

Jesus the Messiah
A Series on Who Do I Worship – God or Jesus: Part 2

While one reason to worship Jesus recognizes His position and relationship to His Father, does His role in God's plan contribute to the answer to this perplexing question?

In lieu of "Son of God," Jesus preferred to call Himself the "Son of Man" (Matt 12:8; Mark 10:45, etc.), which the writer of Hebrews recognized as a humble title in contrast to His divine position:

But one has testified somewhere, saying,
"WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM?
OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM?
YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS;
YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR,
AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;
YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET." (Heb 2:6-8)

Introduced by Daniel the Old Testament prophet, the Son of Man was prophesized to be the One appointed by the Ancient of Days to return as the glorified King and Judge (Dan 7:13-14, 25-27). When Jesus identifies Himself as the "Son of Man," He is making the association that the Son of Man and the Messiah are One and claiming the sovereign authority given to Him.

Yet on the very rare occasion that Jesus claims to be the Messiah, He places the focus of worship upon His Father:

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." (John 4:21-26)

And for evil fallen angelic beings who knew with certainty that He was the Messiah, Jesus did not allow them to speak of Him as the Messiah (Luke 4:41, Greek: Christos).

In several instances, Jesus speaks of being sent to accomplish the works that God wanted Him to do:

But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the **works which the Father has given Me to accomplish**—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. (John 5:36-38)

Jesus performed miracles and using titles of Himself that Old Testament Believers would recognize as marks of the Messiah (John 1:47-49).

Jesus speaks of the Old Testament prophesying of Him (i.e. to save God's people [Jer 23:5-6; Dan 9:24-26], to suffer and die for sin [Isa 53:2-7], etc.)

For I have come down from heaven, **not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me**. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:38-40)

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And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For **I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.** I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.” (John 12:44-50)

As explicitly as He could, Jesus makes clear that He is only doing what His Father desires - that all those who believe in the Son will have eternal life (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45). What the disciples did not understand at the time was that it was God’s will to have His Son suffer (Matt 17:12; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22) and die for the sins of mankind (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45).

But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for **I was sent for this purpose.**” (Luke 4:43)

Although Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, His life on earth was not characteristic of the earthly king that was expected (Luke 24:18-21). Jesus’ reign and kingdom was not of this world, and the concept was impossible to grasp (John 18:33-37), and the title “King of the Jews” was used to indict and mock Him (Matt 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:35-38; John 19:19-21). It would not be until later when the kingdom of God is fully realized (Rev 21 - 22).

Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth, **having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.** Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. (John 17:1-5)

In anticipation of completing the work of His Father, Jesus prays that He be glorified when He reunites with His Father:

It was only after resurrection, when Jesus opened their minds (Luke 24:45-47), that disciples understood what messiahship meant and its relationship to the Law (i.e. atonement [Matt 5:17; Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 2:22-24], reconciliation [2 Cor 5:18-20], etc.).

After the resurrection, the apostles speak of the exaltation of Jesus:

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:30-31)

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:8-11)

In a heavenly scene, the apostle John sees Jesus take the scroll with the seven seals:

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When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped. (Rev 5:8-14)

It is apparent that there is more than one reason for worshiping Jesus, as equivalent to worshiping God, than just being part of the Trinity.

God exalts (glorifies) His Son the Messiah, because He accomplished what He was appointed to do - provided mankind the means for holiness and eternal life and initiated the coming of His kingdom.