

# God the Son and our Redemption

## LORD'S DAY 11

29. Q. Why is the Son of God called *Jesus*, that is, Saviour?

A. Because He saves us from all our sins,<sup>1</sup> and because salvation is not to be sought or found in anyone else.<sup>2</sup>

1. **Matthew 1:21** “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

**Hebrews 7:25** Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

2. **Isaiah 43:11** I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior.

**John 15:4,5** “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides

in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

<sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

**Acts 4:11,12** “This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. <sup>12</sup> Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

**1 Timothy 2:5** For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus...

30. Q. Do those who seek their salvation or well-being in saints, in themselves, or anywhere else, also believe in the only Saviour Jesus?

A. No. Though they boast of Him in words, they in fact deny the only Saviour Jesus.<sup>1</sup> For one of two things must be true: either Jesus is not a complete Saviour, or those who by true faith accept this Saviour must find in Him all that is necessary for their salvation.<sup>2</sup>

1. **1 Corinthians 1:12,13** Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

**Galatians 5:4** You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

2. **Colossians 1:19,20** For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup> and by

Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

**Colossians 2:10** ...and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

**1 John 1:7** But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**W**e begin to explain the second part of the Apostles' Creed which deals with the second Person of the Trinity, God the Son. The names given to Him are of great importance. Our fathers could easily have put the question of this Lord's Day in this manner: "*What do you believe when you say, 'And I believe in Jesus Christ.'*" Yet they did not. They wish to emphasise the importance of the name "*Jesus,*" for the name of Jesus serves as a guarantee of our salvation. His Name means "**Saviour.**" (In the next Lord's Days the Catechism will stress the importance of the name "*Christ*" and again the title "*Lord.*")

Hebrew	Greek	English
Joshua	Jesus	Saviour

Actually, it is not the name but the *giving* of the name, which serves as a guarantee that Jesus is really our Saviour. We say this because other men were given the name *Jesus*. The name *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Jewish name *Joshua*. In the Old Testament we read of four persons who were given this name. There was Joshua, the son of Nun, who led the people of Israel after the death of Moses (cf. Exodus 17:9). There was also Joshua of Beth-Shemesh, in whose field the cart bearing the ark of the LORD came when it was sent back to Israel by the Philistines (cf. 1 Samuel 6:14). The third Joshua whom we meet in Scripture was the son of Jehozadak, the high priest who led the exiles home from the captivity, along with Zerubbabel (cf. Haggai 1:1). The fourth Joshua was the governor of Jerusalem in the days of King Josiah (cf. 2 Kings 23:8).

That Jesus bore this name is in itself no guarantee that He is truly the Saviour of His people. **The guarantee is in the giving of this name.** The other men who bore the same name were given this name by their parents. Yet Mary and Joseph did not choose this name for their Son. They were commanded by God to give Him this name. The angel Gabriel said, "*You shall call His name Jesus,*" (cf.

Matthew 1:21). **God gave this name to His Son.** And because God called Him *Jesus*, we are assured that He is what His name indicates. God gave this name to His Son for our sake, that we might be assured that Jesus is really our Saviour.

From what would He save us? This was made clear in the birth announcement which the angel Gabriel proclaimed to Joseph. "*He will save His people from their sins*" (cf. Matthew 1:21). It was necessary for the angel to point this out, for the Jews looked for a political redeemer to save them from the power of the Romans. Yet that was not Jesus' work. He came to deliver His people from their sins. He would deliver them not merely from earthly powers but from spiritual powers, which held them in bondage to sin and to death.

There is still a need to emphasise this today in light of the preaching of what is called the **Social Gospel**. It preaches Jesus as the Saviour of society life. It teaches that Jesus is the Man who came to free men from racial discrimination and inequality. He is the Man, for example, who would fight against apartheid as it existed in South Africa, just as He broke down the barrier of hostility between Jews and Samaritans when He spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well. The Social Gospel teaches that Christ came to deliver men, not from their *sin* but from their *misery*. He came to help the sick and the oppressed, the poor and the hungry.

While it is true that Jesus also saves us from the misery of sin, He could do so only after He had delivered us from our sin. For the cause of our misery is sin. Only when sin is removed can the misery of life be removed. Thus the first purpose of Jesus' work was to deliver us from our sins.

We, too, must be careful not to lose sight of the first purpose of Jesus' saving work. Our prayers for deliverance from the misery of life are often more ardent than our prayers for deliverance from our sins. When we experience illness or wasting

disease, we pray with great fervour for deliverance from them. Yet how often is our prayer for the forgiveness of sins not just a “one-liner” at the end of our prayer? We, too, can easily overlook the great need for salvation from sin, and focus our faith on Jesus as the One who redeems us from our misery. Christ saves us from both, our sins and our misery, but in the first place He saves us from our sins.

When we make the confession, “*I believe in Jesus Christ,*” we do more than confess Him as *our* Saviour. We also confess that He is our *only* Saviour. There is no one besides Him from whom we can receive redemption from our sins and misery.

He is our exclusive Saviour, but He is also the all-inclusive, the complete Saviour. There is no Saviour besides Him, and we need no other Saviour in addition to Him. In Him we find everything we need for the redemption of body and soul.

In Lord's Day 6 we learned that our Mediator must be true God and true man. We emphasise here again the two-fold reason why our Saviour must be divine:

1. Our Saviour must have **divine power**, for He must bear the sins of all God's elect, of all the “144,000” whom God has chosen to redemption. The weight of so many sins is greater than any mere creature could bear. Our Saviour must have divine power to be able to bear the heavy burden of God's wrath.
2. Furthermore, our Saviour's death must have **sufficient value and worth** if the death of the one Man is to suffice as payment for the sins of many. Also for this reason our Saviour must be true God. *The death of the Son of God is ... of infinite value and worth, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world ... because the person who submitted to [death] is ... the only-begotten Son of God.* (Canons of Dort, II, 3,4, Book of Praise, pg. 545,546).

Salvation could not come from one who was only true and righteous man, but also from one who was true God. God

must save His people. That was declared throughout the Old Testament: “*Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD*” (Deu 33:29). “*But Israel shall be saved by the LORD*” (Isa 45:17). “*Yet I am the LORD your God ever since the land of Egypt, and you shall know no God but Me; for there is no savior besides Me*” (Hosea 13:4).

Earlier we mentioned that the name *Joshua* (from which the name *Jesus* is derived) means *Saviour*. To be more correct, it means *Yahweh is salvation*. (In Hebrew, the suffix *Jo* is an abbreviation for *Yahweh*. The remainder of that name *-shua* is the Hebrew word for salvation.) Even the name of *Jesus* (*Joshua*) shows us that salvation is the work of *Yahweh*, and not the work of man.

In the gospel according to Matthew, the reference to the name *Jesus* is seen as the fulfilment of the Immanuel-prophecy. Matthew wrote, “*And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.*” *All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us”*(cf. Matthew 1:21-23).

The fact that *Jesus* is called Immanuel “God with us” proves that *Jesus* is true God. *Yahweh* Himself came to earth in the person of *Jesus Christ*. *Jesus* is the Son of God *incarnate*, (which means *in the flesh*). The fact that *Jesus* is the Son of God assures us that He is a complete Saviour. We need no other besides Him.

Since *Jesus* is a complete Saviour, the Catechism teaches us that it is wrong to invoke the aid of the saints. (To *invoke* is to call upon in prayer.) This was commonly done prior to the Reformation. In the bull “*Injunctum Nobis*”, issued by the Council of Trent in 1564, the church of Rome defended this practice and encouraged its members to continue it. In this declaration, the members of the church of Rome were to profess, “*I*

hold that the saints reigning together with Christ should be honoured and invoked, that they offer prayers to God on our behalf.”<sup>1</sup> In another decree from the same council we read, “It is a good and useful thing to invoke the saints humbly and to have recourse to their prayers and to their efficacious help to obtain favours from God through His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord who alone is our Redeemer and our Lord.”<sup>2</sup>

The Catechism declares that the invocation to saints is a denial of the honour and all-sufficient work of Christ as Mediator. The Roman Catholics vehemently deny this in words. Yet when we look closely at their teaching concerning the “*efficacious help*”, it becomes clear that they are able to intercede with God on our behalf where we are not able. Thus they are more powerful than we, mere mortals. And when we look at the history of the veneration of saints in the Roman church, we find that Mary certainly becomes a rival for Jesus Christ.

Just as Christ was born without sin, Rome also teaches that Mary was “*immaculately conceived*.”

Just as Christ remained free from sin all His life, Rome also speaks about Mary’s “*sinless soul*.”

Just as Christ sacrificed Himself, Rome also teaches that Mary sacrificed her son to God. They even dare to speak about Mary as the co-redeemer of the human race.

Just as Jesus was taken up after death to heaven, Rome also teaches that Mary has been raised and taken into heaven like Christ (the *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary*).

Let me copy for you a letter addressed by the Pope Pius X to the bishops of the world and an apostolic letter from Pope Benedict XV, both from this century.

“As a result of this union of suffering and willing between Mary and Christ, she most deservedly merited to be the restorer of the lost world and therefore the dispenser of all gifts that Jesus has won for us with his death and his blood.... She is holier than all and more closely united with Christ, and as he has chosen her as his associate for the work of human salvation. She is the principal agent in distributing graces.”<sup>3</sup>

“As [Mary] suffered and almost died together with her suffering and dying Son, so she surrendered her mother’s rights over her Son for the salvation of the human race. And to satisfy the justice of God she sacrificed her Son, as well as she could, so that it may justly be said that she together with Christ has redeemed the human race.”<sup>4</sup>

Although the church of Rome declares that Jesus is the only Saviour, yet their doctrine contradicts this. Mary is Christ’s associate. One is not saved by Christ alone, but also through the mediation of Mary who applies or distributes the merits of Christ. Such statements are nothing less than a denial of the all-sufficiency of Christ.



<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *The Church Teaches, Documents of the Church in English Translation*, trans. by J.F. Clarkson et.al., Tan Books and Publishers, 1973, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> The Encyclical *Ad Diem Illum*, 1904, as quoted in *The Church Teaches*, ibid., p. 210.

<sup>4</sup> The Apostolic Letter *Inter Sodalicia*, 1918, ibid., p. 211. This means that Mary was joined with her son, Jesus Christ in both the suffering of Christ and in His willing. That is, just as Christ suffered willingly, so Mary suffered willingly. Her own heart was pierced with sorrow when she saw her son die, but she was willing to offer Him as a sacrifice for the salvation of the world.

**Questions:**

1. What does the Greek name "Jesus" mean in English? What is the Hebrew equivalent used in the Old Testament?
2. What is more important than the name Jesus? Why is it so important?
3. What kind of saviour were the Jews of Christ's day looking for?
4. From what did Jesus come to save us?
5. From what does Jesus save us according to the Social Gospel? Is this the first purpose of Christ's saving work?
6. Is there any danger of us losing sight of the first purpose of Jesus' saving work? If so, explain why.
7. What do we mean when we say that Jesus is our exclusive Saviour and our all-inclusive Saviour?
8. Give two (2) reasons why our Saviour had to be true God?
9. What does the name Joshua mean? What does this signify?
10. What does Immanuel mean? Who is our Immanuel? What does this say about our Saviour?
11. Why is it wrong to seek the aid of saints through prayer? Who promoted prayers to the saints? Why did they promote them?
12. What has occurred in the church of Rome concerning Mary, the mother of our Lord? Why is this wrong?