

# Jesus Christ our Savior

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Who is Jesus Christ? He is many things according to the Bible: Savior, Son of God, Son of Man, the Lamb of God, the King and our High Priest. In this article I would like to look at just a few of these things.

First, Jesus is our Savior. He saves us from sin and its consequences. The Book of Romans states:

*For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).*

We have been in the state of sinfulness since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were perfect when they were created. But they did not stay this way. Eve was tempted by the serpent and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which God commanded them not to eat of. Then she gave some of the fruit to Adam and he ate. This was their sin and from that time onward the human race was sentenced to death because,

*“the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).*

To atone for sin and escape the sentence of eternal death, people before the time of Jesus were commanded to sacrifice animals. But this could only atone for their sins for a short time and had to be done again and again because animals were imperfect.

But God had a better way. Jesus was perfect and unblemished. By dying on the cross he was sacrificed as the final sacrifice. His blood washes our sins away. He was the final Passover Lamb.

*I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life (John 5:24).*

Thanks to Jesus our Savior, we have eternal life even now!

Jesus is our High Priest. As the Book of Hebrews states:

*Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently*

*with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people (Hebrews 5:1-3)*

The role of the high priest was to represent the people in matters related to God and to atone for sins. But just as the sacrifices of the Old Testament were imperfect, so the High Priest of the Old Testament, no matter how godly he might be was imperfect.

*For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak ... (Hebrews 7:28a).*

The same verse goes on to say,

*... but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever (7:28b).*

Jesus is now our high priest. Because he is perfect and is the Son of God he is able to intercede for us. He does not have to intercede or atone for himself because he is perfect. The earthly high priest could only enter God's presence in the Holy of Holies once a year. Jesus, however, lives eternally in God's presence.

Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus was the Son of God and Mary.

*And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased (Luke 3:22b).*

That God would send his Son for us shows his great love for us.

*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in him might not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).*

Because we are also God's children we are Jesus' brothers and sisters. We are heirs together with Jesus.

*... because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God ... Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory (Rom. 8:14, 17).*

As co-heirs with Christ we share in Jesus' sufferings and glory.

Jesus is our Savior, High Priest and the atonement for our sins. He is also the Son of God and our brother. These are just some of the many things that the Bible says about who Jesus is. The important thing to remember is that we should always check the Scriptures to see if what people are saying about Jesus is true.

[Sarah Waite, who just turned 14 this past October, attends home school and has a special interest in both the Bible and History. She has also helped me a great deal on the last few issues of this newsletter, for which I thank her]

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## **History and Redemptive History**

Few Bible believing Christians would dispute the fact that the study of history is meaningless apart from a realization that God, the creator and sustainer of the universe, is guiding and over-ruling history to his own appointed ends. This does not mean, of course, that all that happens is according to the will of God. God has clearly given man freedom of will and the very fact that there will be a final judgment means that man is responsible for the choices that he makes. However, God's rule over, and in, history does mean that he has a sovereign plan that he is working-out which has a purpose and goal which he is able to fulfill. The scriptures from Genesis to Revelation witness to this plan (e.g. Acts 1:7; 2:23; 17:24-31; Rom. 8:28-30, Eph. 1:3-10; etc.) and without an understanding of it history itself is meaningless.

The New Testament literally abounds with passages of Scripture which describe God's redemptive or salvific plan in a nutshell. One example is from Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians:

*But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:20-28).*

These verses describe redemptive history. Their focus is on God's plan of salvation which he achieves in, and through, Christ. In his commentary on chapter 5 of the Book of Revelation G.E. Ladd summarizes the Christian perspective of history:

Here is a simple but profound biblical truth which cannot be overemphasized: apart from the person and redeeming work of Jesus Christ, history is an enigma. For centuries since Augustine and his City of God, a Christian view of history as having a divinely ordained goal which was inseparable from the redemptive word of Christ has colored western thought. Since the enlightenment, many philosophers have rejected the Christian view of life, and for them history has become a problem ... Christ, and Christ alone, has the key to the meaning of human history. It is not therefore surprising that modern thinkers are pessimistic; apart from the victorious return of Christ, history is going nowhere [A Commentary on the Revelation of John, p. 82, Eerdmans].