

With Sam and Chris

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[0 : 0 0] A couple of questions that I think we can wrestle with a bit quickly. First one is, do we still call Jesus now that he's been exalted or does he go back to being a kind of pre-incarnation deity?

Because you'll remember we talked about how that's the point where God arrives or shows up. It's not the beginning of him. So the answer I have is yes and yes. So yes, we still call Jesus now.

He still referred to Jesus post-resurrection by New Testament writers. So I think that is perfectly acceptable. And yes, he does return to his pre-incarnation deity because in John 17 he prays that he'll return to the glory that he had before the creation of the world with the Father.

So that's correct, but I don't think it's wrong to refer to him as Jesus. He's referred to as multiple things in the New Testament. So in Revelation he's referred to as the Lamb quite regularly, but that doesn't negate the title Jesus or the title Christ particularly because his death and resurrection proves him to be the Christ and then he sits on the throne as Christ, as Lord and King.

So hopefully that's a short, sharp one. Will Jesus be in human form, a glorified human form, in heaven or will he be physically different from us?

[1 : 2 0] That's a great question. And there's a bunch of scriptures that I want to point to really, really quickly. Philippians 3 is one that comes to mind which talks about our desire to eventually be with God.

It's Paul straining towards heaven. And he says this, verse 20 of chapter 3, So there is some likeness between what Jesus now has and what we will have in our new bodies when we get to heaven.

1 Corinthians 15 is another passage that talks about how the new bodies we get are going to be better and that all the sickness and stuff is taken out and it talks about how it used to be perishable and it would be imperishable.

Yeah, so I think that's my answer. Yes, I think it will be in human form because the risen Jesus who appears to the disciples is the same risen Jesus now.

There's no communication in scripture that he changes. I think the vision of the Lamb in Revelation is a vision reminding us that he was the one who was slain. But my read, and I'm open to Chris pushing on this, is that he will have a human form that is glorified.

[2 : 5 1] Do you want to...? I think it's really significant that he's taken humanity into heaven. But I think it's humanity, not all of humanity. Thank you. It's just really significant that Jesus has taken humanity, but perfect humanity into heaven.

And he is the perfect person that we're not. But he opens the door for us being there with him through what he's done. Yep. Another one which hopefully I can do pseudo-quickly.

Question, in terms of salvation, when do we receive the Holy Spirit? This is a good question and a controversial one as well. What happens is, so when Jesus talks to Nicodemus in John 3, he says that to have eternal life we need to be born again.

We need to be born of the Spirit, and that's what we call being regenerated. So we're told in scripture that we're dead in sin, and we need to be made alive to then begin our relationship with God.

That is the work of the Holy Spirit, that regeneration which enables us to see Jesus as Christ and to repent of our sins and place our trust in him.

[4 : 07] It does also say in Ephesians 1, for example, that having believed, you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. And so I think it's important to understand that it's the Spirit that works.

God uses the Spirit to bring the benefits of Christ to us. But in terms of receiving it, I think you receive it at the point of salvation, although I think that's a blurry line.

So is the point of salvation when you pray a prayer to say, I want to be a Christian, or is the point of salvation when God begins to change your heart so that you can get to a point where you want to pray a prayer like that? I think that's all the point of salvation.

I agree with you, but I think for some of us, we haven't got a clear point where we know we were in Christ. Some of us have been raised in Christian families. Others of us have come to Christ maybe over a period of time.

And clearly it's the Spirit's work in both drawing us to Christ, convicting us of sin, and then keeping us in Christ. And so God's Spirit's at work at every point in one way.

[5 : 11] I probably think against the idea of a special reception of him. If you're a believer, he's at work in you, and his power is fully at work in you. But we might quench him, or what's the other word?

Well, there's a question in that direction, so let's continue in that direction, and you can continue answering it. No, no, you can go. You're doing well. The question was, is the Spirit working within us 24-7, or does the percentage of his involvement in our lives fluctuate?

So you're on a good direction, I think. My head feels a bit dead, but I think I answered this one online the other day, and I think the Spirit is always there.

He doesn't come and go. I think our sensitivity to his voice and our obedience to his voice and to his leading, that's what fluctuates. So there's fluctuation in us. Like sometimes we just downright say no to God.

And when we say no to God, we're actually rejecting the work of his Spirit in us in that moment. Now, I'm not talking about being cast out of the kingdom, but that's what a disobedient walk looks like at that point.

[6 : 19] I make a decision sometimes day by day not to do something that I really know I should do. When I do that, I'm actually sort of saying I'll take control right here, and you can sit in the passenger seat for a while, and then you wear the consequences.

Yeah, I think it's helpful. So I'm guessing that this might come out of a passage like Ephesians 5, which says do not get drunk on wine, but be filled with the Spirit. I think it's important to remember as we've worked through this series that the Spirit is a person.

It's not just a force or something like that. And so to think that we have more of a person or less of a person is maybe not a helpful way to think about it. The Spirit dwells in us according to the Scriptures, and I think it's more an issue of our submission to him than how much of him we may or may not have.

Is there any from the floor before we keep going through? Anyone want to... Yeah? I'm going to throw the mark down in that direction. Oh, sorry.

So one of the most striking points that you made during this series, for me, was the fact that Jesus existed before he was born here, and you pointed out tonight that the three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were eternal.

[7 : 37] So what was the role then of Jesus before he arrived on that Christmas day 2,000 years ago? So the Bible, like, talks about him coming in the future, but does that mean that Jesus didn't have any role for those people before he was born on earth?

That is a sensational question. I'm happy to have a crack, and then I'll defer to the wiser member of the panel. I think that one of the things that we've done in this series is looked at the relationships between Father, Son, and Spirit, and it's helpful to remember that those relationships are eternal.

So the Son existed in submission to the Father's will, which ultimately was that he would come, die, and rise again. But the Father had a will before that as well.

Jesus is pointed to as an agent of creation quite a few times in Scripture. So through him all things were created. To nail down specific things that he was doing in the period between creation and him coming in human form, I'm not sure that Scripture is really explicit on that, but I think he was actively loving the Father and submitting to the Father for all of that period.

The content of what that looked like I've struggled to nail down. When Jacob wrestles with God, is that Jesus or is that an angel or something else?

[9 : 07] Great question. Do you want to... Yeah, you're a couple of weeks in.

You've got this covered. Yeah, so the question was when Jacob wrestles with God in Genesis, that is that Jesus or is that an angel or is that...

Well, I guess you've got to answer from the text, and the text doesn't tell us, but it's tantalising, isn't it, when you read it, because you really wonder if he's wrestled with God in human form and is that Jesus. But Jesus is not revealed as Jesus until you get to the New Testament.

But it doesn't mean that Jesus wasn't in operation through the Old Testament even before that. And Sam's question, answer before I agree with, there's two purple passages for Jeff, John chapter 1 and Colossians chapter 1, in terms of Jesus existing before he was born.

And Sam quoted it and he said, he's the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over... This is Colossians 1, 15. The firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.

[10 : 22] All things were created by him and for him. So it's not just him creating everything. It's making this grand statement that the whole creation's been brought into being for him.

Not quite sure exactly what that means, but it's a big picture statement about the importance of Jesus, his role in creation and what it's for. In the end, Philippians 2, every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

So every single created knee will bow to the Lord Jesus. That's the summing up at the end to his lordship. And then, 1 Corinthians 15, he will hand over the kingdom to his father.

Yep. If I was going to throw in a thought based on the rest of what scripture says, I think your whispered answer down here is, I think that it's probably not Jesus in human form for the reason that Chris said, because he's revealed in human form at his incarnation when he is born to Mary.

So in terms of exactly what it is, I'd be more nervous, but an angel is probably not a bad suggestion. Yeah. As a representative of God in the Old Testament. Any other questions?

[11 : 31] There is more on here. Yep. Can you talk about how the spirit glorifies the son and the son glorifies the father, and then how the father goes back in glorifying the son.

Does the spirit ever end up with any glory or recognition? I know, I don't want to just like side with like the underdog spirit, but like I just feel like it's a chain that goes up, but I don't feel like the spirit gets any glory as like an end in itself.

I think understanding what we mean when we talk about glory will probably help us a little bit in that. So glory is ultimately the revealing of who God is.

And so even in John 17, the prayer, Father, glorify your son, that your son may glorify you. What Jesus is praying is, show me to be God the son so that I can show people you as God the father.

And the spirit's primary role is to reveal Jesus as God, remembering that he is God himself. In terms of direct towards the spirit, I'm not sure that he does get focused on in the way that the father and the son do, but that doesn't reduce the fact that he is God.

[12 : 45] He is eternal. He is all-knowing. He is completely God and fully God. And like we keep saying, he's equal with father and son, even though he's not the focus of what's happening. But I think there's, like I said tonight, there's no even whisper in scripture that that's in any way negative for the spirit.

The spirit is very satisfied and content in his work and feels full of the love of the father and the son.

So, I don't know. I think Jesus is the most tangible expression of God that he has given us in that he is God in the flesh.

Spirit is hidden to some extent, except we see his impact in our lives and in the lives of people around us and in the world. The father in heaven is hidden and Jesus himself is the one who really helps us to see what the hidden God of the universe is like.

And I think for me, that's been the most special thing that's come through in the whole series. I've been preaching in the morning, Sam's been preaching at night, but the whole notion that lots of people say they believe in God and they have a sense of God.

[13 : 55] And so, when I spoke to one of my friends the other week, who's a doctor, he said, I've had the privilege of cutting people open and I could never conceive that there's not a God. But I said, that's just like a Muslim who says he can't conceive there's not a God.

So, how do you get to the character of the real God? Well, the way you find out about the character and the nature and the person of the real God is through Jesus who reveals him. So, what do I want to say to my friends? Come to Jesus and find out about what...

You're perceiving something which is really true, but come and find out what he's really like and you find out through Jesus. Can I say something controversial? Please do. Controversial one on the spirit is, I challenge you to go and see anywhere in the Bible where the spirit is prayed to as a person.

I don't think you'll find it, but I'm happy for you to come and shove it under my nose and say, here it is here. I think you see prayers like, we pray to Jesus asking him to send his spirit on us and to work in us and through the church.

We pray to the Father, send the spirit and work in us through the church. But I don't think you see prayers saying, dear Holy Spirit, work amongst us. And if you pray a prayer like that, I don't think you're thrown out of the Christian family, but I think it's worth pondering in terms of how God operates and how God is revealed to us in the scripture.

[15 : 09] I think that's helpful. I know if you've got one, I was going to say others will keep wandering down that track. Sorry, just in regards to that comment, does that mean that the spirit doesn't have a will or does the spirit also have a will like Jesus and the Father do?

I would say, again, scripture doesn't go into heaps of detail on the person of the spirit and the way it does, Father and Son. But I think because he is God, he has all the attributes of God, including a will.

Father and Son have wills, but it's also a shared will in that they're so unified and I think the spirit is the same. But again, I would struggle to find a place in scripture that kind of unpacks that because the spirit really does work backstage for want of a better term.

It's probably not a great word, but the idea is he kind of stays out of the mainframe as much as possible because he's just trying to point to Jesus. Would that then apply to praying to the Son? Would we not pray to the Son either because of that?

I think, so I actually think, like Chris said, I don't think it's going to get you kicked out praying to the spirit and I think praying to Jesus is the same. But the instruction, the only time we're ever instructed on how to pray by Jesus is our Father in heaven.

[16 : 23] And I think given the stuff we've looked at, that the spirit and Son come to draw us in to that relationship so we can call him our Father. It's a privileged position to be able to pray to our Father and it's one to make the most of.

So I don't think it's wrong to pray to Jesus or to pray to the spirit, but seeing a scripture encourages me towards praying to the Father. That's where I think. Chris may have a passage.

Oh, look out. Acts chapter 7, as Stephen's dying, he's been stoned to death. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And I'm not sure there's some other places as well, but that's a clear example.

But I'd say it's happening, but it's not instructed in the way that Matthew... Oh, no, no, no. It's not instruction, but it's there in the scriptures happening and you see it and it's real. Can I have a go to another question, which I know is on the list?

Please do. Somebody asked the question about where you see the spirit at work in Revelation because it seems pretty quiet. And in the book of Revelation, you do see the spirit working with the three churches in Revelation chapter 1 to 3, 2 and 3 in particular, what the spirit says to the churches.

[17 : 35] And then there's some really... The pictures of God in Revelation, a couple of the key pictures of God for me in Revelation are in Revelation 5, when worthy is the Lamb who was slain.

The Lamb is worshipped and the last song is, to him who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and glory and honour. So it's like father and son worshipped together as one, not the two persons in the one place worshipped as one.

And then in Revelation 21, 22, I think 21, there's no need for a temple in heaven because him who is on the throne and the Lamb are its temple.

The presence of God is with his people and it's expressed as the two there. And I can't go further than that other than we clearly presume the spirit's at work and so when things emanate from the throne, it's the power of God, it's the person of God, it's the spirit of God that is still at work.

But again, there's a hiddenness to him in Revelation. But in saying there's a hiddenness, that's not to presume at all that he's not there and at work. I think we're getting tight on time.

[18 : 43] Would that be correct? All right, just to wrap up, I just want to affirm again that as we've kept saying throughout this series, this isn't the final word. This isn't exhaustive on the character of God and that's something that we can be thankful for, that God is bigger and more wonderful and there's more for us to keep discovering and rejoicing in and being thankful for until he comes again and shows us everything.

So I encourage you to keep digging. If you had questions that we didn't get to tonight, I'm happy to hang around.