

THE [LORD OF GLORY](#)

IN the first century it was the custom in letter writing to begin with some pious expression. 'Gaius to Amplias, greeting. May the gods preserve you' is the usual kind of thing. This was just as much a part of a first-century letter as our 'Dear So-and-so' at the beginning, and 'Yours faithfully' or the like at the end (even though we may be addressing our worst enemy, and be not at all faithful in what we write!). The early Christians, of course, used the conventional form, though they did give it a twist or two of their own.

The interesting thing for our present purpose is that when Paul was writing a letter it was his habit to associate the Lord [Jesus](#) with [the Father](#) in his opening prayer. '[Grace](#) to you and peace from [God](#) our Father, and the Lord [Jesus](#) Christ' (Rom. 1:7), he wrote to the Christians at Rome, and a similar expression is found at the head of every one of his [letters](#) that has been preserved.

This is very revealing. It shows us that Paul held the highest possible view of the Person of Christ. In the first place, only on this basis could he have bracketed the Son with the Father. In the second, he looks to Christ as the source of that [grace](#) and peace which he longs to be made available to his correspondents, wherever they might be.

Another little habit of the great apostle is to interject some short [prayer](#) into the body of a letter. Such prayers are frequent. On occasion he addresses them to both Father and Son, and *puts his verb in the singular* (e.g. 1 Thes. 3:11; 2 Thes. 2:16f.). This is not formal theological definition, but it shows us plainly enough that Paul thought of Christ as in some sense one with the Father.

It is in line with this that he can describe [God](#) as 'the God and Father of our Lord [Jesus](#) Christ', or some similar phrase (Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3, 11:31, etc.). We know God [the Father](#) in His real character only because

[Jesus](#) has revealed Him. It is as He is known in Jesus that He is known at all.

He is so much in the habit of thinking of [the Father](#) and the Son as intimately related that he ascribes many gifts and graces indifferently to either. Thus he can speak of the gospel as the gospel of God (Rom. 1:1), and a few verses later as the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). The two are so close that it doesn't matter which name is used. Nor is this an isolated instance.

Forgiveness is from God (Col. 2:13), or from Christ (Col. 3:13), or from [God](#) for Christ's sake (Eph. 4:32). Revelation is from [Jesus](#) Christ (Gal. 1:12), and it is from the Father (Gal. 1:16). Very significant is the fact that this way of speaking is applied to the Church (Gal. 1:13; Rom. 16:16), the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:11; Rom. 8:9), and the Kingdom (Rom. 14:17; Col. 1:13).

If it is true that Paul does not make any marked difference between [the Father](#) and the Son when he is thinking of great realities like the Spirit and the Kingdom, and when his thought concerns blessings, it is also true that he has both Persons in mind when the darker matters of [judgment](#) are to the fore. He tells us that one day we shall stand before the judgment seat of God (Rom. 14:10-12, see rv), but he can also refer to the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). The Old Testament jealously guards the prerogative of deity, and assures us that vengeance belongs only to God (Dt. 32:35), but Paul has no doubts about the fact that vengeance will be executed by the Lord Jesus (2 Thes. 1:7f.).

Again in the Old Testament the great day at the end of the world when [judgment](#) would be effected is the 'day of the Lord' (cf. Rom. 2:16). Paul speaks boldly of 'the day of our Lord [Jesus](#) Christ' (1 Cor. 1:8). Could anything more strikingly demonstrate the place accorded Christ than the spectacle of this convinced [Jewish](#) monotheist so freely ascribing divine functions to Him? It might be possible to maintain that one or two expressions such as these are casual, and that no great stress should be

placed upon them.

But the cumulative force of so many is impressive (and there are many others not cited). Paul habitually associate the Lord [Jesus](#) so closely with the Father, that he can ascribe functions to either of Them indifferently. Anyone who has worked closely on the Pauline writings will know that passages are frequent in which there is no great distinction made between Them.

Morris, L. (1958). *The Lord from Heaven: A Study of the New Testament Teaching on the Deity and Humanity of [Jesus](#)* (66). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Tags: [Theology](#)