



Rome, 80 AD. Two men meet on a street. One man is selling vegetables and the other buying. As they briefly visit, one man, using his foot, draws an arc in the dirt of the street. It may have looked something like this. 

The other man looks down and sees the shape. He does nothing. He continues the brief visit, collects the other man's money in exchange for some vegetables and they part. The man who drew the arc in the dirt continues down the street. He meets another vendor, this one selling fruit. He begins to negotiate a price. He repeats the drawing in the dust as he did with the first man. This new vendor looks down and sees the shape. He smiles and with his foot connects another arc with the first so that the two may have looked something like this.  A simple fish.

The conversation changes. The two men begin to greet one another as brothers in Christ. They speak of the goodness and

greatness of their God and their Savior Jesus Christ. The vendor tells his new friend where he can gather that evening for a meal and Bible study. They then continue on their way, rejoicing that God has led them to another believer in Christ.

Whether this is exactly how such a meeting may have happened, it would have been similar. You see, in the first century of the church, christianity came under persecution. It was dangerous to be identified as a Christian. Not wishing to hide their faith in Christ but to be cautious, early believers would draw the top half of simple fish, perhaps in the dirt, with a piece of charcoal upon wood or stone, but somehow they drew this. If the person with whom they were talking was also a believer, he would complete the fish by drawing the bottom half. In this way believers were able to identify one another. What was this fish about? We may see similar fish on the tailgates of cars or on business signs or cards. Yet many christians do not fully understand why this

particular symbol was used and just how important it was.

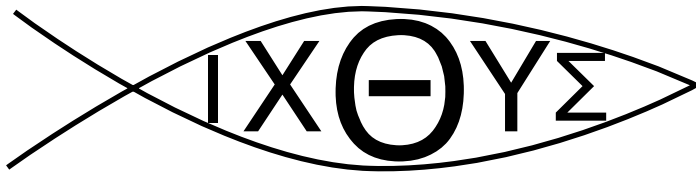
Sometimes we don't have to write a word but just a symbol and others know what we mean. If we see a ♣ we recognize it means a move of film. If we see a 🎵 🎵 know it means something musical. If we find a bottle with a ☠ printed on its label we know the contents are poisonous. If you perform a task for someone would you rather they give you a 👍 or a 👎? We use symbols all the time. The fish symbol involved the word fish.

Fish is an acronym for the names and titles of Jesus Christ. An acronym, for those who don't know, can be a word or set of letters in which each letter stands for the first letter in another word. Acronyms are often used to help us remember things. Many people are familiar with the name NASA which stands for National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The Greek word fish is ἰχθύς and is pronounced ichthus with the ch being hard as in the word

chord. The first letter ι-iota is the first letter in the name Jesus which in Greek looks like this **ΙΗΣΟΥΣ** and was pronounced Yehsus with a long u. The second letter χ-chi is the first letter in **ΘΕΟΣ** title Christ which in Greek looks like this **ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ** and was pronounced christos. The third letter is θ-theta and is the first letter in the title God. In Greek, the word God looks like this **ΘΕΟΣ** and is pronounced theos. The fourth letter is υ-epsilon. It is the first letter in the Greek word son. In Greek it is **ΥΙΟΣ** and pronounced hwee-os . The h is added because of a breathing mark. The last letter is σ-sigma, which at the end of a word is written ς as in our Greek word fish. It is the first letter in the word savior. In Greek it is written **σωτηρ** and is pronounced soter, with the o being long.

So let's put all this information together and see what this acronym looks like. For ease we'll write the main words vertically and the corresponding English following.

Ι	ΙΗΣΟΥΣ	-i	Iesous	J	Jesus
Χ	ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ	-ch	Christos	C	Christ
Θ	ΘΕΟΣ	-th	theos	G	God
Υ	ΥΙΟΣ	-u	huios	S	Son
Σ	ΣΩΤΗΡ	-s	soter	S	Savior



Now, in that simple acronym, a wealth of truth is expressed. A Christian who lived almost two thousand years meant something when he drew that symbol. He expressed his belief in Jesus, who is the Christ, who is God, who is the Son, who is the Savior. In each of the following studies we will look at one of those titles and consider how important each one is as each tell us something about this one we know as Jesus Christ.

What does this  symbol mean?

Why did the Christians use the fish?

What does each letter in the Greek word fish mean?

Try copying the Greek words for the acronym and then write what each means in English

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| Ι _____ | Ι _____ |
| Χ _____ | Κ _____ |
| Θ _____ | Γ _____ |
| Υ _____ | Σ _____ |
| Ϛ _____ | Σ _____ |

JESUS

Who is Jesus? Many people think many different things about the name Jesus. Some people in some countries even name their children Jesus. When we find the name Jesus in our Bibles, it means something very specific and very important. Jesus is a name. It is the name of the most important person to ever live upon this earth.

We can use the English name Jesus to form an acronym that will help us remember that name and what it means.

J esus
E ntered the world to
S ave
U s from our
S ins

2,000 years ago, an angel appeared to a man named Joseph (Matthew 1:20). Joseph was engaged to a young woman who was going to have a baby. Joseph knew it wasn't his baby and so he wasn't going to marry her. When the

angel appeared to Joseph, the angel told him to not be afraid to marry the young woman. The angel explained that the baby she was going to have wasn't another man's baby. The baby was from the Holy Spirit, that means, the Spirit used God's special power to form this baby in her (Matthew 1:21). Then the angel told Joseph to name the baby Jesus (Matthew 1:22). Jesus was an old name. It was a name that meant something. It meant Jehovah saves. Jehovah is name of God, so in other words, Jesus meant that God saves. The angel explained that this baby would save his people from their sins.

How would God save? How would this Jesus save His people from their sins. He became a man so that He could die upon a cross for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3). God can't die. So God became a man, so He could die. John 1:1 tells us that the Word was God, that's the one we're talking about. John 1:14 tell us that the Word became flesh. Flesh is what you and I are. We live in physical bodies made of flesh: skin, muscle, nerves and all kinds of other tissue. So

in other words, God, the Word, became a man. Hebrews 2:14 explains that He shared in blood and flesh so that through death, He could destroy the one who had power over death, the devil. He became blood and flesh. He became man. He became human. He did this so He could die and He died so He could save us. Peter wrote, “He carried our sins in His body upon the tree (cross).” (1 Peter 2:24). He was innocent but when He died on the cross, God piled all our sins upon Him. That is part of what He did to save you and I.

So, when you think of the name Jesus, don't just think about the man we see in painting. Don't just think about a little boy. Don't just think about a kind man with a child sitting on His lap. Think about God becoming man. Think about the man who died for your sins, so you could be saved. By the way, since He did all the work, there is nothing left for you to do but believe He has already done it all. We'll explain this more in our next lesson.

Do you remember what the name Jesus means?

Why is He called Jesus?

Since God can not die what did He do to save you and me?

On what did Jesus carry our sins?

Fill in the acronym

J

E

S

U

S

-skit idea - Several people carry large garbage bags labeled "SINS." God then takes those bags and places them on someone portraying Jesus. He bears or carries our sins. He suffers and dies under them.

CHRIST

Did you know that Christ is not a name? Jesus is a name. Barbara is a name. Joe is a name. Connie is a name. President, doctor, and father are titles and Christ is a title. It is a title which belongs to Jesus. We saw in our last study that Jesus is God in flesh. Jesus refers to a man who is God. A man who died for our sins. The title Christ tells us something else about this Jesus.

The title Christ comes from a word which meant to anoint. Anointing meant to pour something upon someone or something else. In the Old Testament, men poured oil on other men. They did this to picture the Holy Spirit being poured on someone. You see, God not only wanted people to serve Him but He wanted to be certain that they could serve Him properly and the Holy Spirit, who is also God, did this. Old Testament kings were anointed so they could rule God's people Israel, in the manner God wanted them to be ruled.

When God became the man Jesus, the people of Israel knew about this anointing. Some were looking for this man who would be anointed by God. They called this man the Messiah or Christ, which both mean, anointed one. Jesus, Himself, said that the Spirit was upon Him (Luke 4:18-21). People expected this one to tell them all things (John 4:25). They expected Him to do signs (John 7:31). Some people wanted to know if Jesus was this anointed one, this Christ (Luke 22:67). Others believed Jesus was the Christ (John 1:41; 7:41). They even knew that to be Christ meant to be a king (Luke 23:2). But most of the nation of Israel rejected Jesus. They didn't want Him to be their king. When Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your king?", they replied, "We have no king but Caesar." (John 19:15). So they handed Jesus over to be crucified (John 19:16). By rejecting Him as king, Jesus died for our sins and became Savior.

Because He was rejected, crucified and died, the title Christ or “anointed one” changed. God changed its emphasis.

We find in Acts 2:36 “Therefore, let all the house of Israel know certainly that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.” They crucified Him but God made Him something! He made Him Lord and Christ. He had already been Christ, but Peter meant Christ in a new sense. As Lord, He is over all. As Christ, He is the one who is resurrected and glorified. He is the one who is raised to life, raised out from the dead. He is Christ in this new sense.

That means, when we read the title Christ after Acts 2:36, most of the time it does not mean He is Israel’s anointed king. It means He is alive and sitting in heaven today. That might be surprising to you. Many people think that Jesus died and stayed dead. Others believe He died, came back to life and then died later. The Bible tells us that when he rose, He never died again (Romans 6:9). He died once and He rose

once (Hebrews 10:10 7:25)! Think about it, can a dead man save anyone? NO! He had to die for our sins to pay the penalty for those sin but He also had to rise from the dead so He could give us life! A dead man can't save.

Now, you need to know this. No one is automatically saved by Jesus' death and resurrection. You have to do one thing. You have to believe that Jesus died for your sins and you have to believe He rose again, that He is alive. If you believe that, you are saved, your sins are forgiven and you will spend eternity with God. So when you see the title Christ remember this little acronym and remember, it means He, Jesus is alive today.

C hrist

H aving died

R ose again and

I s our

S avior

T oday

- skit idea - Various people in need of help, asking a dead man to help them, but all he does is lie their silently! He can't help!

What does the title Christ mean?

What kinds of things did people think about the Christ when Jesus came?

Did the nation of Israel accept Jesus as their King?

What did they do with Jesus?

What then did God make Jesus?

When we read the title “Christ” what should we think?

Fill in the blanks of the acronym.

C _____

H _____

R _____

I _____

S _____

T _____

GOD -

People all over the world worship gods. Some worship trees, some rocks, some fire. Some make objects to worship. They carve a figure from wood or stone or cast a figure in metal. Then they bow down and worship that figure. In the Old Testament book of Isaiah, God spoke to His people Israel and tried to show them how foolish this was. He asked them what they would make God look like (Isaiah 40:18). He also pointed out how foolish it was to worship something they had made, something which came from their strength or made of something they could also use for other purposes such as cooking food over burning wood (Isaiah 44:10-12, 13-17). So God asks, "Is there a God besides Me? Indeed, no other rock!" (Isaiah 44:8). The Bible tells us that there is only one God In Deuteronomy 6:4 God also tells us that He is one! He isn't two Gods or three or four. He is one! Let's read that verse, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!"

Now, this is sometimes hard for people to understand but that one God is three persons. One of those persons is the Father. One of those persons is the Son and One of those persons is the Spirit. That's right, the Son, Jesus is God! In Acts 20:18 we find, "The Church of God which He bought with His own blood." God doesn't have blood. If you remember from our study on the name Jesus, He became a man so He could share in blood and flesh. With that blood He paid for us. The Father even calls Jesus God, "To the Son, Your throne, O, God ..." (Hebrews 1:8). His friend and disciple Thomas called Him, "My Lord and My God!" (Hebrews 1:8). We also find that He is the creator, the one who created all things (Colossians 1:16-17). He forgave sins, which only God can do (Luke 5:20-21). He received worship, when only God should be worshipped (John 9:35-38; Revelation 22:9). In fact, God the Father even instructs other to worship the Son (Hebrews 1:6). Just as God the Father works on the Sabbath, so God the Son worked on the Sabbath. The Jews called this

breaking the Sabbath (John 5:17-18). We could say more but the simple fact is, Jesus is God. He is God in flesh and in many ways He said it and proved it.

This is also important for your salvation. If Jesus was just a man and is not God then He can not save. He was just a man. But His death upon the cross for our sins is of great value because the one who died is God. Let me share with you an interesting observation about this. Many people call themselves christians but do not believe that Jesus is really God! They might believe He is just a man, an angel, the top angel. Some even believe that he is a god but not the one and only God. Whatever they might believe, they all share one thing in common; they are all working for their salvation. You see, since they don't have a God who became man to die in their place for their sins, they don't have salvation. Since they don't believe that the one who died on that cross is really God, they have someone less than a Savior. So these people spend their lives trying

to be good, maybe even being religious, and hoping that they will be good enough to make it to heaven. None of them will. Jesus already did everything they need for salvation, they just have to believe in Him.

Maybe you've never believed in Jesus. O, you've heard about him. You might even believe in a Jesus, but you've never believed in the man who is truly God, the man who died for your sins, the man who rose again and is alive today. Then you need to believe in Him, now! You need that savior!

JESUS IS GOD!

Who saves?

G O D

O N L Y

D O E S

How many God's are there?

How many persons are God?

Is Jesus ever called God in the Bible?

What were some things which Jesus did that only God can do?

-

-

-

-

Since Jesus is God and became a man, can He save?

If He were just a man and not God, could He save us from our sins?

SON

Would a mother or father trust their little four year old boy to pay the bills? If those parents owned a vast and powerful company, would they trust a ten year old son to attend a business meeting and make decisions in their place? Would a king send his young son to another country to seal a peace treaty between two nations? To all three of those questions the answer is no. That answer also demonstrates the difference between what we mean by the word son and what the Bible means by the word son. Yes, sometimes the Bible does use the word son to describe a boy child.

In the Old Testament angels are called sons of God (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). In the New Testament, we are called sons of God (Galatians 3:26). Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 6:69). You see, the people in Jesus' day often used the word son to describe someone who has a special position. That position involves certain privileges. In the Old Testament, angels had a special position with God. Today, you and I

have a special position with God. Jesus Christ is the Son of God in a different way than you and I or the angels are sons of God.

When many people think of Jesus being the Son of God, they think that means that He was born from God or produced by God sort of like a human father producing a son. They then may think of John 3:16 “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” (NASB). The problem is that the words “only begotten” are not a particularly good translation of the Greek word *monogenes* [both e’s are long]. The last part of that word *genes* doesn’t mean begotten but kind or race. I quoted the New American Standard Bible because they note in their margin that this word could be translated “unique, only one of His kind.” This word meant that Jesus was a special kind of Son, a unique kind of Son. He isn’t a son of God like angels or we are. To show how important this is, let’s look in John one. There we find this

same word used twice, in verses 14 and 18. When God the Son became man, He spent time upon this earth so that people could see Him. When they did see Him, they saw His glory. It wasn't just any kind of glory. It was glory of one who was special or unique with the Father (John 1:14). What was that glory, it was seeing God. Verse 18 explains that no one has seen God at any time. By "God" John meant God the Father. We know this because God appeared to people throughout the Old Testament, but the person they saw wasn't God the Father. Now the rest of verse 18 states that special or unique Son He showed the Father. If people saw the Son, they were seeing the Father, because the Son was a suitable representative for God. He is God. So He is able to be sent by God to explain God, to show what God is like. If we think that the words "the Son of God" mean something less than God, then Jesus could not have been God's representative.

In Jesus day the Jews knew what the title "the Son of God" meant. When Jesus said He

was the Son of God, He was saying He is God! In John 10:36 the Jews said that Jesus made a false claim when He said He was the Son of God. In verse 33, the Jews explained that it meant, “You being a man make yourself God.” When the Jews wanted Jesus killed, it was because He made Himself the Son of God (John 19:7). They knew what He meant. Now you know what He meant. When you think about the Son of God, remember, it doesn’t mean He is less than the Father, it means He is equal with the Father. It means He is God! It means He is totally able to represent God before others.

What do we think of when we use the word son?

Would you send a little boy to do an adult's job?

So, what is another way in which the Bible uses the word son?

In our Bibles, we find the words "only begotten son." What is a better way to express those words?

When Jesus said He is the Son of God, what did He mean?

So when you think of the word Son, you should remember that Jesus is and can ...

SAVIOR

If you remember our first study, we saw that the name Jesus means “Jehovah saves.” Jehovah is God’s Old Testament name. Joseph was told to name Mary’s baby boy “Jesus” because He would save His people from their sins. What does it mean to save someone? What is it mean to be a savior or what is mean by the word salvation?

If someone is drowning in a lake and someone brings them safely to shore that person is saved. He was saved from drowning. If someone is sick with a deadly disease and someone gives him medicine so that he lives, he is saved. He was saved from the disease. If a person is in the street and about to be hit by a very large very fast truck and another person pulls them out of the way, that person is saved. She is saved from being struck and killed by that truck. All those are examples of being saved. The savior is the person that performs the rescue; rescued the drowning person, gave

the medicine, pulled the person from the street. The act of saving is called salvation.

You and I didn't need salvation from drowning, sickness, or a speeding truck. We needed salvation from our sins. Romans 6:23 states that the payment for sin is death! The Bible also tells us that all sinned (Romans 3:23). Since all sinned, all receive death. Death means we are condemned or judged by God! It means we will spend forever, away from God, in Hell, the Lake of Fire.

This is why Jesus came to save us. John 3:16 states that Jesus came so that we don't have to perish, we don't have to spend forever away from God. Jesus came to save us from those sins. He came to pay the price we owed. He died for those sins, so that we don't have to die for them. 1 Corinthians 15:3 reads, "How that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures and that He was buried." But it doesn't end there, the next verse reads, "And He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Jesus paid for your sins and my

sins by dying for them on the cross. The Bible tells us that He died for everyone's sins, the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). We find that He is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe (1 Timothy 4:10). He paid for our sins, so He is also our redeemer, a word which means He paid for us. So He paid for everyone's sins but not every believes in Him. If they don't believe in Him they are already condemned or judged (John 3:17-18). Believing in Jesus Christ, believing that He died on the cross for our sins and rose again, is what separates those who are saved from those who aren't saved. The apostle Peter told some people once that those who believe are forgiven (Acts 10:43).

Is Jesus your savior? Have you believed in Jesus Christ? Do you know what He did for you on the cross and that He is alive today? If not, then today, you need to believe in Him. You need to believe that He has done everything you need. Many people don't believe. They think they must do something else to help save

themselves. They think they need to go to church, or be good, or avoid doing bad things. They think they need to give to charity or be baptized but none of these things will save them. Jesus already did it all. The drowning person needs to let another save him. The patient needs to let the doctor give him the medicine. The person in the street needs to let her rescuer pull her from danger. You need to let Jesus save you by believing in Him.

If you do believe Jesus, then remember He is alive today. Remember that He has saved you. And know that He will soon come for you to save you even more, so that you will always be with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

S ALVATION

A ND

V ICTORY

I N

O UR

R EDEEMER

What is a savior?

What are some things from which people might need to be saved?

According to the Bible from what did we need to be saved?

How did Jesus save us?

What do you have to do, if you want to be saved?

Have you done that?

Complete the acronym.

S _____

A _____

V _____

I _____

O _____

R _____