

IN ALL WISDOM

Just over one year ago, Jordan Peterson made his first public appearance since having severe problems with his physical health, and his mental health, and people are again discussing his philosophical views. He is a controversial figure, and most people either love him or hate him. In any case, many, including some Christians, hail him as a kind of prophet. He has spoken much about religion in general, and Christianity in particular, but it is difficult for people to know just what he believes about God, and Jesus Christ, in part, it seems, because he does not know what he believes. He is certainly not an orthodox Christian. In his recent book, *Beyond Order: 12 More Rules for Life*, Peterson expresses his view of Jesus in relation to ‘the Way:’

The Way is the path of proper Being. It’s the same Way as that referred to by Christ in John 14:6: *I am the way, and the truth and the life*. The same idea is expressed in Matthew 7:14: *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*. We eternally inhabit order, surrounded by chaos. We eternally occupy known territory, surrounded by the unknown. We experience meaningful engagement when we mediate appropriately between them. We are adapted, in the deepest Darwinian sense, not to the world of objects, but to the meta-realities of order and chaos, yang and yin. Chaos and order make up the eternal, transcendent environment of the living. (page 42; emphasis original)

Peterson regards Jesus as a mythical hero who successfully navigated between the order and chaos of the world, and who is an example for all to follow. As Justine Toh, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Public Policy, puts it:

Peterson has this secularised version of that which is pick up your own heavy cross, the heaviest load, and carry that, and it will make you strong. He is dealing with a kind of Christian ethic, but he's channelling it into a self-responsibility, self-actualisation message. (Micahel Collette, “Jordan Peterson: Why some (but not all) Christians are flocking to the culture warrior,” Australian Broadcasting Company, 4 June 2019)

Whether more people follow Peterson to the Christian faith, or away from it remains to be seen. According to Scripture, however, Jesus is the Son of God, who died for the sins of the world, who rose from the dead, who ascended into heaven to rule the world, and who commands people to repent of their sins and confess Him as Lord.

In the age of the apostles of Jesus Christ, false teachers tried to lead Christians in the city of Colosse away from the preeminent Christ, and to worthless worldly philosophy. Saint Paul warned them, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” (Colossians 2:8) Saint Paul explained to the Colossians who the Son of God is, and what He accomplished for them. Saint Paul wrote of Christ:

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. (Colossians 1:15–17)

The Son of God is the “image of the invisible God.” God is invisible. This does not mean that God has no form, and so none of His creatures can see Him, but only hear Him. It means that God dwells in heaven in unapproachable light, and no man has seen Him or can see Him. (1 Timothy 6:16) Saint John wrote that God is light. (1 John 1:5) When Moses asked the Lord to reveal to him His glory, the Lord agreed to do so, but He warned Moses, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.” (Exodus 33:20) So, God would protect Moses. He said to Him:

And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen. (Exodus 33:22, 23)

The Son of God is the image of the invisible God. He is not a copy of God, but is in essence God, although in Person distinct from His Father.

The Son of God, Saint Paul wrote, is “the firstborn of every creature.” He is not, as the heretics say the first thing created; He is the firstborn of creation. He is begotten, and not made. The Father did not create the Son, but the Son is eternally begotten of the Father. He is eternally begotten, and yet with no beginning, and no end. As the Son is begotten of the Father, so He is the image of the Father. The two have one and the same divine nature. Just as a man begets a son in his own image, a son with the same nature as his own, so the Son of God, as eternally begotten by His Father, has the same nature. This is not to say that the Father is divine, and the Son also is divine, as though they were two gods. It is to say that, although they are distinct Persons, they have one nature. The Son of God is as much God as is His Father. Jesus said to Philip, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” (John 14:9)

As the Son of God is the firstborn, He has primogeniture, which is to say, He has the rights of the firstborn child. This makes him heir to his father’s estate. Christ, as the eternally begotten Son of the Father, is the heir of the world. In the Eighty-ninth Psalm, God says of His beloved Son, “He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.” (Psalm 89:27)

The Son of God is uncreated, and the creator of all things. Saint Paul wrote, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.” (Colossians 1:16) The Father is the almighty creator, and He was pleased to create the world with His Son. The apostle did not write that the Son of God created some things; the Son created all things. He created everything. Whatever created thing there is, He is its creator. He created all things that are in heaven, and on earth; all things that men can observe, and all things they cannot. He created the entire order of angelic beings. Saint John wrote in his gospel, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” (John 1:3) If a thing is created, then He created it. King Solomon wrote in the Book of Proverbs of the Son of God, as the Wisdom of God, present with God before creation, and at creation. He wrote:

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set

a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. (Proverbs 8:22–30)

Agur, son of Jakeh, wrote in the Book of Proverbs of the Father and Son as creators of the world:

Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

In the Year of Our Lord Three-hundred twenty-five, the Council of Nicea summarized these great truths in their creed, which states:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of light, Very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made.

Saint Paul wrote to the Colossians of the Son of God, “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (Colossians 1:17) Not only has the Son of God created all things, but He holds all things together. God’s creation has in itself no power of being, no power of life. God did not create the world to operate by its own faculty, to function by its own power. The Son of God created the world, and He also sustains it. He caused the world to come into being, and He causes it to continue to be. Any thing exists because He causes its existence. If the Son of God ceased sustaining the world it would collapse; it would disintegrate, it would become nothing. The continued existence of the world is not precarious in the sense that it is uncertain; the world most certainly will continue. Its continued existence is precarious in the sense that it depends upon the will of the Son of God. Saint Paul, writing to the Hebrews, described the Son of God this way: by Him God made the worlds; He is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; He is upholding all things by the word of his power.” (Hebrews 1:2, 3) The Son of God is not a lesser deity. He is as much God as the Father.

The Son of God is the Creator of the world, and He is also its Redeemer. The Son of God created the world; man with his sin ruined the world; the Son of God, rather than condemn the world, saved it. Jesus said, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3:16, 17) The Son of God is the Creator of the world, and the Creator of the new world. When the first man, Adam, sinned, He died, and the entire race of men died with him. Although the Son of God is without sin, sinful men put Him to death. Because He did not deserve to die, God raised Him from the dead, never to die again. He is the first to be raised to new life, and so the beginning of a new creation. The Son of God created the race of men, and He has created a new race of men. This new race of men are those He has redeemed. They are His body, and He is the head. But joining them to Himself, He gives them forgiveness of sins and new life. He raises them from their spiritual death, and will raise them from their

physical death. This is so that the Son of God shall become preeminent in all things, both in the original creation and in the new creation.

The Son of God became incarnate so that He might die as a man, and for man, and it was His pleasure to do so. Saint Paul wrote of Him that “for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.” (Hebrews 12:2) His incarnation and death was not an accident, nor was it something the Son of God did independently of His Father. He did not come into the world of His own accord. It was the Father’s good pleasure as well. It pleased the Father to send His Son into the world so that, by atoning for men’s sins, He might reconcile the world to Himself, and so bring peace to the world.

Concerning the Son of God as Redeemer, the Nicene Creed states:

Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; from thence he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

Saint Paul explained to the Colossians why men need redemption, and what redemption the Son of God accomplished:

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight. (Colossians 1:21, 22)

Apart from the redemption found in Christ, men are sinners. This means, not that they are morally weak, but rather morally contrary to God. Sinners are not neutral toward God, but rather hostile to Him. They are his enemies, and He is theirs, and there is no peace between them. Their deeds are bad, and their minds are bad. Their sins are not accidents, but are the result of rebellious hearts and minds. Men, because of their rebellion, are alienated from God. The Son of God, however, has redeemed those who believe in Him, atoning for their sins, so that He might present them to His Father as blameless, so reconciling the two.

The Son of God will present a man to God blameless, but there is a condition. Saint Paul wrote:

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister. (Colossians 1:23)

A man may not once come to Jesus, and then go on his way without Him. A man may not once believe in Christ, and then ignore Him, let alone deny Him. If a man will remain at peace with God, then He must continue as one of His loyal subjects. He must stand firm in the faith, and not depart from the gospel. This is the gospel that Saint Paul, along with the other apostles, preached to all men everywhere, whether Jew or Gentile.

Just as the Son of God sacrificed Himself to make peace between God and man, and between Jew and Gentile, so Paul sacrificed himself as a minister of the gospel so that he might bring the peace of Christ to both Jew and Gentile. He wrote to the Colossians of his ministry:

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 1:24–28)

Saint Paul was at first a persecutor of the church. When the risen Lord confronted him, however, he believed, and became a servant of Christ and of His church. Before he met Jesus, he had a zeal without knowledge, and attacked the church. After he met Him, his knowledge of Christ directed his zeal toward defending the church. The Lord considered him to have been faithful, and so committed the church to his charge, and entrusted to him a sacred mystery, a truth long hidden, but then revealed, so that the apostle might pass that truth on to others. The substance of the mystery is not that the Gentiles would worship the true God (that was clear from the prophets), but that Jews and Gentiles would be members of one body, with Christ as their head, and so the Gentiles would be fellow heirs with the Jews, and partakers of the promise that God made to Abraham. Saint Paul wrote to the Ephesians of this mystery, “which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” (Ephesians 3:5, 6) It is this Christ, and this gospel, that the apostles preached to everyone, warning everyone to repent of their sins, and to believe in Jesus, so that the apostles might present them all to God as perfect in Christ. This is the true wisdom, the true philosophy.

Jesus is a perfect man, and the life He lived in the world was perfect. He is, therefore, an example to follow. He is much more than this, however. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Creator and Redeemer of the world. Saint Paul told the philosophers of Athen that, before the Son of God came into the world, God overlooked the ignorance of pagans; now that He has come, God commands all men everywhere to repent, and believe in Jesus.

Let not be led astray by the vain philosophies of the world. Let believe that Jesus is the Son of God, creator and redeemer of the world. Let us call men to repent of their sins, and believe in Jesus.

Now unto the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.