

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

- Pastor Zhang Cheng -

What kind of relationship is it between Jesus Christ and God? The traditional answer is that they are both God at equal standing. However, a traditional answer may not necessarily be biblical. When you study through the Bible concordance, you would see that Paul liked to address God as ***“the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”*** (cf. Ro 15:6; 2 Co 1:3, 11:31; Ep 1:3, 17 and Col 1:3). Such a description for the relationship between God and Jesus Christ will surprise many Christians. If they were both God who were from the beginning and at equal standing, why is one of them God while the other, his Father and God? The phrase, ***“the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ”*** has appeared quite a few times in the New Testament. Let's read the following verses and try to understand the relationship between Jesus Christ and God.

Eph 1:3 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...

To whom should the blessing go? It is to ***“the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”***. God is the God of the Lord Jesus Christ and God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Every spiritual blessing is not given to us by the Lord Jesus. Rather, it is God who gives it to us in Christ, through Jesus.

Let's read 1 Pt 1:3 and see how the Apostle Peter addressed God.

1 Pt 1:3 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..."

To whom did Peter say that the blessing was given? To ***"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"***. (Original passage was 'Blessed be to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'.) Who caused us to be born again? Who has mercy on us? It is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must see this point clearly. The blessing is not to be given to the Lord Jesus, but God who is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only Paul and Peter described the relationship between God and Jesus that way, Jesus himself also addressed Yahweh God as his Father and his God. This point is most evident from Jn 20:17.

Jn 20:17 - Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.'"

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, Christians can enter into a totally new relationship with God. We can learn from Jesus to call Yahweh God as our Father. As such, the God and Father of the Jesus Christ has also become our God and our Father.

Note that these were the words spoken by Jesus after his resurrection. Jesus did not only call Yahweh his God and Father while he was on earth; he still called Yahweh his God and his Father after his resurrection.

After Jesus was raised from the dead, was God still his Father? Or is it like how the traditional saying goes – that Jesus was the real man only when he was on earth and that his deity was restored after he returned to heaven; and was God at equal standing with Yahweh? What does the Bible say?

Rev 3:12 - He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and my new name.

We can see here that the Christ who ascended to heaven after resurrection still addressed Yahweh as his God. In verse 1 alone, he has already addressed Yahweh as his God without any ambiguity. This shows that Jesus Christ had never considered himself God because he was not God and only Yahweh is the only true God. It is no wonder that whenever Paul mentioned ***‘the God and Father of our Lord Jesus’***, he would always give blessings and glory to Yahweh (cf Ro 15:6; 2 Co 1:3, 11:31; and Ep 1:3, 17), because He only is the true God and is worthy of all praises.

The Jesus Christ who was resurrected and ascended did not only confess that Yahweh was his God, but he also addressed Yahweh as his Father. We can see this point clearly from the three passages below:

Rev 2:27 – “AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from my Father”.

Rev 3:5 – 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father and before His angels.'

Rev 3:21 – 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with me on my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne.'

We can see how Jesus had always acknowledged Yahweh God as his Father because he himself was man. God has made Jesus “*the firstborn among many sons*” (Ro 8:29), thus the Jesus after his resurrection called his disciples as ‘*brothers*’ (Mt 28:10). It is so precisely because he was man, such that he could identify with us so well. Not only did he identify with us, but he also passed on the authority and glory given by the Father to the Christians who overcome. No wonder Paul said that we are heirs with Christ i.e. to be children of God and if we suffer with him, we will also be glorified together. Let’s see Eph 1:15-17.

Eph 1:15-17 - “For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

Paul prayed unceasingly for the saints. To whom did he pray? It's to the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Father of glory, the one whom we pray to. Regrettably, the Father of glory has no place in our hearts or He is even non-existent. Whenever the Father is mentioned, all we have in our heart is Jesus and Jesus has become the one we pray to. Although the Lord Jesus tells us clearly through the Lord's prayer that the one we pray to is our Father in heaven, it seems we still could not hear it.

What did Paul pray for the saints? His key concern was whether the saints could 'see' because it says in v18, '*... that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling ...*' etc. Paul prayed for one thing specifically and that was, for the eyes of our hearts to be enlightened. For what purpose? As v17 says, it was for '*a spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Him*'. Who is this '*Him*' referred to? It does not say that it is God, could it be the Lord Jesus? If we understand some exegetical principles, you should know how to refer to the context. Verse 20 says '*which He brought about in Christ...*' and apparently, '*He*' refers to God.

However, this sentence of Paul '*revelation in the knowledge of Him*', is rather strange. What does it mean? What was he trying to say? Paul seemed to have this perception to suspect that many Christians still did not really know the Father. The definition of the original Greek word for '*knowledge*' or '*know*' refers to a very accurate knowledge and understanding of something. We can see how Paul had this concern in his heart that the saints did not really know the Father, so he pray for them unceasingly that God would open their eyes so that they can '*truly know Him*'.

This point is actually applicable to us because we often mix Yahweh God and Jesus Christ up. This is so because we still do not know the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jn 17:3 - This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

We have to get to know God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ afresh. God our Father is the only true God while the Lord Jesus was the Christ sent to save us by Him. We must differentiate the two and not confuse them together.

Eph 1:19-23 - 'and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised him from the dead and seated him at His right

hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Some words in Ephesians are very similar to those in Colossians. Among them, the passage of Eph 1:19-23 is an example although the letter to the Ephesians is easier to understand. In v20, Paul said that in accordance to the working of the strength of His might which *'He brought about in Christ'*; Jesus himself did not have the mighty power, it was God's power working in him and it was God who *'raised him from the dead and it was God who called him to be seated on the right side of God'*...

V21 says, *"far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come"*. Many Christians reckoned that Paul was declaring Jesus as God once they read this. Such an understanding is entirely an error resulted from a pre-conceived idea, which is not based on any exegesis at all.

In fact, these words are plain language which can be easily comprehended. As long as you read the context, you can understand what Paul was thinking about. Paul, in v20, said that it was God *'who seated (Christ) at his right hand'*. Why did God let Christ seat on His right side? That was to prove to those in heaven, on earth and those who are under the earth that God has already

instituted Jesus Christ as Lord (cf Ac 2:36). Therefore, Jesus' status was high above all, and "*not only in this age but also in the one to come*".

Then, in v22, it says that "*And He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him as head over all things to the church*". These words are also very important. What is the link between this and the phrase, '*the church as his body*' in v23? To put it simply, Christ and we are united. If we are faithful, we will also enjoy the glory given to him by God because we are his body, which is filled with the fullness of the One in all. Of course, the one who fills all in all mentioned in v23 refers to God. God chooses to fill His church and dwell in it. Hope that all of us are able to know the God and Father with this overall perspective (He is also our God and Father) and understand all the glorious things He wants to accomplish for us.

May all blessings be given to God our Father!
