

Text: Various

Title: Lord's Table: What does "Jesus is Lord" mean?

Truth: We investigate the meaning of *Lord* in belief and practice.

Date/Location: Sunday December 6, 2020 at FBC

Introduction

In the message on 1 Corinthians 12:3, I reiterated what the Bible says: "no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." The point is that people who truly confess Jesus as their Lord must be doing so by the power of the Holy Spirit. This confession is not acceptable to a non-Christian person, that is, a person who does not have the Holy Spirit indwelling them and thus ministering to them in an illuminating, saving and sanctifying way.

These notes are not intended to address the "Lordship salvation" controversy as such. If you do not know what that is, do not worry!

Know that a confession that you believe and acknowledge Christ as Lord is of the essence of a true entrance into the Christian faith. Romans 10:9-10 makes this very clear. You cannot have salvation without it.

Savior describes Jesus as the one who rescues us from sin and death. *Christ* refers to Jesus as the Messiah or "anointed one of God." That means He is the chosen servant of God to save and rule His people. We want to look at title *Lord* in more detail.

I. "Jesus is Lord" in Belief

In this section, I intend to get across just exactly what *Lord* means and how you are to truly know that information. I am writing this so that your mind can be informed, and your affections and volition can be impacted.

A. You need true knowledge and belief in Christ as *Lord*. I would never tell someone to make a confession that they do not understand—much less in this most important of areas about the Lordship of Jesus Christ. No Christian teacher should ever ask someone to say something or confess something that they do not understand. This is the thing about confessing faith in the Lord Jesus—it is not a rote memorized answer to a catechism question, for that is not true knowledge. Regurgitation of information is not knowledge—not in school, and not regarding Jesus. True faith entails an inner, voluntary acknowledgement that Jesus is Lord and agreement to the implications of that truth about His identity.

B. *Lord* is a title that cannot be divorced from other titles referring to Jesus. In other words, if your Savior from sin is not the *Lord* Jesus Christ, then

you do not have salvation from sin. Jesus is not sometimes Christ and sometimes Savior and other times Lord, whatever your fancy is at the moment. He is what all three of those titles indicate, all the time, simultaneously, without division. Other descriptions and titles apply to Jesus as well, but we'll address those another time!

C. I am going to mostly limit my study to the body of Biblical text known as the New Testament. That is not a harsh limitation, however, since there are over 600 verses that use the word *Lord* in the NT. It was written in Greek in the first century. The first use of the word *Lord* in the New Testament, at least in the order in which we have received it, is in Matthew 1:20. There it says that an “angel of the Lord” appeared to Joseph in a dream. This is a reference to God—an angel from God appeared to Joseph. Then in 1:22, a quotation of Isaiah 7:14 is introduced by saying that the “Lord” said this through the prophet. This is a reference to God himself. So the word **Lord has a divine meaning!** In other words, *Lord* is a reference to God, to deity.¹

D. Now what about the first time the word *Lord* is used of Jesus? It may be that the title is used as a way to show respect or honor to a person, something like “sir” or “ma’am” in English. This happens sometimes when people are speaking to Jesus, and perhaps they do not know really who He is. That may be the case in Matthew 8:6 and 8:8.

But in Matthew 3:3, John the Baptist is described as the voice crying in the wilderness, “Prepare the Way of the LORD.” Now it is obvious that He is speaking about the imminent appearance of Jesus on the public scene. Jesus appears in 3:13 to be baptized and begin His ministry. But also, the word “LORD” is quoted from Isaiah 40:3 which uses the word “Yhwh” or “LORD” in all capital letters, “Jehovah” as some translations have it. This word arose by inserting three vowels in between the four consonants.² Suffice it to say that the Biblical authors are saying that LORD, or Lord, is a reference to Jesus, which was a reference to God the Father in earlier Scripture. This is very significant and supports our earlier statement that **Lord has a divine meaning, and that meaning is applied to Jesus.**

The Lord then is the same as the one identified by Peter as the Messiah, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16). Acts 26:15 says, “Who are you

¹ When I use *divine* in a context like this, I mean *deity*. I do not mean “the Westminster divines” which were Christian ministers, that is, mortal humans.

² The origin of those vowels is not of interest to us at this point. Many have said they come from another word, “Adonai,” but the exact correspondence of the vowels of Adonai to the word Jehovah are details that are lost on the English reader.

Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting’”. This is the Lord replying to Paul’s inquiry—the Lord, the divine Jesus.

E. What about the first use of the word Lord in the Bible as the books were written? There is some debate about which book was the earliest (James, 1-2 Thessalonians, or Galatians), but likely that honor goes to the letter of James, written around 49 AD. James uses the word *Lord* 14 times in his short letter. Consider the uses:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the master of James, His servant in 1:1. Already at this early date in church history it is beyond well established that Jesus is the divine Son of God.
2. Jesus is involved in dispensing answers to prayer, 1:7.
3. The Lord promises life (crown of life) to those who love him, 1:12.
4. The Lord Jesus is glorious, 2:1.
5. Some translations have Lord in 3:9 where we blessed the Lord with our tongue right along with blessing God the Father.
6. We are told to humble ourselves before the Lord, and we will be exalted. The Lord is above us, and we are beneath him, 4:10.
7. It is the Lord’s will that determines if we will do such and such things in our lives, 4:15.
8. The Lord is coming back to earth, 5:7, 8.
9. The prophets spoke in the name of the Lord, 5:10.
10. The Lord is full of compassion and merciful, 5:11.
11. The Lord is the one to whom we pray and in whose name we anoint the sick, 5:14.
12. The Lord raises up the sick, 5:15.

Summarizing all of this is not easy, but we can try: the *Lord* describes Jesus, Who does just what God the Father does. The Son and the Father truly are working together (John 5:17).

F. Finally, a definition of word *Lord*. It means a person who is **owner or master of property**. Or, it refers to **one who has authority over other persons**. It is personal title for God and Jesus Christ because they inherently possess such ownership and authority. And this makes sense, because Jesus told us that “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt 28:18).

In any realm, there can only be one Lord. Since the realm over which He is Lord is universal, there is only **one** Lord Jesus Christ, one owner, one authority (1 Cor. 8:6).

G. He is the Lord of the **harvest** (Luke 10:2). He is the Lord of the **Sabbath** (Luke 6:5). He is the Lord of the **whole earth** (Psalm 97:5, Zech. 6:5). He is

the Lord of the **angelic hosts** (1 Samuel 1:3). He is the Lord of **Sabaoth** (James 5:4, meaning, again, *hosts*). He is the Lord of **all** (Acts 10:36)—all things, and all people (Romans 10:12). To him belongs the entire Universe, for He made it (John 1:3) and He holds it together (Col. 1:17).

Transition: Does that help you understand in your head and heart what “Lord” means? Now put yourself in your thinking kind of “next to” the Lord. Where do you fit?

II. “Jesus is Lord” in Practice

True belief is never dissociated from practice. For a belief to be truly held, it must apply to one’s life, it must be operational, it must create change, it must have implications, action, new attitudes, etc. Here are some:

- A. Those who confess Jesus as Lord obey what he tells them to do. Luke 6:46 says, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” As a specific example, consider John 13:12-15.
- B. Those who confess Jesus as Lord honor and respect Him as God. Malachi 1:6 says, “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect? Says the LORD of hosts to you...” (NASB). This compares to the previous point like children obeying their parents is different than children honoring their parents.
- C. Jesus as your Lord means you humble yourself in your own estimation underneath His mighty person (James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6).
- D. Jesus as Lord means that you encourage people not to use the name of the Lord (Jesus) in vain (Exodus 20:7).
- E. Jesus as Lord means we extol him before others and worship Him in the way that He appoints for us to do—not any made-up way we wish (see Leviticus 10).
- F. Jesus as Lord means that Jesus is your king and master, because He is King of all (Matt 25:31). You can *trust* Him because He has it all under control!

Conclusion

Jesus *is* Lord, whether you believe it or not. But now you know what it means and what it implies for your life. So live it!

MAP