

Listening In

Hi Lori,

I haven't forgotten you, Lori, or our email discussions while I was in the states. As you can imagine, I came home to a great deal of work that demanded immediate attention. Now I am focusing on you and our prior discussions.

As I recall, this began when someone communicated with you and said that an article of mine you published was advocating "lordship salvation". As a result you were going to print a retraction, or apology, or something of the sort.

Since that time we've got off on several tangents. I'd like to bring us back to the center of the issue that is "Is the Lordship of Jesus Christ central to the Christian life and even to salvation?"

If the answer is "Yes", then you should be jumping with joy that you published something proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus rather than apologizing for it.

If the answer is no, likely you did the correct thing.

I am assuming we start from a common premise, i.e., that Scripture is God-breathed and inerrant in its original form and that the transmission of God's Word through the centuries has been preserved remarkably well so that we can take it as authoritative in matters concerning our salvation. If that is not so, why are we bothering to engage in dialogue at all?

What does Scripture emphasize about Jesus?

In America, at least when I was there, the great emphasis was upon Jesus as Savior. Yet Scripture, which I hope we agree is God-breathed, only refers to Jesus as Savior 15 times. He is referred to as LORD 618 times. Where is the emphasis?

How does Scripture describe Jesus?

What does Scripture say about Jesus? I'll give you just a few Scriptures that describe how Paul and the early Apostles described Jesus:

Wherefore also **God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name**; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth and *things* 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).

Actually the Philippians' passage should settle the matter without going further. God did all this so that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And that is what Lordship salvation is: Confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord!

Some more scriptures that exalt Jesus as Lord:

. . . according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that

is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Ephesians 1:19-23).

. . . for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is **Christ the Lord** (Luke 2:11).

And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. 16And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, **KINGS OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS** (Revelation 19:14).

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that **God hath made him both Lord and Christ**, this Jesus whom ye crucified (Acts 2:36).

. . . who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence (Colossians 1:15-18).

. . . Jesus Christ; who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him (1 Peter 3:22).

Jesus confirmed his Lordship:

Then Jesus came to them and said, “**All authority in heaven and on earth** has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18).

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, **the Almighty**” (Revelation 1:8).

Who did Jesus claim to be? “You call me ‘Teacher’ **and ‘Lord,**’ and rightly so, for **that is what I am**” (John 13:13).

I told you that you would die in your sins; **if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins**” (John 8:24).

Consider, please, what the people do who deny the Lordship of Jesus and it's importance. Jesus said if we don't believe he is who he claimed to be, we'll die in our sins. He claimed to be LORD!

What did the Apostles preach? Look at just a few of their writings:

For we do not preach ourselves, **but Jesus Christ as Lord**, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4:5).

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is **in Christ Jesus our Lord** (Romans 8:38-39).

So then, just as you **received Christ Jesus as Lord**, continue to live in him . . . (Col. 2:6). [Never does Scripture speak of Jesus being received in any other way.]

But in your hearts **set apart Christ as Lord** (1 Peter 3:15). [Never does Scripture speak of Jesus being set apart in our hearts in any other way.]

Consider the two preceding verses. Both speak of how to receive Jesus -- as Lord and then to set him apart in our hearts -- as Lord!

Still more verses which show how the Apostles presented Jesus:

You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through **Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all** (Acts 10:36).

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and **have faith in our Lord Jesus** (Acts 20:21).

Then they spoke **the word of the Lord** to him and to all the others in his house (Acts 16:32).

When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the **teaching about the Lord** (Acts 13:12).

On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the **word of the Lord** (Acts 13:44).

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the **word of the Lord**; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed (Acts 13:48).

Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and **taught about the Lord Jesus Christ** (Acts 28:31).

*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; **one Lord**, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all* (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Did you notice Paul did not say “one Savior”? No, New Testament Scriptures refer to God the Father as Savior 9 times.

Still more about how the Apostles presented Jesus:

For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and **one Lord, Jesus Christ**, through whom are all things, and we through him (1 Cor. 8:5-6).

. . . who was declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; *even Jesus Christ our Lord*, . . . (Romans 1:4).

For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life **in Christ Jesus our Lord** (Romans 6:23).

These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is **Lord of lords, and King of kings** . . . (Revelation 17:14).

I charge thee in the sight of God, who giveth life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession; that thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until **the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ**: . . . (1 Timothy 6:13-14).

What was the result of the Apostles preaching Jesus as Lord?

This became known all over Joppa, and **many people believed in the Lord** (Acts 9:42).

Nevertheless, more and more men and women **believed in the Lord** and were added to their number (Acts 5:14).

The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and **turned to the Lord** (Acts 11:21).

When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a **believer in the Lord**," she said, "come and stay at my house" (Acts 16:15).

Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household **believed in the Lord**; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8).

You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through **Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all** (Acts 10:36).

So if God gave them the same gift as he gave **us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ**, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" (Acts 11:17). [Peter was speaking to the elders in Jerusalem. They all believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.]

In the following verse, Paul includes all Christians, including us:

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with **all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours**: . . . (1 Cor. 1:2).

The early church preached Jesus Christ as Lord, resulting in the incredible rapid growth in the early church was through people accepting the Word of the Lord and believing in

Jesus Christ as Lord. What a shame that today you are listening to people who decry preaching Jesus as Lord!

A warning for today:

For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and **deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord** (Jude 4).

If anyone teaches false doctrines and **does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ** and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing (1 Tim. 6:3).

Are these people who are telling you that you shouldn't have anything to do with this "awful" doctrine of the Lordship of Jesus some of those described in the prior two verses?

Scriptures re Salvation:

Most importantly, the issue of the Lordship of Jesus deals with salvation. If it did not, if it were only a peripheral issue, then good men could afford to differ. If, however, there is no salvation UNLESS a person receives Jesus as his LORD, then the issue is a watershed issue. And so it is. Please remember, there are NO scriptures which say or suggest that there is salvation by accepting or believing in or receiving Jesus as Savior. NONE! But consider the following:

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and **have faith in our Lord Jesus** (Acts 20:21).

But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That **if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,”** and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, **you will be saved** (Romans 10:8-9).

They replied, “**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved**—you and your household” (Acts 16:31).

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “**Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved**” (Romans 10:12-13).

For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life **in Christ Jesus our Lord** (Romans 6:23)

What If We Deny Him?

Is that what is happening with those "friends" who decry the Lordship of Jesus?

“But **whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father** who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:13).

Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we endure, we shall also reign with him: **if we shall deny him, he also will deny us:** if we are faithless, he abideth faithful; for he cannot deny himself (2 Tim. 2:11-13).

Scriptures Re OBEDIENCE to JESUS CHRIST

Perhaps the real rub is that if Jesus is Lord there is a necessary requirement to obey him; it would be an oxymoron to claim Jesus as Lord and not obey him.

"Ah," they claim, "that is legalism, something added to the finished work of Christ on the cross! We can't be required to obey!"

Really? Is that what Scripture says, or is it important to listen to only the doctrines of men? Let's look at Scripture:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven**” (Matthew 7:21).

This Scripture that should cut off all further discussion from those who claim obedience is not important for salvation.

EVERYTHING Jesus said was the will of God as shown by the following Scriptures:

“My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own” (John 7:16-17).

“He who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world” (John 8:26).

“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me” (John 8:28).

“I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. . . . So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say” (John 12:49-50).

“Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work” (John 14:10).

“These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me” (John 14:24).

“The world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me” (John 14:31).

Because God instructed Jesus what to do and say, and because Jesus obeyed perfectly, whatever Jesus said and did was God's will. Every teaching, every command, every miracle, all were done by Jesus because God the Father instructed him to do it and he did exactly as he was told. Everything Jesus did was the will of God.

Let's look at more Scriptures about obedience:

. . . and having been made perfect, he [the Lord Jesus] became **unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation** (Hebrews 5:9).

“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

“Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you:” (Matthew 28:19-20).

“If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him” (John 14:21).

“If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me” (John 14:23-24).

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40).

For this is the love of [for] God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3).

May the truth of these Scriptures be revealed to you, Lori, and may our Lord bless you and your ministry as you seek to serve him.

In the love of our Lord Jesus,

Bernie
