



JESUS IS LORD

This article focuses on a three-word phrase that is central to the Christian faith. The phrase, JESUS IS LORD, has only one meaning but has innumerable applications. This phrase encompasses all of human history—past, present, and future—and reveals the infinite power that orders the universe. The reality of this phrase causes demons to tremble and, simultaneously, provides hope for believers facing life’s greatest challenges. When believers realize the dimensions of Christ’s Lordship, they will embrace the honor of living now as Christ-like servants and simultaneously anticipate their future life as joint heirs with Christ throughout eternity.

In light of the immensity and majesty of the Lordship of Christ, it is not surprising that new believers are largely unaware of Christ’s universal Lordship at the moment of their conversion. (See [Life’s Most Important Decision](#)) From that time forward, however, believers can thankfully acknowledge that Jesus is *their* Lord due to a personal relationship with Him. Jesus Christ’s position as Lord, however, does not depend on a believer’s understanding or acknowledgment of this spiritual reality. In fact, there is nothing in the universe that is apart from the Lordship of Jesus Christ right now. As the verses below declare—JESUS IS LORD! (Unless otherwise noted, all verses referenced in this study are from the New American Standard Version of the Bible 1995 edition.)

JESUS IS LORD OVER ALL THINGS AS GOD AND CREATOR

The scope of the Lordship of Jesus Christ encompasses everything in the universe, whether we recognize it or not, as the following indicates.

Matthew 28:18, And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

Colossians 1:15-17, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Hebrews 2:8, You have put all things in subjection under His feet. For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.

JESUS IS LORD OVER UNSEEN POWERS

Acknowledging Jesus as Lord over everything, we sometimes forget that some aspects of “everything” involve unseen powers, some of which are extraordinarily beneficial while others are diabolically detrimental.

1 Peter 3:22, Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

Angels

Hebrews 1:4, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

Satan

1 John 3:8, the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

Hebrews 2:14, Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Satan’s hordes

Colossians 2:15, When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

JESUS IS LORD IN A DIMENSION THAT IS FAR ABOVE ANY OTHER POWER OR BEING THAT HAS BEEN OR WILL BE

1 Corinthians 15:27, For He has put all things in subjection under His feet . . .

Ephesians 1:19-21, 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 might²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ 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.

JESUS IS LORD OVER SIN'S POWER AND PENALTY

Romans 8:3, For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

Galatians 1:4, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Colossians 1:13-14, For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

JESUS IS LORD OVER DEATH

Romans 6:9, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

1 Corinthians 15:20-26, But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.²¹ For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead.²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,²⁴ then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

2 Timothy 1:8-10, Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,⁹ who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,¹⁰ but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

JESUS IS LORD OVER HELL

Revelation 1:17-18, And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

JESUS IS LORD OVER THE ETERNAL DESTINY OF EVERY PERSON

John 3:16-18, For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

JESUS IS LORD OF THE CHURCH AND HAS FIRST PLACE IN EVERYTHING

Ephesians 1:22, And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

Colossians 1:18, He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

JESUS IS LORD OF EVERY BELIEVER'S LIFE AND ASSOCIATED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

John 15:5, I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

JESUS IS LORD OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

John 5:24, Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Romans 14:7-9, For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;⁸ for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived *again*, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

ONE DAY, EVERY PERSON WILL ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS IS LORD OVER EVERYTHING

Philippians 2:8-11, Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Timothy 6:13-16, I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴ that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS TODAY

Believers over the last twenty centuries know that God's Word emphasizes that JESUS IS LORD. Is it possible, however, that some 21st century Christians relate differently to the Lordship of Christ than did their 1st century counterparts? Quite possibly, they do.

To begin with, the word "Jesus" is used over 900 times in the New Testament. Of this total, about 600 are in the Gospels and about 5% of the time that "Jesus" is mentioned, the title "Lord" accompanies that name. However, from Acts to Revelation, when "Jesus" is mentioned (over 300 times), the word "Lord" is associated with Him about 40% of the time. This increased use of "Lord Jesus" is linked to the finished work of Jesus on earth (His death and resurrection, followed by His ascension).

With the finished task of our Lord in mind—providing forgiveness of sins, granting the gift of eternal life to those who believe in Him, sending the Holy Spirit to abide in believers, ascending to the right hand of the Father—notice how the majority of Christ's followers refer to Jesus after the Gospels.

Acts 2:36, (*Peter's first sermon to his Jewish brethren*) Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified (emphasis added).

Acts 15:11, (*at the Council of Jerusalem, Jews and Gentiles were both considered children of God in the same manner*) "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are" (emphasis added).

Acts 16:31, (*Paul and Silas said to the Philippian jailer*) They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (emphasis added).

Romans 5:1, Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (emphasis added).

Romans 10:8-10, But what does it say? "The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (emphasis added).

Romans 13:14, But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts (emphasis added).

These representative examples demonstrate that the first century Christians recognized that the Lordship of Jesus Christ was instrumental in all things from salvation through every aspect of their life. Do today's Christians demonstrate they believe likewise? To answer that question, remember that theoretical beliefs can be stated in *what you say*, but true beliefs are revealed in *what you do*. For those truly believing the Bible, what they say *will correspond* to what they do. (See *What Do You Believe ... No, Really*)

Modern Christians—especially in the western world—discuss Jesus, refer to Him, profess allegiance to Him, but far too often do not seem to be truly in awe that He is Lord. For example, many professing Christians may say, "JESUS IS LORD" but then maintain values and lifestyles similar to those in the world instead of obeying the truth of God's Word for all aspects of life and relationships.

Even though believers today are aware of religious creeds and doctrinal statements, professing Christians often deny the Lordship of Jesus Christ in business, use of time, priorities, speech, relationships, clothing, goals, financial stewardship, and/or entertainment. Except for a perceived born-again experience, worship service attendance, and sporadic Bible

reading, some professing Christians live like those who have little or no interest in Christ.

Predictably, if believers do not grow in their understanding and appreciation of the Lordship of Christ, they face the possibility of not fearing the consequences of sin as well as not being continually grateful for deliverance from sin's power. When a believer overlooks the Lordship of Christ, challenges of life can easily become overwhelming obstacles instead of being recognized as opportunities to grow in God's grace and love. Basically, when the Lordship of Christ is minimized or overlooked, self-oriented living is inevitable.

The Lordship of Jesus Christ, on the other hand, should make a marked difference in the lives of believers. The following examples characterize believers who continually recognize that JESUS IS LORD.

BELIEVERS WHO KNOW THAT JESUS IS LORD CONTINUALLY RESPOND TO CHRIST'S WORK ON THEIR BEHALF

Those following the Lord Jesus Christ know that they are no longer under condemnation . . . and live accordingly. They are consistently thankful for Christ's intervention on their behalf with regard to sin and death.

Romans 8:2, For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

The opening verses of Ephesians chapter 2 describe our natural dilemma, remind us of God's loving response on our behalf, and provide on-going motivation for us to live according to His plan.

Ephesians 2:1-10, And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

As the above passages state, we were dead in our sins, and our realm of life was in accordance with worldly values. We were ruled by lusts of the flesh and were, by nature, children of wrath. Yet, in our spiritually dead condition, God made us alive together in Christ because of His grace and seated us with Him in the heavenlies. As a believer in Jesus, you do not have to sin and there does not need to be any fear of death because you are His workmanship. You can bring glory to God through every aspect of your life. All this is available to you because, in a moment of time, the Lord Jesus Christ entered your life! What Lordship!

In addition, when believers fail to live up to their high calling in Christ Jesus, they can confess their sins and be assured of receiving divine forgiveness.

1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

BELIEVERS WHO KNOW THAT JESUS IS LORD RECOGNIZE GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN THEIR LIVES

One of the most profound passages related to a believer's life in this world is in Romans, chapter 8.

Romans 8:28-32, And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal proof of God's loving provision for believers in Christ. If you had no other verses except these verses in Romans 8, you are assured of divine Lordship operating for good (Christ-like development) in your life.

BELIEVERS WHO KNOW THAT JESUS IS LORD TRUST THE DIVINE OVERSIGHT OF THEIR LIVES

Closely related to all things working together for good is the promise that a believer's spiritual development is under divine oversight.

Philippians 1:6, *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

This Christ-like development does not depend on human perfection but, instead, depends on instruction from God's Word that keeps us from sinning in addition to divine correction when we do sin.

Hebrews 12:7-11, It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? ⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. ¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

BELIEVERS WHO KNOW THAT JESUS IS LORD KNOW THAT SATAN HAS BEEN DEFEATED BY JESUS

No matter how formidable the struggles may be in the lives of believers, they have the promise that the power of Christ—His Lordship—is greater than that of Satan.

1 John 4:4b, ... greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

BELIEVERS WHO KNOW THAT JESUS IS LORD REALIZE THE PERMANENCY OF GOD'S LOVE FOR THEM

Romans 8:38-39, For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

CONTINUING BENEFITS FOR A BELIEVER TRUSTING THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST

When believers recognize and respond to the reality that JESUS IS LORD, they accept personal trials as part of Christ's Lordship in their lives. Believers who recognize that JESUS IS LORD pursue servanthood to God and others, knowing that they represent Christ. They joyfully embrace dying to self. They become increasingly sensitive to sin and faithfully practice confession and repentance of sin(s). For them, praying is no longer a problem but, instead, is a profound privilege. Studying God's Word is not an interruption to daily life but is vital to every aspect of it. In fact, they perceive and approach everything differently when they know that JESUS IS LORD.

In light of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the many promises of Scripture for life today and the life to come, whom should you trust? To whom should you turn? Who should be the focus of your attention each day of your life?

When believers truly understand and respond to the eternal truth that Jesus Christ IS Lord, their lives will have a significance that is "out of this world." And, in the not-so-distant future, the reality of 1 John 3:2 will be realized for all of eternity . . . "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is."

In the meantime, as a believer who is serious about growing in Christ, ask God to grant you ever increasing insight into the Lordship of Jesus Christ and then rely on divine empowerment to live accordingly. JESUS IS LORD!