

## **Article: Jesus is Lord!**

People say, "You have to accept Jesus as Saviour *and Lord!*" Aside from the proud, free-will implication of the word "accept," what bothers me is the emphasis they put on the term "Lord." They mean it in the sense of "boss" or "ruler." The idea is that for salvation it is not enough to trust Christ. One must also obey Him. I'm reminded of that one line in hymn no. 877, "*Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*" It makes my skin crawl! It's as if we must do something to save ourselves by our own works. That is directly contrary to the Gospel (Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 3:19-4:8).

When the New Testament calls Jesus "Lord," it means that He is true God. It means what the Old Testament means by "LORD," all in capitals. Compare Deuteronomy 6:4 and 1 Corinthians 8:6; Joel 2:32 and Romans 10:13. It is the name "Jehovah" ("He Who Is"), and it can be applied only to the true God.

The Septuagint was the Greek translation of the Old Testament done by Jews before the birth of Christ. It translated "Jehovah" as "Kyrios," "Lord." When the Greek New Testament says, "Jesus is Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:3), that means that Jesus is Jehovah, the only true God. Greek speakers familiar with the Old Testament could hardly fail to understand.

Greek speakers who did not know the Old Testament also knew that Jesus was being called "God." For them, "Kyrios," "Lord," was as strong a divine title as "Theos," "God." As they learned the Old Testament, this meaning was deepened in terms of the one true God.

But the Bible means still more by the term "Lord." It emphasises the true God as the Saviour and Redeemer. When He proclaimed the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, God did not start out, "I am the LORD your God, so obey or else!" He said, "*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*" (Exodus 20:2).

The Israelites were to obey out of gratitude for delivery from slavery in Egypt - and for the promised delivery from sin and hell. We obey out of gratitude for the accomplished delivery from sin and hell. Both Testaments teach us to obey as loved and loving sons - not as threatened and fearful slaves.

A big book could be written about the Biblical use of "Lord." But even rapid Bible reading and quick word study show that, for Christians, the title "Lord" should be sweet and comforting. See how it is used in Psalm 9:1; 11:1; 18:1-2; 23:1; 27:1; 34:1; 103:1-22; and many more.

The same goes for the New Testament. In the opening greetings in his letters, Paul again and again connects "Lord" with grace and peace (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 3). That list includes every one of Paul's epistles. He cannot even get through saying, "Hello," before he connects the title "Lord" with the grace of God that the Lord Jesus earned for us by His suffering and death for our sin in our place.

In his Large Catechism, Dr. Martin Luther sums up the second article of the Apostles' Creed by showing that "Lord" means "Redeemer." He writes: "*But what is it to become Lord? It is this, that He has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death, and all evil*" (Concordia Triglotta, p. 685). He says again: "*Let this, then, be the sum of this article that the little word Lord signifies simply as much as Redeemer, i.e., He who has brought us from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and who preserves us in the same*" (p. 685).

What should we mean when we say that Jesus is Lord? It should be our confession of faith that Jesus is our God, our Saviour and Redeemer!