messiah*)

Jesus Christ is holy

ACTS 4:27 [BELIEVERS, TO GOD:] Then they turned against *your holy Servant Jesus*, your chosen Messiah. CEV

HEB 7:26–28 Jesus, then, is the High Priest that meets our needs. *He is holy; he has no fault or sin in him; he has been set apart from sinners and raised above the heavens.* ²⁷*He is not like other high priests; he does not need to offer sacrifices every day for his own sins first and then for the sins of the people. He offered one sacrifice, once and for all, when he offered himself.* ²⁸*The Law of Moses appoints men who are imperfect to be high priests; but God's promise made with the vow, which came later than the Law, appoints the Son, who has been made perfect for ever.* GNT

Jesus Christ is righteous . . .

1JN 2:1B [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ the righteous One* . . .

. . . Jesus Christ judges in righteousness and with justice

PS 72:2 *He will judge Your people with righteousness, And Your poor with justice.* NKJV

This is from a messianic passage, understood to be ultimately fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is faithful

2THES 3:3 But *the Lord is faithful*, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.

Jesus Christ is loving

EPH 3:18–19 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] And I pray that you and all God's holy people will have the power to *understand the greatness of Christ's love—how wide and how long and how high and how deep*

that love is. ¹⁹*Christ's love is greater than anyone can ever know, but I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God.* NCV™

Jesus Christ shows grace . . .

1TIM 1:14 *And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.* NKJV

. . . and Jesus Christ is merciful

JUDE 1:21 [JUDE, TO BELIEVERS:] *Remain in God's love as you look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you eternal life.* GW

Jesus Christ can display anger

REV 6:16–17 They [people in the end times] said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who is seated on the throne and from *the wrath of the Lamb,* ¹⁷*because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to withstand it?”*

In what sense has Jesus Christ “been made perfect” (Heb 7:28)?
Hasn’t he always been perfect?

What can we do to more fully grasp and experience Jesus Christ’s
great love?

Choose one attribute of Jesus Christ that if you kept it more in view,
would affect your worship and/or your daily living. What affect would
it have?

d) Jesus Christ's 'Name'

In biblical times, a person's name represented or embodied their whole person – including their nature, authority and significance. This concept is in view in references to the “name” of a person.

Jesus Christ's “name” signifies Jesus Christ himself

ROM 10:12–13 For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses *all who call on him*. ¹³For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The fact that Jesus Christ's “name” is synonymous with him is illustrated by the equivalent phrases “call on him” (v. 12) and “calls on the name of the Lord” (v. 13).

Jesus Christ's “name” is correlated with his authority and power

ACTS 3:6–7, 16 But Peter said [to a crippled man], “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!*” ⁷And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ... [PETER, SPEAKING OF JESUS' NAME:] ¹⁶And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all. ESV

Peter gave the command in the “name” or by the authority of Jesus Christ, his name representing or incorporating his authority and power – “By the power of Jesus Christ” (NCV).

Jesus Christ's “name” signifies Jesus Christ in his attainment of forgiveness of sins . . .

1JN 2:12 [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] I am writing to you, little children, that *your sins have been forgiven because of his name*.

... Likewise, it signifies Jesus Christ in his attainment of salvation and eternal life

ACTS 4:12 *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved.*

1JN 5:13 [JOHN:] *I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

Jesus Christ's "name" signifies him in his gospel and cause

ACTS 9:15–16 *But the Lord said to him, "Go, because this man [Saul] is my chosen instrument to carry my name before Gentiles and kings and the people of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."*

Saul (later known as Paul) was to take the message about Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. This would result in him suffering greatly for Jesus Christ and his cause – the cause of spreading the gospel.

Note: God has given Jesus Christ a name that is superior to all others

PHIL 2:9B–11 *God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow – in heaven and on earth and under the earth –¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*

Explain in your own words the relationship between Jesus Christ and his "name".

In what ways can we make reference to or use Jesus Christ's "name" (cf. Acts 3:6–7, 16)?

What does the Bible mean by trusting or calling upon the "name" of Jesus Christ?

II. Jesus Christ and God

The claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is one of the most central teachings in the NT. In addition to this, the NT says much that associates Jesus Christ with God. This teaching forms the basis of a large portion of what distinguishes Christianity from other religions.

a) Jesus Christ Is the Son of God (I): General

Jesus Christ is the Son of God . . .

HEB 4:14 Therefore since we [believers] have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, *Jesus the Son of God*, let us hold fast to our confession.

. . . Jesus Christ is God's only Son

1JN 4:9B *God has sent his one and only Son* into the world so that we may live through him.

So, God is Jesus Christ's Father . . .

COL 1:3 [PAUL, TO THE COLOSSIAN BELIEVERS:] We always thank *God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in our prayers for you. GW

. . . and God loves his Son

JOHN 3:35 *The Father loves the Son and has placed all things under his authority.*

Jesus Christ is the image of God . . .

2COR 4:4B . . . the glorious gospel of *Christ, who is the image of God*.

The assertion that Jesus Christ is the image of God – having the form and fullness of God (as per the following subsection) – reflects and supports the assertion that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

. . . Jesus Christ has the form and fullness of God

PHIL 2:5–6 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had, ⁶who though *he existed in the form of God* did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped . . .

COL 1:19 *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son . . .*

The phrase “all his fullness” refers to: the fullness of God’s nature (cf. GNT, NIV) – “the sum total of the divine perfection, powers, and attributes” (AMP); and/or “all of himself” (NCV; cf. CEV, NLT), meaning that God himself in all his fullness dwells in Jesus Christ.

What does the Bible mean in saying that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? In what sense is he God’s Son?

What do you think Paul means in saying that Jesus Christ "existed in the form of God" (Philippians 2:6)?

Why is the teaching that Jesus Christ is the Son of God so central and significant to Christianity?

b) Jesus Christ Is the Son of God (II): Testimony

God testifies to Jesus Christ being his Son

MATT 3:16–17 After Jesus was baptized, just as he was coming up out of the water, the heavens opened and *he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming on him.* ¹⁷*And a voice from heaven said, “This is my one dear Son; in him I take great delight.”*

Jesus Christ himself testifies to being the Son of God

MATT 26:63–64A But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: *Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!*” ⁶⁴*Jesus said to him, “It is as you said.* NKJV

Others also testify to Jesus Christ being the Son of God

MARK 3:11 *When evil spirits saw Jesus, they fell down before him and shouted, “You are the Son of God!”* NCV™

JOHN 1:32–34 And *John gave this testimony:* “I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and stay on him. ³³I still did not know that he was the one, but God, who sent me to baptize with water, had said to me, ‘You will see the Spirit come down and stay on a man; he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴*I have seen it,*” said *John, “and I tell you that he is the Son of God.”* GNT

Jesus Christ’s deeds are evidence that he is the Son of God . . .

JOHN 20:30–31 *Now Jesus performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not recorded in this book.* ³¹*But these are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

The phrase “these are recorded” (v. 31) refers to the miraculous signs that John did record as testimony to Jesus Christ being the Son of God, his miraculous deeds giving credence to his miraculous claim.

... Other events of Jesus Christ's incarnation are further evidence

MATT 27:50–52, 54 *Then Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and gave up his spirit.* ⁵¹*Just then the temple curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks were split apart.* ⁵²*And tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had died were raised. ...* ⁵⁴*Now when the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and what took place, they were extremely terrified and said, "Truly this one was God's Son!"*

ROM 1:3–4 It [the gospel] is about his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: as to his humanity, he was born a descendant of David; ⁴*as to his divine holiness, he was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death.* GNT

Jesus Christ's resurrection is a powerful testimony to him being the Son of God.

Why do you think that evil spirits shouted out that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. Mark 3:11)?

If you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, why do you?

Is there anything that you could add to your previous answer (e.g. further evidence), in testifying to a non-believer that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

c) Jesus Christ and God Are One

(➔ *Jesus Christ Is Related to like God*, p. 23; *II. God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as One*, in 4. *The Holy Spirit*)

Jesus Christ and God are one – each is in the other

JOHN 10:30, 36–38 [JESUS:] *The Father and I are one.* ... ³⁶do you say about the one whom the Father set apart and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? ³⁷If I do not perform the deeds of my Father, do not believe me. ³⁸But if I do them, even if you do not believe me, believe the deeds, so that you may come to know and understand that *I am in the Father and the Father is in me.*

A number of commentators state that the Greek for “one” (v. 30) is neuter, meaning that it denotes “one thing”, rather than “one person”. God (the Father) and Jesus Christ are generally understood to have a unity of essence or nature, but not be the same person. Particularly in light of the assertion that “I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (v. 38b) this would appear to involve a spiritual union. This would include a unity of purpose, as vv. 37–38a suggest.

To know or see Jesus Christ is to know or see God

JOHN 14:7–9 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *If you have known me, you will know my Father too. And from now on you do know him and have seen him.*” ⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be content.” ⁹Jesus replied, “Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? *The person who has seen me has seen the Father!* How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

Jesus Christ is called “God” . . .

JOHN 20:28 *Thomas replied to him* [Jesus], “*My Lord and my God!*”

JOHN 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God.* ESV

Jesus Christ is understood to be “the Word” – with the man Jesus being the manifestation of “the Word” (cf. v. 14).

. . . and titles of God are applied to Jesus Christ

LUKE 2:11 [AN ANGEL, TO SHEPHERDS:] Today your Savior is born in the city of David. He is *Christ the Lord*.

The Greek word used for “Lord” in the NT, is the same Greek word used for God’s name – “LORD” (or “Yahweh”) – in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the OT). It is used many times in reference to God (particularly in the OT) and also in reference to Jesus Christ (in the NT, as demonstrated here).

REV 22:13 [JESUS CHRIST:] *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.* NCV™

This alludes to God’s descriptions of himself as: “the first and... the last” (Isa 44:6; cf. 48:12); “the Alpha and the Omega” (Rev 1:8); and “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.” (Rev 21:6).

Other OT references to God are applied to Jesus Christ

EPH 4:7–8 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*⁸ *Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he captured captives; he gave gifts to men.”*

Verse 8 quotes Psalm 68:18 and Philippians 2:9–11 below alludes to Isaiah 45:23b. Both of the OT verses contain references to God which are applied to Jesus Christ in these NT verses.

PHIL 2:9–11 As a result God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that *at the name of Jesus every knee will bow* – in heaven and on earth and under the earth –¹¹ *and every tongue confess* that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Some actions are attributed to both God and Jesus Christ

LUKE 8:38–39 The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying,³⁹ “Return to your home, and *declare what God has done for you.*” So he went away, *proclaiming throughout the whole town what Jesus had done for him.*

MARK 2:5–7 *When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”*⁶ Now some of the experts in the law were sitting there, turning these things over in their minds:⁷ “Why

does this man speak this way? He is blaspheming! *Who can forgive sins but God alone?*”

Although the teachers of the law were mistaken in thinking that Jesus could not forgive sins, they were correct in asserting that the authority and capacity to forgive sins belongs to God.

Some things are said to be both God's and Jesus Christ's

EPH 5:5 For you can be confident of this one thing: that no person who is immoral, impure, or greedy (such a person is an idolater) has any inheritance in *the kingdom of Christ and God*.

REV 7:10 They [believers in heaven] were shouting out in a loud voice, “*Salvation belongs to our God, to the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!*”

What did Jesus mean by saying, “I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (John 10:38)?

In what sense is Jesus Christ God?

How is the association of Jesus Christ with God important for us?

d) Jesus Christ Is Related to like God

The fact that God's people relate to Jesus Christ in ways in which they relate to God, reflects a unity or oneness of Jesus Christ with God. Thus the teaching in this section supplements the teaching in the previous section.

Jesus Christ is worshiped

LUKE 24:51–52 While he [Jesus] was blessing them, he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. ⁵²*They worshiped him* and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ISV

In conjunction with biblical teaching that God alone is to be worshiped, the Bible's accounts of people worshiping Jesus Christ are indicative of his oneness with God.

Jesus Christ is honored and glorified

JOHN 5:22–23 Furthermore, the Father does not judge anyone, but has assigned all judgment to the Son, ²³so that *all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. The one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father* who sent him.

2PET 3:18 [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] But grow in the grace and knowledge of *our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory be to him now and forever! Amen.* NCV™

People pray to Jesus Christ

JOHN 14:14 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] If you *ask me anything in my name*, I will do it.

ACTS 7:59–60 They continued to stone Stephen while *he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"* ⁶⁰*Then he fell to his knees and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!"* When he had said this, he died.

People obey and serve Jesus Christ

MATT 28:19–20A [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and

the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰*teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

JAMES 1:1A From *James, a servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.* CEV

People have faith in Jesus Christ

JOHN 14:1 Jesus said to his disciples, “Don’t be worried! *Have faith in God and have faith in me.* CEV

People put their hope in Jesus Christ

1THES 1:3B [PAUL, TO THE THESSALONIAN BELIEVERS:] And we thank him that you continue to be strong because of *your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.* NCV™

In worship and prayer, should we be conscious of whether we are addressing God or Jesus Christ (or both)? Does it matter?

Is there anything we should do differently in relating to Jesus Christ in comparison to relating to God?

Why is honoring Jesus Christ also honoring to God (cf. John 5:23)?

e) Addendum: The Concept of Subordination

➔ *Epilogue: God Works through Jesus Christ, in 11. God's Promised Messiah*

The concept of Jesus Christ being eternally subordinate to God (as opposed to only being subordinate to God during his incarnation) is a historical doctrine that is still debated by Christian scholars. As such, some would disagree with or wish to qualify propositions put forward in this section.

So in “coming to grips with” the propositions in this section, one should do so prayerfully and be prepared to research further (e.g. consult commentaries). As well as reading them critically, one should also approach them with an open mind, to try to understand or explain them, rather than aiming to “explain them away”.

Jesus Christ is described as being subordinate to God

1COR 11:3 [PAUL:] But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and *God is the head of Christ*.

1COR 15:28 But when everything has been put under him, then *the Son himself will also become subject to the one who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all*. ISV

God is both the God and the Father of Jesus Christ

JOHN 20:17 Jesus replied, “Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. Go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending *to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*.’”

EPH 1:3, 17 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Blessed is *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ. ... ¹⁷I pray that *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory*, may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him, ...

The expression “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 3) also occurs in Romans 15:6, 2 Corinthians 1:3 and 1 Peter 1:3. 2 Corinthians 11:31 uses the similar expression, “The God and Father of the Lord Jesus ...”

Jesus Christ was chosen and sent by God . . .

LUKE 9:35 A voice came from the cloud, saying, “*This is my Son, whom I have chosen. Listen to him!*” NCV™

JOHN 8:42 Jesus replied, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for *I have come from God* and am now here. *I have not come on my own initiative, but he sent me.*

. . . Jesus Christ is God’s servant

ACTS 4:30 [THE EARLY BELIEVERS, PRAYING TO GOD:] Stretch out your hand to heal, and grant that wonders and miracles may be performed through the name of *your holy Servant Jesus*. GNT

HEB 8:2 *He* [Christ] *serves as High Priest* in the Most Holy Place, that is, in the real tent which was put up by the Lord, not by human hands. GNT

God’s seniority is reflected by the things that God has done for Jesus Christ

JOHN 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so *he has granted the Son also to have life in himself*. ESV

COL 1:19 For *God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son* ...

HEB 1:1–2 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by *his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world*. ESV

Note: Verses speaking of equality of Jesus Christ with God

(➔ *Jesus Christ is the image of God* . . . , p. 14; . . . *Jesus Christ has the form and fullness of God*, p. 14; *Jesus Christ and God Are One*, p. 19; *Jesus Christ Is Related to like God*, p. 23)

JOHN 5:16–18 Now because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began persecuting him. ¹⁷So *he told them, “My Father is working until now, and I too am working.”* ¹⁸For this reason the Jewish leaders were trying even harder to kill him, because

not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but *he was also calling God his own Father, thus making himself equal with God.*

JOHN 5:22–23A Furthermore, the Father does not judge anyone, but has assigned all judgment to the Son, ²³*so that all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father.*

PHIL 2:5–7 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had, ⁶*who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped* ⁷*but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature.*

Here “equality with God” appears to refer primarily at least to “existed in the form of God”. As such v. 6 would appear to be referring to Jesus Christ having an equality of “form” with God, speaking of Jesus Christ being prepared for his mission to forgo his divine form for “the form of a slave” (v. 7).

What do think the Bible means in describing God (the Father) as the “God” of Jesus Christ?

Do you think that Jesus Christ is in any way subordinate to God? Explain your answer.

In what way/s is Jesus Christ equal to God?

Topics in This Series

Section I: What to Know

Part A. God and Spiritual Powers

1. God's Being

- I. Basics
- II. God's Pre-Eminence

2. God's Character

- I. Holy Characteristics
- II. Loving Characteristics

3. Jesus Christ

- I. General
- II. Jesus Christ and God

4. The Holy Spirit

- I. General
- II. God, Christ and the Holy Spirit as One

5. Angels, Satan and Demons

- I. Angels
- II. Satan and Demons

Part B. God and the World: Basics

6. God's Creation

- I. General
- II. God's Creation of People

7. God's Sovereignty

- I. God's Supreme Authority
- II. God's Control over the World

8. God's Word

- I. General
- II. Key Old Testament Covenants

9. The Problem of Sin

- I. General
- II. The Law's Provision for Israel's Sin

10. God's Judgment

- I. Basics
- II. The Manifestation of God's Judgment

Part C. God and the World: Jesus Christ

11. God's Promised Messiah

- I. The Messiah's Identity
- II. The Messiah's Purpose and Person

12. Jesus Christ's Mission

- I. God's Enablement of Jesus Christ
- II. Jesus Christ's Ministry, Death and Resurrection

13. Salvation through Jesus Christ

- I. Salvation from Sin
- II. Salvation for the World

14. The New Order

- I. Jesus Christ and the Law's Diminished Role
- II. Key Elements of the New Order

15. 'The Last Things'

- I. Jesus Christ's Return and the Final Judgment
- II. The Afterlife

Part D. God and His Own People

16. The Standing of God's People

- I. Belonging to God
- II. Being 'in' Jesus Christ

17. Keys to God's Interaction with His People

- I. Basics
- II. God's Holy Spirit in His People

18. God's Transformation of His People

- I. General
- II. Spiritual Attributes

19. God's Care of His People

- I. God's Saving of His People
- II. God's Preservation of His People

20. God's Plans for His People

- I. General
- II. God's Plans for Israel

Section II. What to Do

Part E. Relating to God

21. Being Right with God

- I. Getting Right with God
- II. Staying Right with God

22. Having Faith in God

- I. Faith and Hope
- II. What Not to Do

23. Loving, Fearing and Obeying God

- I. Loving and Fearing God
- II. Obeying God

24. Connecting with God

- I. Being Close to God
- II. Praying to God

25. Exalting God

- I. Instructions
- II. Reasons to Exalt God

Part F. Church Life

26. Being One Body

- I. General
- II. Caring for the Body

27. Worshiping God

- I. General
- II. Offerings

28. Serving God

- I. Preliminary Instructions and Insights
- II. Doing God's Work

29. Significant Practices

- I. Symbolic Rites
- II. Other Significant Practices

30. Church Leadership

- I. General
- II. Teaching in the Church

Part G. Relating to People

31. Love

- I. Loving Qualities
- II. Antitheses of Love

32. Justice

- I. Justice in Action
- II. Being True

33. Wisdom

- I. Being Wise
- II. Antitheses of Wisdom and Knowledge

34. Common Relationships

- I. Family Relationships
- II. Civil Relationships

35. Spreading the Gospel

- I. Instructions
- II. Insights

Part H. Persevering

36. Standing Firm

- I. General
- II. Spiritual Warfare

37. Rejecting Sin

- I. Encountering Sin
- II. Avoiding Sin and Being Holy

38. Major Pitfalls

- I. Pride
- II. Riches and Sex

39. Hard Times


- I. General
- II. Praying in Hard Times


40. Persecution


- I. The Persecution of God's People
- II. What to Do in Persecution

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There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, as shown below. Each edition is an abbreviated version of the next longest edition. As such they have similar structures. Four of the editions have studies based on them, with the same text along with questions. For more details and free downloads of all the material, go to www.thebibleunpacked.net.

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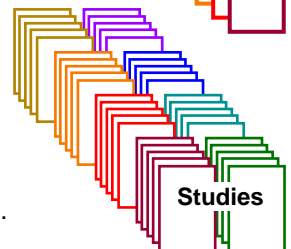
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Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

Barnabas Fund – www.barnabasfund.org

It provides material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local Christian leaders.

Christian Faith and Freedom – www.cffreedom.org

It advocates on behalf of and aids persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity International – www.csi-int.org

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide – www.csw.org.uk

It advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

Compass Direct – www.compassdirect.org

This is a Christian news service providing news, reports, interviews and analyses of situations facing persecuted Christians.

Open Doors – sb.od.org; www.opendoors.org.au

It provides Bibles and other Christian materials, to prepare believers for persecution and equip them to maintain a witness to the Gospel.

Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc/; www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also www.idop.org
Receive weekly updates by sending a blank email to join-rlpb@hub.xc.org.

The Bible League – www.bibleleague.org/persecuted; www.bibleleague.com

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com; www.persecution.com.au

VOM provides Bibles, literature, radio broadcasts and other assistance to help persecuted Christians spread the gospel. They also send material aid.

Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.' Matthew 25:40 NCV

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