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JESUS IS LORD

The phrase "Jesus is Lord" is probably the earliest of the Christian confessions and worked its way into the various acts of Christian worship. In what may well reflect a baptismal liturgy Paul writes, "If you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' ... you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). Similarly, in the confessional or creedal formula in Phil. 2:11 every tongue shall confess, "Jesus Christ is Lord." Furthermore, only by the Holy Spirit can one say, "Jesus is Lord" (I Cor. 12:3).

It is important to note that it is Jesus as the risen and exalted one who is Lord, that is, the believing community in virtue of His exaltation to the right hand of God confesses the lordship of Jesus. In his Pentecost sermon Peter declares that Jesus whom they crucified God has raised and exalted to his right hand; and the whole house of Israel must know assuredly that God by this exaltation has made Him Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

According to Paul, Jesus as Lord is declared Son of God with power through His resurrection from the dead. This must not be taken to mean that lordship is not to be ascribed to the earthly ministry of Jesus but to reinforce the point that the significance of the title in the life of the church is linked to His exaltation. To underscore this, Psalm 110:1 was drawn on heavily (Matthew 22:44; 26:64, Acts 2:34-35; Hebrews 1:3).

In the Palestinian community "Lord" was most commonly linked with Yahweh and became a regular circumlocution for the divine name in the public reading of the Scriptures. In the Greek Old Testament it is a translation of the Hebrew term $\forall\text{Αδωνα},\forall$ a designation for Yahweh. $\Phi\upsilon\rho\tau\eta\epsilon\mu\omicron\rho\epsilon$, the use of $\omicron\phi\ \text{Μαρνανατηα}$ ("Our Lord, come" or "Our Lord is coming") in I Cor. 16:22 suggests an early Palestinian origin. It is suggested, therefore, that when Jesus is called Lord, it is affirming his oneness with God. They Jews have argued that the title, which makes Jesus equal with God, could not have arisen in the monotheism of Palestine, and that Jesus was first worshiped in these $\eta\epsilon\lambda\lambda\epsilon\nu\iota\sigma\tau\iota\chi$ Christian communities. Though the debate is exceedingly complex, the former explanation is probably to be preferred. The recognition by even the enemies of Jesus that He acted and spoke with the authority of the OT Lord is not to be dismissed.

As the title for the exalted one, "Lord" has special reference to the present work of Christ as over against His former work on earth or His future work. The life of the community is lived under Jesus' lordship (Rom. 14:8). The baptism, or gift, of the Spirit is the act of the risen Lord that creates and extends the church. Through the Spirit the lordship of Jesus is exercised so that even the work of the Spirit is to be seen as the work of the risen Lord.

Having ascended on high He has given the church its spiritual leadership for the equipping of the saints and the perfecting of His body (Ephesians 4:11). The diversity of gifts and the variety of services are the singular activity of the Lord (I Cor. 12:4-5). The empowerment of the church is also expressed in the head-body imagery employed by Paul so that the head sustains the body and keeps it on course in the

fulfilling of the divine plan (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 2:10). In the church the risen Lord thereby continues His own ministry begun in the incarnation.

Prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and intercession are carried on in the church by virtue of the presence of the Lord at the right hand of the Father (Rom. 8:34). The church rejoices in the Lord (Rom. 5:11; Phil. 3:1; 4:4). All the promises of the present meaning of ministry and witness are rooted in the lordship of Jesus. The promise of spiritual victory and the certain, present reality of the love of God flow from His presence at the right hand of God (Rom. 8:34-39)