

UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD, JESUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

When you have read this leaflet you will know the answers to these questions:

1. What is the relationship between God and Jesus?
2. What is Jesus called in the gospels?
3. Why cannot Jesus be God?
4. Who, or what, is the Holy Spirit?
5. What will be the relationship between God and Jesus in the future?

1. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND JESUS?

There are many verses in the Bible which state very clearly the nature of the relationship between God and Jesus. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the Son of God. It also says that God is the Father of Jesus Christ.

This is what the angel told Mary: “You will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and shall be called the *Son of the Highest*” (Luke 1:31,32).

At the baptism of Jesus, a voice from heaven said: “This is *my beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). All good fathers are pleased with obedient children. God is no exception. But, just as a normal father is *not the same person as his son*, neither is God the same as His Son, Jesus.

Jesus is the very image of his father, reflecting God’s character to men (Hebrews 1:3). When you look in a mirror, you see your image. But, physically, the image is not you: it is a reflection. In the same way Jesus is not the same being as God. He reflected God’s character to men.

Fathers always exist before their children. God has always existed. But Jesus, as His Son, has not. Peter tells us that Jesus was “*foreordained*” in the mind of God, “but was *manifest in these last times* for you” (1 Peter 1:20).

Jesus did not exist until he was born. He was born because “God so loved the world that he *gave his only begotten Son*, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God gave His son. Could the words be more simple?

Just as God called Jesus his “beloved Son”, so also Jesus often called God his Father. He said: “I am going to the Father, for *my Father* is greater than I” (John 14:28). If God is greater, how can He and Jesus be the same being?

When asked about the end of the age, Jesus said: “Of that day and hour no one knows, neither ... *the Son*, but only *the Father*” (Mark 13:32). If God knows, and Jesus doesn’t, how can they be the same?

Jesus said after his resurrection: “I am ascending to *my Father* and your Father, and to *my God*, and your God” (John 20:17). The Apostle Paul also calls God, “The *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:31). God and Jesus are separate beings.

The Apostles Paul and John understood the relationship between God and Jesus. Paul said: “The head of every man is Christ ... and *the head of Christ is God*” (1 Corinthians 11:3). At this time, Jesus was *immortal*, and *in heaven*, yet still not equal with God.

In fact, Jesus is still a man, not God. Paul tells us, “There is one God and one mediator *between* God and men, *the man* Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). God is *never* referred to as a man. Jesus is *never* called “God the Son”. They are different.

John said, “Whoever confesses that *Jesus is the Son of God*, God abides in him, and he in God” (1 John 4:15). There we have it: “Jesus is the Son of God”. Exactly so.

2. WHAT IS JESUS CALLED IN THE GOSPELS?

Often he is called “Jesus”, “Christ”, “Lord” and “teacher”. Also:

- (a) Son of man (81 times);
- (b) Son of God (27 times);
- (c) Son of David (17 times);
- (d) Beloved Son (8 times).

Jesus is called the “Son of man” because he was born of a human mother; the “Son of God” because God was his Father; the “Son of David” because he is descended from King David and will return to the earth as king to sit on David’s throne (Luke 1:32,33); and, the “beloved Son” because he was obedient to God, his Father.

In *all* these 133 references *Jesus is called the Son*. He is distinct from God, the Father. We must accept the evidence the Bible so abundantly provides.

3. WHY CANNOT JESUS BE GOD?

Although God and Jesus are at one in purpose, their work is different.

God gave Adam a choice. Adam sinned by disobeying God. As a result, every member of the human race is mortal. To bring salvation, a sinless man had to restore man to God. That man is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 42-49).

God could not do that work Himself, because He is *immortal and sinless*. He cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:13). Unlike God, Jesus was *mortal*, he could be *tempted*, and he *might have sinned*, although he did not (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15). God gave *his Son*, “that the world *through him* might be saved” (John 3:17). “While we were still sinners, *Christ died for us*”, and “we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Romans 5:8,9).

God cannot sin, or die. So, He brought salvation through Jesus Christ who died for us. If Jesus could not have sinned, his *victory over sin* would have no meaning.

4. WHO, OR WHAT, IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Bible says the Holy Spirit is *the power of God*. It is not a person, controlling actions. God controls His Spirit. The angel said to Mary: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and *the power of the Highest* will overshadow you; therefore, also, that holy one who is to be born will be called *the Son of God*” (Luke 1:35). The truth is simply stated. God used *His power* to bring into being Jesus, *His Son*

5. WHAT WILL BE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND JESUS IN THE FUTURE?

Although Jesus is now immortal, his role will still be different from that of God. Soon God will send Jesus back to the earth to establish His Kingdom (Zechariah 9:9,10; Matthew 25:31). Jesus will reign as King, until finally he hands the Kingdom to God. Jesus, as God’s immortal Son, *will still be subject to Him* – “that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:23-28).

We too can be in God’s Kingdom. To be blessed with everlasting life when Jesus comes, we must:

- (a) Believe God’s Word and keep His commandments;
- (b) Treasure God’s wonderful gift of His “only begotten Son”; and
- (c) Value the work of Jesus, “who died for us”.

Let Jesus have the final word:

*“This is eternal life, that they might know you, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom you have sent”
(John 17:3).*