

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

11. God's Promised Messiah

Composed by Paul Mallison

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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. The Messiah's Identity

The OT Scriptures speak of a leader chosen and sent by God to save his people and to reign forever. This leader is known as the "Christ" or the "Messiah" – which are Greek and Hebrew terms respectively, meaning the "anointed" or the "Anointed One". In NT times the Jews looked forward to the Messiah's coming and many still do today. But the NT provides compelling evidence that this Messiah was in fact Jesus Christ.

Note that this chapter is in a sense a prologue to the whole of *Part C. God and the World: Jesus Christ*, as Jesus being the Christ or Messiah undergirds many of the topics.

a) The Promise of a Messiah in OT Scripture

The OT Scriptures speak of a coming anointed one of God . . .

DAN 9:25A [THE ARCHANGEL GABRIEL, TO DANIEL:] So know and understand: From the issuing of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem *until an anointed one, a prince arrives*, there will be a period of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.

Regarding the “weeks”, many scholars understand the term to denote seven years.

. . . The anointed one would have God’s Spirit

ISA 61:1 [THE MESSIAH:] *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; . . .* ESV

These words are prophetically attributed to the Messiah.

The OT Scriptures describe him as a remarkable chosen servant of God

ISA 42:1A *The LORD says, “Here is my servant, whom I strengthen—the one I have chosen, with whom I am pleased.* GNT

ISA 52:13 [GOD:] *The LORD says: My servant will succeed! He will be given great praise and the highest honors.* CEV

The OT Scriptures promise that such a one would arise as a great ruler of Israel . . .

MIC 5:2 [GOD:] As for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, seemingly insignificant among the clans of Judah – *from you a king will emerge who will rule over Israel on my behalf, one whose origins are in the distant past.*

NUM 24:17–18 [BALAAM:] *I see someone who will come some day, someone who will come, but not soon. A star will come from Jacob; a ruler will rise from Israel. He will crush the heads of the Moabites and smash the skulls of the sons of Sheth.* ¹⁸*Edom will be conquered;*

his enemy Edom will be conquered, but Israel will grow wealthy.
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This prophecy may have been initially fulfilled in David, but probably primarily or ultimately refers to the promised, divinely appointed leader. It speaks of him crushing renowned enemies of Israel, often used to symbolize her enemies in general.

... and that he would bring justice and salvation to the nations

ISA 42:3–4 [GOD:] He will not break off a bent reed or put out a flickering lamp. *He will bring lasting justice to all.* ⁴He will not lose hope or courage; *he will establish justice on the earth.* Distant lands eagerly wait for his teaching. GNT

ISA 49:6B [GOD, AS SPEAKING TO THE MESSIAH:] *I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.* ESV

The ruler would be a descendant of King David, in accordance with God's promise to David

Ps 132:11, 17–18 *The LORD swore an oath to David. This is a truth he will not take back: "I will set one of your own descendants on your throne. ... ¹⁷There I will make a horn sprout up for David. I will prepare a lamp for my anointed one. ¹⁸I will clothe his enemies with shame, but the crown on my anointed one will shine."* GW

The "horn" and "lamp" (v. 17) speak of the strength ("horn") and continuation ("lamp") of David's dynasty, and would be embodied by the Messiah.

The OT Scriptures also say that he would suffer and die, for people's sins – but then be raised and exalted

ISA 53:5–6 *He was wounded for our rebellious acts. He was crushed for our sins. He was punished so that we could have peace, and we received healing from his wounds. ⁶We have all strayed like sheep. Each one of us has turned to go his own way, and the LORD has laid all our sins on him.* GW

ISA 53:10–12 *But it was the LORD who decided to crush him and make him suffer. The LORD made his life a penalty offering, but he*

will still see his descendants and live a long life. He will complete the things the LORD wants him to do. ¹¹“After his soul suffers many things, he will see life and be satisfied. My good servant will make many people right with God; he will carry away their sins. ¹²For this reason I [God] will make him a great man among people, and he will share in all things with those who are strong. He willingly gave his life and was treated like a criminal. But he carried away the sins of many people and asked forgiveness for those who sinned.” NCV™

These verses speak in part of God raising his messianic servant to life, following his death. The term “his descendants” (v. 10b) is understood to refer to the messianic servant’s spiritual descendants – those who would be given life through him. Note that Isaiah 52:13–53:12 has been called “the gospel in the OT” and is quoted in the NT more than any other OT passage.

Briefly explain the term or concept of the “Messiah”.

What do we know about the Messiah’s relationship with God?

What elements of the gospel message are in the passages from Isaiah 53?

b) Jesus Is the Promised Messiah

Bear in mind that in his first advent, or coming, Jesus Christ did not come as an all-conquering ruler, which is how the Messiah is depicted in much of OT messianic prophecy. The NT indicates that this aspect of messianic prophecy will be fulfilled on Jesus Christ's second coming.

Jesus Christ is the one chosen by God

LUKE 9:35 Then a voice came from the cloud, saying, "*This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him!*"

The voice is considered to be God's voice, speaking about Jesus.

Jesus Christ is the one anointed by God, with the Holy Spirit . . .

ACTS 10:38A [PETER:] You know that *God anointed Jesus from Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.* GW

The descending of the Holy Spirit onto Jesus at his baptism (cf. Matt 3:16–17) was God's anointing of Jesus for his mission. It is also understood to mark Jesus as the Messiah – the "Anointed One" – and fulfilled OT prophecies that God would bestow his Spirit on the Messiah (cf. Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1).

. . . Jesus is the Messiah

ACTS 3:19–20 [PETER, TO A CROWD OF LARGELY JEWS:] Therefore repent and turn back so that your sins may be wiped out, ²⁰so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and so that he may send *the Messiah appointed for you – that is, Jesus.*

The OT Scriptures testify to Jesus being the Messiah, the Christ

ACTS 18:28 For with his strong arguments he [Apollos] defeated the Jews in public debates by *proving from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.* GNT

For the OT Scriptures speak of the sufferings and resurrection of the Christ as fulfilled in Jesus . . .

ACTS 17:2–3 Paul went to the Jews in the synagogue, as he customarily did, and on three Sabbath days *he addressed them from the scriptures,* ³*explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and to rise from the dead, saying, “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.”*

. . . and they speak of the messianic salvation that would come through Jesus Christ

LUKE 1:69–70 [ZECHARIAH, SPEAKING OF WHAT GOD HAD DONE:] *He has raised up a mighty Savior for us in the family of his servant David.* ⁷⁰*He made this promise through his holy prophets long ago.* GW

ACTS 10:43 *About him [Jesus Christ] all the prophets testify, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.*

Luke 1:69–70 refers to the messianic salvation prophesied in the writings of the prophets (v. 70) as coming through Jesus, who was from the family line of David (v. 69). Acts 10:43 states that the prophets testify that the forgiveness of sins, a key aspect of this salvation, comes through Jesus Christ.

What was the significance of God anointing Jesus with the Holy Spirit? What did it show about Jesus? (Do not limit your answer to just what is mentioned in the above verses and comments.)

What did Paul use to demonstrate to others that Jesus Christ is the Messiah (cf. Acts 17:2–3; 18:28)?

What reasons do we have to believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah?

c) Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus

Broadly speaking, there are two ways in which prophecies are spoken of as being fulfilled by Jesus Christ. One is that prophecies or predictions were accomplished or came true in Jesus' life. The other is that aspects of his life have marked parallels in OT Scripture which they thus fulfill in the sense that they correspond to them and reveal a deeper, more complete meaning in them.

The following subsections contain examples of prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. There are numerous other ones.

Prophecy fulfilled in Jesus' birth and early years

MATT 2:1–6 After *Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea*, in the time of King Herod, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem ²saying, “Where is the one who is born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³When King Herod heard this he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴After assembling all the chief priests and experts in the law, *he asked them where the Christ was to be born.* ⁵“*In Bethlehem of Judea,*” they said, “*for it is written this way by the prophet:* ⁶‘*And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are in no way least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.*’”

MATT 2:13–15 After they [the wise men] had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to look for the child to kill him.” ¹⁴*Then he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and went to Egypt.* ¹⁵*He stayed there until Herod died. In this way what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet was fulfilled: “I called my Son out of Egypt.”*

Prophecy fulfilled in Jesus' life and ministry

MATT 8:16–17 In the evening the people brought him [Jesus] many who were possessed by demons. *He forced the evil spirits out of people with a command and cured everyone who was sick.* ¹⁷*So what*

the prophet Isaiah had said came true: "He took away our weaknesses and removed our diseases." GW

LUKE 4:16B–21 He [Jesus, in a synagogue] stood up to read,¹⁷ and *the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,*¹⁸ *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and the regaining of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed,*¹⁹ *to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him.²¹ *Then he began to tell them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled even as you heard it being read."*

Jesus' claim to fulfill the messianic prophecy of one who would be anointed by God with the Holy Spirit to carry out God's messianic work (vv. 18–19) was supported by his proclamation of the good news of God's salvation and in his healing works, whereby he liberated people from various kinds of bondage. The release from sin that Jesus would accomplish was a further aspect of his fulfillment of this prophecy.

Prophecy fulfilled in Jesus' death

JOHN 19:31–37 Then, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not stay on the crosses on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was an especially important one), the Jewish leaders asked Pilate to have the victims' legs broken and the bodies taken down.³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men who had been crucified with Jesus, first the one and then the other.³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, *they did not break his legs.*³⁴ *But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and blood and water flowed out immediately.*³⁵ And the person who saw it has testified (and his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth), so that you also may believe.³⁶ *For these things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled, "Not a bone of his will be broken."*³⁷ *And again another scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."*

1PET 2:21–25 [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] This is, in fact, what you were called to do, because *the Messiah also suffered for you* and left an example for you to follow in his steps. ²²“*He never committed a sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.*” ²³*When he was insulted, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he did not threaten but made it his habit to commit the matter to the one who judges fairly.* ²⁴*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to those sins and live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.* ²⁵*For you were like sheep that kept going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.* ISV

This passage draws heavily from Isaiah 53, indicative of Jesus having fulfilled what is a monumental messianic prophecy.

Prophecy fulfilled in Jesus’ resurrection

ACTS 2:30–32 [PETER:] Therefore, since he [David] was a prophet and knew that God had promised him with an oath to put one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹*he looked ahead and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ: ‘He was not abandoned to Hades, and his flesh did not experience decay.’* ³²*It was this very Jesus whom God raised, and of that we are all witnesses.* ISV

“Hades” was a name given to the place of the dead, sometimes translated as “the grave”.

Nominate a fulfillment by Jesus of prophecy that you either: did not know of before; or find particularly convincing evidence that Jesus is the Messiah?

Do you know of other examples of Jesus Christ's fulfillment of messianic prophecies? If so, what are they?

How could you use Jesus Christ's fulfillment of messianic prophecies in testifying to other people about Jesus Christ?

d) Further Testimony to Jesus Being the Messiah

Jesus' deeds showed that he is the Messiah, the Christ

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.*

Jesus himself claimed to be the Christ

JOHN 4:25–26 *The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (the one called Christ); “whenever he comes, he will tell us everything.”²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I, the one speaking to you, am he.”*

Jesus' followers acknowledged him as the Christ . . .

JOHN 1:41, 45 *He [Andrew] first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah!” (which is translated Christ). . . .⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law, and the prophets also wrote about – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

. . . and Jesus being the Christ was a central aspect of their teaching

ACTS 5:42 *And every day both in the temple courts and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus was the Christ.*

ACTS 9:22 *But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. ESV*

Others also acknowledged Jesus as the Christ

MATT 21:9 *The crowds that went ahead of him [Jesus, as he rode into Jerusalem] and those following kept shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of*

David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

The crowd was acknowledging Jesus as the Christ, referring to him with messianic expressions in declaring him "the Son of David" and the one "who comes in the name of the Lord".

Note: The Christ is understood to be the Son of God

MATT 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are *the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"

MATT 26:63B The high priest said to him [Jesus], "I charge you under oath by the living God, tell us if you are *the Christ, the Son of God.*"

Bear in mind that here it is the high priest who speaks of the Christ as being the Son of God. As such this correlation is not a uniquely Christian teaching. Note that it appears to be largely based on OT messianic passages where God speaks of the Messiah as his Son (cf. 2Sam 7:11b–14a; Ps 2:6–7; 89:27).

Of all the things mentioned in this study, what do you find to be the most compelling evidence that Jesus Christ is the Messiah?

Why is the assertion that Jesus Christ is the Messiah such a central aspect of Christian teaching?

As best you can, explain the connection or correlation between the “Messiah” and “the Son of God”.

II. The Messiah's Purpose and Person

Arguably the fundamental assertion of the NT is that God sent the Messiah – Jesus Christ – into the world to save people from sin and its devastating consequences. For this mission, Jesus Christ was born of the Holy Spirit and became fully human – further assertions that are very significant to the Christian faith. In fulfilling the objectives of the mission, Jesus Christ lived a life which was faultless, with his character being both exemplary and inspiring. The following teaching shows the NT's testimony to these crucial matters.

a) Jesus Christ's Mission from God

God sent Jesus Christ into the world

JOHN 5:36 [JESUS, TO THE JEWS:] But I have a testimony greater than that from John. For *the deeds that the Father has assigned me to complete – the deeds I am now doing – testify about me that the Father has sent me.*

JOHN 10:36B [JESUS:] *I am the one God chose and sent into the world.*
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God sent Jesus to take away sins . . .

1JN 3:5A You know that *Christ came to take away sins.* GEV

. . . and so to save the world

JOHN 3:17 For *God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him.*

LUKE 19:10 For *the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*

Saving the world from sin was arguably the key objective of Jesus Christ's mission. The following subsections speak of other important objectives of Jesus Christ's mission, that were to be accomplished in conjunction with saving the world from sin.

Jesus came to bring spiritual light into the world . . .

JOHN 12:46 [JESUS:] *I have come into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me will not remain in the darkness.* ISV

. . . and Jesus came to bring truth

JOHN 18:37B [JESUS:] *For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world – to testify to the truth.* Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.

Jesus came to enable us to know God

1JN 5:20A *And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us insight to know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ.*

Jesus came to destroy Satan's work

1JN 3:8 The devil has been sinning since the beginning, so anyone who continues to sin belongs to the devil. *The Son of God came for this purpose: to destroy the devil's work.* NCV™

The “devil's work”, which Jesus Christ came to destroy, involves people's sin – as pointed to by the first statement here and by v. 5 (“...Christ came to take away sins...”). As such it also encompasses the results of sin – such as separation from God, enslavement to sin, and death.

Further objectives of Jesus Christ's mission

(➤ *The first covenant (with its priesthood and law) was inadequate and superseded by the superior new covenant – through Jesus Christ . . . , in 14. The New Order)*

LUKE 4:43 *But Jesus said to them, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, for that is what I was sent to do.”*

JOHN 10:10 [JESUS:] *A thief comes to steal and kill and destroy, but I came to give life—life in all its fullness.* NCV™

Note: Jesus Christ's mission took place at a time chosen by God

GAL 4:4–5 *But when the right time finally came, God sent his own Son. He came as the son of a human mother and lived under the Jewish Law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might become God's sons and daughters.* GNT

The phrase “when the right time finally came” (v. 4) parallels “the time set by his father” (cf. v. 2), implying that God had set the time of Jesus' mission.

What reasons do we have for believing that Jesus was sent into the world by God?

How did Jesus in his mission enable us to know God?

Pick one of the objectives given in this section that is particularly significant or important to you, and say why it is.

b) Jesus Christ's Humanity

(➔ *Jesus Christ Is the Son of God (I): General*, in 3. *Jesus Christ*)

This and the following section speak of Jesus Christ's person in his mission. The section cross-referenced above is complimentary to this section in that it encompasses Jesus Christ's divine nature, applicable to before and after his mission.

Jesus Christ became a human being

ROM 8:3B By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ...

God sent Jesus Christ "in a human body like ours" (NLT).

Jesus was born, of Mary – after being conceived through the Holy Spirit

MATT 1:18–25 Now the birth of Jesus Christ happened this way. While his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹Because Joseph, her husband to be, was a righteous man, and because he did not want to disgrace her, he intended to divorce her privately. ²⁰When he had contemplated this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because *the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.* ²¹*She will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus,* because he will save his people from their sins." ²²*This all happened so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled:* ²³*"Look! The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call him Emmanuel,"* which means "God with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep he did what the angel of the Lord told him. He took his wife, ²⁵*but did not have marital relations with her until she gave birth to a son, whom he named Jesus.*

Jesus was a descendant of David

2TIM 2:8 Remember *Jesus Christ*, who was raised from death, *who was a descendant of David*, as is taught in the Good News I preach.

Jesus had family

MATT 13:55–56A [PEOPLE OF JESUS' HOMETOWN, REFERRING TO JESUS:] *Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother named Mary? And aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶And aren't all his sisters here with us?*

Jesus grew from childhood through to adulthood

LUKE 2:40–42 *And the child [Jesus] grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him. ⁴¹Now Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem every year for the feast of the Passover. ⁴²When he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom.*

LUKE 2:52 *Jesus became wiser and grew physically.* People liked him, and he pleased God. NCV™

Jesus was called a man

ACTS 2:22 [PETER:] Fellow Israelites, listen to these words! *Jesus from Nazareth was a man* accredited to you by God through miracles, wonders, and signs that God performed through him among you, as you yourselves know. ISV

Jesus had a physical body . . .

COL 1:22A [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But now Christ has brought you back to God by dying in *his physical body*. GW

. . . and Jesus had physical limitations

MATT 21:18 Now early in the morning, as he returned to the city, *he was hungry*.

JOHN 4:6A Jacob's well was there, so *Jesus, since he was tired from the journey, sat right down beside the well.*

Like all humans, Jesus experienced difficult times – including temptation

JOHN 11:33–35 When Jesus saw her [Martha, whose brother had died] weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, *he was*

deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."
³⁵*Jesus wept.* ESV

HEB 4:15 [THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] For we do not have a high priest [Christ] incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but *one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin.*

Note: Jesus' humanity was vital to his mission to save people

HEB 2:14–18 Therefore, *since the children share in flesh and blood, he [Jesus] likewise shared in their humanity, so that through death he could destroy the one who holds the power of death (that is, the devil),* ¹⁵*and set free those who were held in slavery all their lives by their fear of death.* ¹⁶For surely his concern is not for angels, but *he is concerned for Abraham's descendants.* ¹⁷Therefore he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For since he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

Jesus needed to share in the humanity of God's people and become like them so as to be identified with them, in a sense being one with them. As such he could die as a substitute and an offering for them. Partaking of their humanity would also be important for him in his ongoing role in helping God's people, as indicated in v. 18 and possibly also in view in v. 17.

Why is the doctrine of the virgin birth, with Jesus being conceived through the Holy Spirit, important?

What is significant about Jesus being a descendant of David?

Why was it necessary for Jesus to become fully human?

c) Jesus Christ's Personality

(⇒ *Jesus Christ's Character*, in 3. *Jesus Christ*)

Jesus was loving – shown ultimately in him giving up his life

JOHN 15:9, 12–13 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you; remain in my love. . . .* ¹²My commandment is this – to love one another just as I have loved you. ¹³*No one has greater love than this – that one lays down his life for his friends.*

Jesus was compassionate

MATT 9:36 *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Jesus was meek . . .

1PET 2:23 *When he was maligned, he did not answer back; when he suffered, he threatened no retaliation, but committed himself to God who judges justly.*

. . . Jesus was gentle and humble – as a servant

MATT 11:29 [JESUS:] Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because *I am gentle and humble in heart*, and you will find rest for your souls.

LUKE 22:27 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] For who is greater, the one who is seated at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is seated at the table? *But I am among you as one who serves.*

Jesus was good . . .

JOHN 10:11 [JESUS:] *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

. . . and Jesus was righteous

1PET 3:18A For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, . . . ESV

Jesus showed righteous anger and indignation

JOHN 2:14–16 He found in the temple courts those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting at tables. ¹⁵So he made a whip of cords and drove them all out of the temple courts, with the sheep and the oxen. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those who sold the doves he said, “Take these things away from here! Do not make my Father’s house a marketplace!”

Jesus was courageous and composed

JOHN 18:3–11 So Judas obtained a squad of soldiers and some officers of the chief priests and Pharisees. They came to the orchard with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴Then Jesus, because he knew everything that was going to happen to him, came and asked them, “Who are you looking for?” ⁵They replied, “Jesus the Nazarene.” He told them, “I am he.” (Now Judas, the one who betrayed him, was standing there with them.) ⁶So when Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they retreated and fell to the ground. ⁷Then Jesus asked them again, “Who are you looking for?” And they said, “Jesus the Nazarene.” ⁸Jesus replied, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, let these men go.” ⁹He said this to fulfill the word he had spoken, “I have not lost a single one of those whom you gave me.” ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, pulled it out and struck the high priest’s slave, cutting off his right ear. (Now the slave’s name was Malchus.) ¹¹But Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath! Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

Note: Jesus was prepared to associate with notably sinful people

LUKE 15:2 But the Pharisees and the experts in the law were complaining [about Jesus], “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

In his mission to save the world from sin, Jesus reached out to sinners – in particular those who recognized themselves as such. These included groups of people looked down upon as “sinners” by the self-righteous members of society. Associating with and supporting such people showed Jesus’ love and compassion. These actions also reflected his strength of character, with him not being influenced by or giving in to social norms and the pressure of public opinion.

Why was Jesus meek, particularly during his trial and crucifixion (cf. 1Pet 2:23)?

In what ways did Jesus serve (cf. Luke 22:27)?

Choose one of Jesus’ personal characteristics that you need to work on imitating. What is a situation where you could show more of this characteristic?

d) Epilogue: God Works through Jesus Christ

(➔ God made and sustains all things through Jesus Christ in 6. God's Creation; I. God's Enablement of Jesus Christ, in 12. Jesus Christ's Mission)

God works in all eras through Jesus Christ, impacting all things everywhere

HEB 1:2 But now in these last days God has spoken to us through his Son. God has chosen his Son to own all things, and through him he made the world. NCV™

COL 1:20 Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's blood on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven. GNT

ROM 2:16 [PAUL:] And so, according to the Good News I preach, this is how it will be on that Day when God through Jesus Christ will judge the secret thoughts of all. GNT

God enacts his will in or through Jesus Christ

GAL 1:3–4 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father, ...

EPH 1:9–10 God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. ¹⁰This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head. GNT

Bear in mind that the teaching in this and the previous subsection is not necessarily indicating that God works or enacts his will exclusively through Jesus Christ. The Bible also speaks of God working through the Holy Spirit and through his people – although this does not mean that Jesus Christ is not also involved in such work.

God fulfills his promises through Jesus Christ . . .

2COR 1:20A *For all God's promises are "Yes" in him.* ISV

All God's promises are confirmed in Jesus Christ; they are "fulfilled in him" (NLT).

. . . Key promises of God have been centered on Jesus Christ

ACTS 13:23 From the descendants of this man [David] *God brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, just as he promised.*

ROM 1:2–3 *The Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets, as written in the Holy Scriptures. ³It is about his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ . . .* GNT

2TIM 1:1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. God sent me to tell about *the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.* NCV™®

God saves people through Jesus Christ

JOHN 3:16–17 *For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him.*

God gave the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ

TITUS 3:6 [PAUL, TO TITUS:] *God poured out the Holy Spirit abundantly on us through Jesus Christ our Saviour, . . .* GNT

God works in and through his people, through Jesus Christ

HEB 13:21 [THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] May this God of peace prepare you to do every good thing he wants. *May he work in us through Jesus Christ to do what is pleasing to him.* Glory belongs to Jesus Christ forever. Amen. GW

The first sentence suggests that the second is speaking at least as much of the work he does through us (impacting others) as of that which he does in us (impacting our own spiritual lives).

What does the assertion that God works through Jesus Christ in all eras show about their relationship?

Comment on the statement: “Jesus Christ is the prime ‘interface’ between God and the world.”

Why do you think that God does so much of his work through Jesus Christ?

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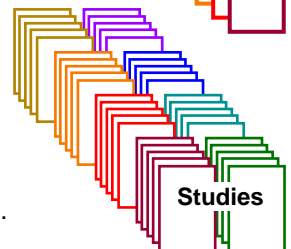
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Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

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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