

BEYOND TODAY

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A name above all names

God the Father has placed all things under the authority of Jesus Christ to whom He also gave names, titles and positions befitting this power.

A brief study of some of the principle names, positions and titles of Jesus Christ can teach us much about why His name is so important.

Shortly after the establishment of the New Testament Church on the Feast of Pentecost, the apostle Peter found himself before the council in Jerusalem. When asked about Christ's authority he declared of Jesus Christ of Nazareth: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Later the apostle Paul added that all would ultimately worship Christ for what He had accomplished: "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

These two apostles clearly saw Jesus' name as of paramount importance for salvation. Other titles reveal more.

Christ the Word

The apostle John had much to say about the nature of Jesus Christ. In the first chapter of his gospel he tells us that He, here referred to as the Word, existed from the very beginning and created all things that were created (John 1:1-3, 14).

Christ then voluntarily gave up His position in the Godhead for a season to become a human being and die as our Saviour (Philippians 2:5-8). John warns us to be

wary of those who teach contrary to this: "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God . . ." (1 John 4:2-3).

Christ's faith in His Father's promise to restore all He had previously relinquished was absolute. He prayed: "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5).

Christ our Redeemer

It is generally accepted that Jesus Christ came to atone for the sins of the world. What does this really mean and how did He do it?

John the Baptist introduced Jesus by saying, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Paul explained how sin is forgiven: "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin by being put to death in our place, taking upon Himself the punishment for our wrong actions.

According to the prophet Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

In other words, He redeemed us by paying the price of our sins upon our repentance, all the while trusting His Heavenly Father to restore Him to life.

Our Mediator and High Priest

Under the Old Covenant, the Levitical priesthood was the mediator between God and human beings. It was the High Priest who went into the Holy of Holies annually on the Day of Atonement to mediate for the nation of Israel. The book of Hebrews tells us: “Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance” (Hebrews 9:6-7).

Under the New Covenant, our Mediator is Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3). With our Mediator at God’s throne we can have access to the Father: “For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which

Christ’s faith in His Father’s promise to restore all He had previously relinquished was absolute.

are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God *for us*” (Hebrew 9:24).

Jesus Christ is both our Mediator and High Priest. He understands what it is like to be a human being because He has been there! “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

We can trust Him to help us, if we stay close to Him.

Christ the Reconciler

The role of Christ as our Redeemer, Mediator and High Priest makes it possible for Him to reconcile us to God the Father.

Wise King Solomon explained the need for reconciliation in the book of Ecclesiastes. Here we see the status of man with regards to obeying God’s law; “For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin” (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Indeed, Paul noted: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). With no Redeemer, Mediator and High Priest it would be impossible for us to inherit eternal life in God’s Kingdom. “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10).

God the Father has made it possible for us to be reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ. We must show

our willingness to be reconciled to Him by following our Saviour’s example, living by every word of God.

Christ the Messiah

About two thousand years ago, because of a prophecy in Daniel 9:25, the Jews were expecting a powerful leader to arise and free them from the dominance of the Roman Empire and restore them as a great and powerful nation. They didn’t realise that Kingdom was, and remains, future and that the Messiah had to be sacrificed as the Lamb of God prior to the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth. The people of that time rejected Him and didn’t realise that Isaiah had predicted that, writing: “He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him” (Isaiah 53:3).

Jesus Christ preached the Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God. He told how He would return to this earth with great power and glory to set up that Kingdom assisted by His saints. “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven” (Mark 13:26-27).

Christ has promised to rescue His faithful and obedient followers.

Glory and honour forever

All Christ’s names, roles and titles teach us about His attributes. However, it is only through the name of Jesus Christ that our salvation is possible. At His return to earth Jesus is to receive a new name (Revelation 3:12). He will also bear the title King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).

The prophet Isaiah spoke thus of Christ’s rule: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgement and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

As God’s Kingdom expands throughout the universe, more titles are likely to be conferred upon Jesus Christ by His Father.

To study further and in more detail about the importance of Christ’s various roles, please request or download our booklet *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*.

David Payne

Consider the lilies: An aid to greater faith

Worry can destroy faith, but Jesus explained that conscious appreciation of creation can counter these feelings and strengthen faith.

Faith is not just a casual belief that Jesus Christ once existed about 2000 years ago and that a religion grew from Him. Nor is it a feeling that God is out there somewhere. Although both of these concepts involve elements of faith, the full definition is much broader.

Scripture defines faith as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). It is our assurance that God will keep His promises. It is trusting belief, conviction and conduct based on a right relationship with God. It is not static, but deepens as we nourish that relationship with our Creator throughout our lives.

Importance of faith

Faith not only necessitates that we trust God, but that in order to demonstrate that faith, we take action. The apostle James summed it up thus: “But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?” (James 2:20-22).

In the book of Hebrews we note, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

The point being stressed here is that we must be fully persuaded about the existence of God and His plan for mankind. Not only can we come to know God, to believe in God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to reveal the Father, but – far more – we can learn to believe God and live our lives accordingly.

Paul explained to the Romans that “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17). By believing all that God commands us and by carrying out the Father’s will, we become more like Jesus Christ, whose entire human existence was an example of faith.

Creation and faith

Jesus Christ placed great emphasis on facets of creation that can increase our faith. In His discourse known as

the Sermon on the Mount, He declared: “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matthew 6:25-26).

A close study of birds reveals the wonder of their feathers and flight, and their nest-building abilities. Valuing each of God’s creatures can bring a deeper appreciation of God Himself and thereby enhance our trust in His ability to help us in time of need.

Jesus continued His discourse: “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” (verses 28-30).



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Plants begin the food chain for insects, birds and animals. For humans there are additional blessings of an amazing array of beauty, colour and form to enjoy. Many flowers emit perfume which can lift our spirits. We may not have access to the same species Christ referenced, but few populated places on earth are devoid of flowers.

As Christ pointed out, if our Creator spent so much time designing the lesser elements of Creation, would He not take a far greater interest in us when we earnestly seek a relationship with Him?

To learn more about increasing one’s faith, please request or download our booklet *You Can Have Living Faith*.

Daniel foresaw a time when “many shall run to and fro . . .

Prophecy indicates that a proliferation of travel would characterise the end of man’s rule.

Prior to the advent of Covid-19 in early 2020, a great many people were travelling all over the world. In relative terms, prior to the invention of the steam engine followed by the motor car, and later still the aeroplane, people travelled little.

In previous centuries, peasant classes required special permission from their local prince, baron or lord to leave the district in which they resided. Covid-19 has introduced somewhat similar limitations upon mankind today, with various forms of lockdown and travel restrictions enforced upon the nations of the world by governments struggling to keep their people safe and their health services functioning.

Travel phenomenon prophesied

According to ourworldindata.org/tourism, “The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimates that, internationally, there were just 25 million tourist arrivals in 1950. 68 years later this number has increased to 1.4 billion international arrivals per year. This is a 56-fold increase.” The surge in the volume of this travel phenomenon is unprecedented in recorded history.

The book of Daniel contains a prophecy concerning such an increase in travel near the end of mankind’s rule. It states that “many shall run to and fro” (Daniel 12:4).

When we consider that Covid-19 may be among the



Whatever the mode of transport,
many have a reason to travel.

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first of the many pestilences predicted by Jesus (Luke 21:11 and Revelation 6:7-8), it is not difficult to envisage that the world may have entered an era of recurring lockdowns and travel restrictions. The implication is that if humanity in March 2020 had reached the peak of the increase in travel, then we may have already fulfilled Daniel’s prophecy and have now entered the very last days of this age!

Should this be the case, it would mean that there is very little time left before the catastrophic events that precede Christ’s return.

Gerald McMenamin

. . . and knowledge shall increase”

Also foretold was an unprecedented end-time expansion in knowledge.

While the growth in both national and international travel has been sharply curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic, knowledge continues to increase at a relentless pace (Daniel 12:4).

Not all knowledge is beneficial, constructive or uplifting. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil can most certainly be viewed on the internet (Genesis 2:16-17).

According to a headline in the *Digital Journal* of November 23, 2018: “Knowledge doubles almost every day, and it’s set to increase” (www.digitaljournal.com/tech-and-science/science/op-ed-knowledge-doubles-almost-every-day-and-it-s-set-to-increase/article/537543).

One area of knowledge does not necessarily increase at the same rate as another. Often it is driven by necessity. For example, wars tend to generate more efficient weaponry. In recent years, expertise relating to nanotechnology has expanded dramatically. Clinical knowledge has also escalated, especially in the area of research into gene variants for common diseases (jimcarroll.com/2011/10/trend-the-future-of-knowledge/). During the past eighteen months or so this research has led to the ability to recognise variants of the Covid-19 virus and, as a result, to produce appropriate vaccines.

A prime evil fruit of the internet is the availability of pornography. The Christian Research Barna Group discovered that professing Christians are not immune. According to one of its surveys, pornography was viewed

by 76% of young Christian adults (18-24 years); 55% of married men and 25% of married women. (To help anyone struggling with pornography addiction, please request or download our brochure *Overcoming Pornography Addiction*.)

The prophet Hosea wrote, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . . Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (Hosea 4:6). There certainly isn’t a lack of knowledge of subjects of interest to human beings, whether good or evil. However, there is a dearth of the knowledge of the true God and His way of life. That knowledge is available in the handbook God sent along with His physical creation. It’s called the Holy Bible. To study the main themes in the Scriptures a 12-lesson *Bible Study Course* is available. Please request it from the usual address or find it online at www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/bible-study-course.

The true knowledge that comes from God is always beneficial and under all circumstances. It never dates.

Philip Perry

The certainty of a better world ahead

Scripture reveals there will be a bright future for all humanity, starting with those who strive to become more Christ-like in this age.

Few nations can claim to live prosperously nowadays, with all too many lacking the most basic of needs and amenities. That is the world’s doing – not God’s. How unfair it would be if the purpose for man’s existence should be limited to the physical existence, with no greater significance than living out our short existence on earth. Fortunately, there is more to life – from both a material and spiritual perspective.

The hope of a brighter world tomorrow, a world beyond today, is an integral teaching of God’s Word. It foreshadows mankind’s ultimate destiny and our part in that glorious future as depicted in the pages of the Bible. This will be of God’s making, in contrast to the miserable deficiencies of man over millennia, who has failed to create a just and equitable society for one and all.

Squandered opportunities

This result would have been no surprise to the proph-

et Jeremiah, who wrote, “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). The world at large, including various systems of government, has ignored or repudiated what is right in God’s eyes – and is suffering the consequences of such rejection.

Civilisations throughout history, with or without a knowledge of the one true God, have had the opportunity to rule justly and incorporate good laws into their governmental frameworks. All have failed and fallen short of what God expected of them. Attempts to fashion human utopias – all too often forced upon an unwilling populace – have been to no avail.

The world does not have to wait much longer though. Prophetic signs strongly indicate that we are living in the days leading up to the end of man’s unjust rule, paving the way for the initial phase of God’s rule on earth which will last a thousand years.

When Christ returns

During this thousand-year rule of Christ, God Almighty in His wisdom will demonstrate to all people what a just and morally upright government is like. Human beings will be given the opportunity for salvation, in addition to experiencing a just and equitable society governed by God's own Son together with the ones He has chosen to call in this age of man (Daniel 7:27).

After Christ's return, His followers in this age will be at His side helping to teach God's way to everyone left alive on the earth (Revelation 20:4). This will also be true at the end of the millennium, when the second resurrec-

tion takes place, a period of time when all the dead will be resurrected to life to be judged (verse 5). Those in the first resurrection will be teaching the laws of God to a more receptive world, as indicated by Jeremiah 31:31 and the following Scriptures (Isaiah 2:2-3; 30:19-21; 1 Peter 2:5, 9).

Beyond that time, those who were part of the first resurrection are promised a place in the New Jerusalem in a Kingdom without end (Revelation 22:3-5; Isaiah 9:6-7).

To study this topic further, please request or download our booklets *The Gospel of the Kingdom* and *Christ's Reign on Earth – What Will It Be Like?*

Gerhard Marx

Needed – a spiritual creation

The human spirit is critical to our destiny, since God's Holy Spirit joining with it begets us as spiritual children of our Heavenly Father (Romans 8:15-17).

The book of Genesis describes the physical creation of man, but this is only the first stage. The afore-mentioned spiritual component of a human being is beyond full human comprehension, yet is clearly revealed in the pages of the Bible. For example, the book of Job states, "There is a spirit in man" (Job 32:8).

The apostle Paul confirmed this concept, "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him" (1 Corinthians 2:11).

It is this human spirit that imparts human intellect to our physical brains, creating the human mind. It is what makes people vastly different from animals. In the same way that the human spirit gives us human understanding, so God's Spirit in us gives us higher, godly understanding (1 Corinthians 2:10-16). Our minds and natures begin to change, so we become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

We receive God's Holy Spirit following repentance and baptism, through the laying on of hands (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:15-17). Through this spiritual joining we become God's literal begotten children, though not yet born into His family. We remain human until the resurrection.

The apostle John explained: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! . . . Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is re-

vealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:1-2).

Everlasting life of joy and purpose

Paul taught that this transformation from mortal to immortal, from physical to spiritual, comes through the resurrection, or for those still living, a change to immortality (1 Corinthians 15:50-53). He told his Greek readers in Corinth, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

He concluded that if Christ had not been resurrected, there would be no greater purpose to life beyond merely living out their three-score-and-ten years, and they would be "of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19, King James Bible). Instead God promises a glorious future to those who answer His call to become His spirit-begotten children.

For those who will be born into God's family in the likeness of Christ at His return, an amazing inheritance is promised. Even now, Christ's spirit-begotten disciples are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). Christ has already inherited "all things" (Hebrews 2:5-9). Thus we know what our inheritance shall comprise. Christ promised that those who overcome will sit with Him on His throne (Revelation 3:21; 20:4).

"All things" can be translated as "everything," "all" or "the whole" (*Thayer's Greek Definitions*). In the context of Hebrews 2:5-9, it suggests the entire universe.

To study further the amazing future God has for those who love Him please request or download our booklet *Why Were You Born?*



Are We Living in the Time of the End?

Although Jesus told His disciples that no one knows the exact time that Almighty God will send His Son to put an end to Satan's rule, He also warned them (and us) not to be weary and become distracted waiting for His coming (Luke 21:34-36).

Q What do you mean when you say baptism represents the end of a life?
Reader in London

A By that expression the Bible teaches that the old self based on human nature must come to an end. Human nature is a combination of good and evil and without contact with God's Holy Spirit is contrary to God: "Because the carnal [natural] mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

The apostle Paul explains further in 1 Corinthians 2:14: "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Those called by God to salvation in this age can begin to have their carnal nature moulded into divine nature, as Paul indicated to the church in Corinth: "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). Taking on the mind of Christ requires a spiritual transformation in our lives, a renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2).

That transformation begins with repentance, followed by baptism and receiving God's Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. God then opens our minds so we can understand spiritual matters and embark on this changed way of life. Paul explained that we need to put off the old man and put on the new man (Ephesians 4:22-24). Thus we can avoid becoming enslaved to sin again, as Paul declared: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:6).

After being fully immersed for a moment, the baptised person leaves the water a new person in Christ with their past sins having been washed away: "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should also walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Baptism symbolises the death of the old man – the old person – and the emergence of the new person ready to overcome sin and to grow to become like Christ.

To study this change that can occur in our lives please request or download our booklets *The Power of the Holy Spirit* and *Transforming Your life: The Process of Conversion*.

Q How can we be sure the times in which we live are the end of days foretold in the Bible?
Reader in Norwich

A When it comes to prophetic events concerning end times, we have to be careful not to "rush" prophecies coming to pass. At the same time, we need to be careful not to embrace the view that the Lord is delaying His coming (Matthew 24:48-51). Jesus warned us of that danger in verse 50: "The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him."

In Matthew 24 Christ tells us what will transpire at the end of the days. One key prophetic event was that prior to His return mankind would be in a position to wipe itself from off the face of the planet were God not to intervene and prevent this from happening. Christ declared: "And unless those days were shortened no flesh would be saved, but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (verse 22). Man's ability to destroy himself entirely wasn't possible before the invention of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons of mass destruction in the mid-20th century.

There are other signs that must be fulfilled before Christ's return. You can read more about these in our booklets *Seven Prophetic Signs Before Jesus Returns* and

Let the Bible Answer...

Reasons for the laying on of hands include:

*Passing on a blessing: Genesis 48:14-16; Mark 10:16.
 Symbolic transference of sin to a sin offering: Leviticus 8:14.*

Ordaining a person to a specific role: Numbers 27:22-23; Acts 6:5-6; 13:2-3.

To pass on God's Holy Spirit following baptism: Acts 8:17-18; 19:1-6; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6.

For healing: Luke 4:40; 13:13; Acts 9:11-12; 28:8.



Letters From Our Readers

The Ten Commandments

Yesterday I received your free magazine and the book on *The Ten Commandments*. I have been enjoying reading the book.

Thank you and God bless this charity that is making a difference in people's lives offering these free gifts that will change and transform a person as he or she studies and learns more about the scriptures. I will keep this charity in prayer. God bless you all abundantly.

Reader in London

I believe God created the heavens and this earth. He made us in His image wonderfully and gave us principles and commandments – laws to govern us here.

Reader in London

Thank you for these magazines. The truth of the Bible, which is God's word, cannot be changed to suit mankind, who must obey the laws in God's Holy Book.

Reader in Portsmouth

Food for enquiring minds

Thanks for *Beyond Today*. Good reading for the enquiring mind.

Reader in Barnet

Reading *Beyond Today* has made me a good thinker and more focussed on God as the Creator of heaven and earth.

Reader from Milton Keynes

Your brochures and the magazine have taught me so much and opened my mind and my eyes.

Reader in Liverpool

Helpful booklets

These Bible study booklets are really helping me in my journey with Christ. Thank you so much.

Reader in Nottingham

Reading *Does God Exist?* reinforced my belief that God is the Creator of the world no matter what scientists, historians, philosophers, psychologists, atheists and professors in whatever field may say.

After I finished *Is there Really a Devil?* the book of Revelation became much more meaningful. Thank you.

Reader in Erith

Difficult times

I would like to continue with my subscription to *Beyond Today*. I enjoy the contents of the magazine and it gives me hope in these terrible times.

Reader in Barnsley

Thank you so much. I really appreciate everything you are doing to explain what is taking place in our world in the last days.

Reader from Twickenham

Beyond Today is helping me enormously through a very difficult time in my life.

Reader in London

Bible Study Course

Thank you for your magazine. I thoroughly enjoyed looking up scriptures and learning more. Do you do a Bible Study course?

Reader in Mitcham

Editor's comment: Lesson One is in the post.

How this work is supported

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