

# Catechetical Lecture X

*Cyril of Jerusalem*

Early Church (pre-Nicene) · Nicene & Post-Nicene · Catechesis

STROMATA 46

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## INTRODUCTION

Delivered to baptismal candidates in fourth-century Jerusalem, this tenth instruction works through a single clause of the creed, "and in One Lord Jesus Christ" — unfolding each title Scripture gives the Son: Door, Way, Sheep, Shepherd, Stone, Vine. Cyril is catechizing converts who must soon profess this faith aloud, and the lecture preserves the texture of that preparation: a bishop walking the unbaptized slowly through what each word will commit them to. The argument moves against Jewish objections to the Son's divinity and against any reading of the divine names that would multiply them into separate beings. Expect the cadence of spoken teaching, accumulative, image-driven, pastoral in its urgency rather than systematic in its order.

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## On the Clause, and in One Lord Jesus Christ, with a Reading from the First Epistle to the Corinthians

\_For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth\_ \_; yet to us there is One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and One Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him.\_

They who have been taught to believe In One God the Father Almighty, ought also to believe in His Only-begotten Son. For \_he that denies the Son, the same has not the Father\_. 1 John 2:23 \_I am the Door\_ , says Jesus; \_no one comes unto the Father but through Me\_. For if you deny the Door, the knowledge concerning the Father is shut off from you. \_No man knows the father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him\_. Matthew 11:27 For if you deny Him who reveals, you remain in ignorance. There is a sentence in the Gospels, saying, \_He that believes not on the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.\_ John 3:36 For the Father has indignation when the Only-begotten Son is set at nought. For it is grievous to a king that merely his soldier should be dishonoured; and when one of his nobler officers or friends is dishonoured, then his anger is greatly increased: but if any should do despite to the king's only-begotten son himself, who shall appease the father's indignation on behalf of his only-begotten son?

If, therefore, any one wishes to show piety towards God, let him worship the Son, since otherwise the Father accepts not his service. The Father spoke with a loud voice from heaven, saying, \_This is My

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased\_. Matthew 3:17 The Father was well pleased; unless thou also be well pleased in Him, you have not life. Be not thou carried away with the Jews when they craftily say, There is one God alone; but with the knowledge that God is One, know that there is also an Only-begotten Son of God. I am not the first to say this, but the Psalmist in the person of the Son says, \_The Lord said to Me, You are My Son\_. Heed not therefore what the Jews say, but what the Prophets say. Do you wonder that they who stoned and slew the Prophets, set at nought the Prophets' words?

Believe thou In One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God. For we say One Lord Jesus Christ, that His Sonship may be Only-begotten: we say One, that you may not suppose another: we say One, that you may not profanely diffuse the many names of His action among many sons. For He is called a Door ; but take not the name literally for a thing of wood, but a spiritual, a living Door, discriminating those who enter in. He is called a Way John 14:6, not one trodden by feet, but leading to the Father in heaven; He is called a Sheep , not an irrational one, but the one which through its precious blood cleanses the world from its sins, which is led before the shearers, and knows when to be silent. This Sheep again is called a Shepherd, who says, \_I am the Good Shepherd\_ John 10:11: a Sheep because of His manhood, a Shepherd because of the loving-kindness of His Godhead. And would you know that there are rational sheep? The Saviour says to the Apostles, \_Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves\_. Again, He is called a Lion , not as a devourer of men, but indicating as it were by the title His kingly, and steadfast, and confident nature: a Lion He is also called in opposition to the lion our adversary, who roars and devours those who have been deceived. 1 Peter 5:8 For the Saviour came, not as having changed the gentleness of His own nature, but as the strong \_Lion of the tribe of Judah\_ , saving them that believe, but treading down the adversary. He is called a Stone, not a lifeless stone, cut out by men's hands, but a \_chief corner-stone\_ , on whom \_whosoever believes shall not be put to shame\_.

He is called Christ, not as having been anointed by men's hands, but eternally anointed by the Father to His High-Priesthood on behalf of men. He is called Dead, not as having abode among the dead, as all in Hades, but as being alone \_free among the dead\_. He is called Son of Man, not as having had His generation from earth, as each of us, but as coming upon the clouds To Judge Both Quick and Dead. He is called Lord, not improperly as those who are so called among men, but as having a natural and eternal Lordship. He is called Jesus by a fitting name, as having the appellation from His salutary healing. He is called Son, not as advanced by adoption, but as naturally begotten. And many are the titles of our Saviour; lest, therefore, His manifold appellations should make you think of many sons, and because of the errors of the heretics, who say that Christ is one, and Jesus another, and the Door another, and so on , the Faith secures you beforehand, saying well, In One Lord Jesus Christ: for though the titles are many, yet their subject is one.

But the Saviour comes in various forms to each man for his profit. For to those who have need of gladness He becomes a Vine; and to those who want to enter in He stands as a Door; and to those who need to offer up their prayers He stands a mediating High Priest. Again, to those who have sins He becomes a Sheep, that He may be sacrificed for them. \_He is made all things to all men\_ 1 Corinthians 9:22, remaining in His own nature what He is. For so remaining, and holding the dignity of His Sonship in reality unchangeable, He adapts Himself to our infirmities, just as some excellent physician

or compassionate teacher; though He is Very Lord, and received not the Lordship by advancement , but has the dignity of His Lordship from nature, and is not called Lord improperly , as we are, but is so in verity, since by the Father's bidding He is Lord of His own works. For our lordship is over men of equal rights and like passions, nay often over our elders, and often a young master rules over aged servants. But in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lordship is not so: but He is first Maker, then Lord : first He made all things by the Father's will, then, He is Lord of the things which were made by Him.

\_Christ the Lord\_ is He who was \_born in the city of David\_. Luke 2:11 And would you know that Christ is Lord with the Father even before His Incarnation , that you may not only accept the statement by faith, but may also receive proof from the Old Testament? Go to the first book, Genesis: God says, \_Let us make man\_, not 'in My image,' but, \_in Our image\_. Genesis 1:26 And after Adam was made, the sacred writer says, \_And God created man; in the image of God created He him\_. For he did not limit the dignity of the Godhead to the Father alone, but included the Son also: that it might be shown that man is not only the work of God, but also of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Himself also Very God. This Lord, who works together with the Father, wrought with Him also in the case of Sodom, according to the Scripture: \_And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven\_. This Lord is He who afterwards was seen of Moses, as much as he was able to see. For the Lord is loving unto man, ever condescending to our infirmities.

Moreover, that you may be sure that this is He who was seen of Moses, hear Paul's testimony, when he says, \_For they all drank of a spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ\_. 1 Corinthians 10:4 And again: \_By faith Moses forsook Egypt\_ Hebrews 11:27, and shortly after he says, \_accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt\_. This Moses says to Him, \_Show me Yourself\_. You see that the Prophets also in those times saw the Christ, that is, as far as each was able. \_Show me Yourself, that I may see You with understanding\_. But He says, \_There shall no man see My face, and live\_. Exodus 33:20 For this reason then, because no man could see the face of the Godhead and live, He took on Him the face of human nature, that we might see this and live. And yet when He wished to show even that with a little majesty, when \_His face did shine as the sun\_ Matthew 17:2, the disciples fell down affrighted. If then His bodily countenance, shining not in the full power of Him that wrought, but according to the capacity of the Disciples, affrighted them, so that even thus they could not bear it, how could any man gaze upon the majesty of the Godhead? 'A great thing,' says the Lord, you desire, O Moses: and I approve your insatiable desire, \_and I will do this thing\_ for you, but according as you are able. \_Behold, I will put you in the cleft of the rock\_ Exodus 33:22: for as being little, you shall lodge in a little space.'

Now here I wish you to make safe what I am going to say, because of the Jews. For our object is to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ was with the Father. The Lord then says to Moses, \_I will pass by before you with My glory, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you\_. Being Himself the Lord, what Lord does He proclaim? You see how He was covertly teaching the godly doctrine of the Father and the Son. And again, in what follows it is written word for word: \_And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, both keeping righteousness and showing mercy unto thousands, taking away iniquities, and

transgressions, and sins\_. Then in what follows, \_Moses bowed his head and worshipped\_ Exodus 34:8 before the Lord who proclaimed the Father, and said: Go then, O Lord, in the midst of us.

This is the first proof: receive now a second plain one. \_The Lord said to my Lord, sit Thou on My right hand\_. The Lord says this to the Lord, not to a servant, but to the Lord of all, and His own Son, to whom He put all things in subjection. \_But when He says that all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him\_, and what follows; \_that God may be all in all\_. 1 Corinthians 15:27-28 The Only-begotten Son is Lord of all, but the obedient Son of the Father, for He grasped not the Lordship , but received it by nature of the Father's own will. For neither did the Son grasp it, nor the Father grudge to impart it. He it is who says, \_All things are delivered unto Me of My Father\_ ; delivered unto Me, not as though I had them not before; and I keep them well, not robbing Him who has given them.

The Son of God then is Lord: He is Lord, who was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, according to the Angel who said to the shepherds, *“I bring you good tidings of great joy, that unto you is born this day in the city of David Christ the Lord”* Luke 2:10-11: of whom an Apostle says elsewhere, *“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching the gospel of peace by Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all”*. Acts 10:36 But when he says, *“of all”*, do thou except nothing from His Lordship: for whether Angels, or Archangels, or principalities, or powers, or any created thing named by the Apostles, all are under the Lordship of the Son. Of Angels He is Lord, as you have it in the Gospels, *“Then the Devil departed from Him, and the Angels came and ministered unto Him”* Matthew 4:11; for the Scripture says not, they succoured Him, but they *“ministered unto Him”*, that is, like servants. When He was about to be born of a Virgin, Gabriel was then His servant, having received His service as a peculiar dignity. When He was about to go into Egypt, that He might overthrow the gods of Egypt made with hands, again *“an Angel appears to Joseph in a dream”*. Matthew 2:13 After He had been crucified, and had risen again, an Angel brought the good tidings, and as a trustworthy servant said to the women, *“Go, tell His disciples that He is risen, and goes before you into Galilee; lo, I have told you”*: almost as if he had said, I have not neglected my command, I protest that I have told you; that if you disregard it, the blame may not be on me, but on those who disregard it. This then is the One Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the lesson just now read speaks: *“For though there be many that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth”*, and so on, *“yet to us there is One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and One Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him”* 1 Corinthians 8:5-6.

And He is called by two names, Jesus Christ; Jesus, because He saves — Christ, because He is a Priest. And knowing this the inspired Prophet Moses conferred these two titles on two men distinguished above all: his own successor in the government, Auses, he renamed Jesus; and his own brother Aaron he surnamed Christ, that by two well-approved men he might represent at once both the High Priesthood, and the Kingship of the One Jesus Christ who was to come. For Christ is a High Priest like Aaron; since He *“glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest, but He that spoke unto Him, You are a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek”*. And Jesus the son of Nave was in many things a type of Him. For when he began to rule over the people, he began from Jordan Joshua 3:1, whence Christ also, after He was baptized, began to preach the gospel. And the son of Nave appoints twelve to divide the inheritance; and twelve Apostles Jesus sends forth, as heralds of the truth, into all the world. The typical Jesus saved Rahab the harlot when she believed: and the true Jesus says, *“Behold, the publicans and the harlots go before you into the kingdom of God”*. Matthew 21:31 With only a shout the walls of Jericho fell down in the time of the type: and because Jesus said, *“There shall not be left here one stone upon another”* Matthew 24:2, the Temple of the Jews opposite to us is fallen, the cause of its fall not being the denunciation but the sin of the transgressors.

There is One Lord Jesus Christ, a wondrous name, indirectly announced beforehand by the Prophets. For Esaias the Prophet says, *“Behold, your Saviour comes, having His own reward”*. Now Jesus in Hebrew is by interpretation *“Saviour”*. For the Prophetic gift, foreseeing the murderous spirit of the Jews against their Lord, veiled His name, lest from knowing it plainly beforehand they might plot against Him readily. But He was openly called Jesus not by men, but by an Angel, who came not by his own authority, but was sent by the power of God, and said to Joseph, *“Fear not to take unto you*

Mary your wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus\_. Matthew 1:20 And immediately he renders the reason of this name, saying, \_for He shall save His people from their sins\_. Consider how He who was not yet born could have a \_people\_, unless He was in being before He was born. This also the Prophet says in His person, \_From the bowels of my mother has He made mention of My name\_ Isaiah 49:1; because the Angel foretold that He should be called Jesus. And again concerning Herod's plot against him he says, \_And under the shadow of His hand has He hid Me\_.

Jesus then means according to the Hebrew Saviour, but in the Greek tongue The Healer; since He is physician of souls and bodies, curer of spirits, curing the blind in body, and leading minds into light, healing the visibly lame, and guiding sinners' steps to repentance, saying to the palsied, \_Sin no more\_, and, \_Take up your bed and walk\_. For since the body was palsied for the sin of the soul, He ministered first to the soul that He might extend the healing to the body. If, therefore, any one is suffering in soul from sins, there is the Physician for him: and if any one here is of little faith, let him say to Him, \_Help my unbelief\_. Mark 9:24 If any is encompassed also with bodily ailments, let him not be faithless, but let him draw near; for to such diseases also Jesus ministers, and let him learn that Jesus is the Christ.

For that He is Jesus the Jews allow, but not further that He is Christ. Therefore says the Apostle, \_Who is the liar, but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ\_ 1 John 2:22? But Christ is a High Priest, \_whose priesthood passes not to another\_ Hebrews 7:24, neither having begun His Priesthood in time, nor having any successor in His High-Priesthood: as you heard on the Lord's day, when we were discoursing in the congregation on the phrase, \_After the Order of Melchizedek\_. He received not the High-Priesthood from bodily succession, nor was He anointed with oil prepared by man, but before all ages by the Father; and He so far excels the others as \_with an oath\_ He is made Priest: \_For they are priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him that said, The Lord swore, and will not repent\_. Hebrews 7:21 The mere purpose of the Father was sufficient for surety: but the mode of assurance is twofold, namely that with the purpose there follows the oath also, \_that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong encouragement\_ for our faith, who receive Christ Jesus as the Son of God.

This Christ, when He had come, the Jews denied, but the devils confessed. But His forefather David was not ignorant of Him, when he said, \_I have ordained a lamp for mine Anointed\_: which lamp some have interpreted to be the brightness of Prophecy, others the flesh which He took upon Him from the Virgin, according to the Apostle's word, \_But we have this treasure in earthen vessels\_. The Prophet was not ignorant of Him, when He said, \_and announces unto men His Christ\_. Moses also knew Him, Isaiah knew Him, and Jeremiah; not one of the Prophets was ignorant of Him. Even devils recognised Him, for He rebuked them, and the Scripture says, \_because they knew that He was Christ\_. Luke 4:41 The Chief-priests knew Him not, and the devils confessed Him: the Chief Priests knew Him not, and a woman of Samaria proclaimed Him, saying, \_Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ\_ John 4:29?

This is Jesus Christ who came \_a High-Priest of the good things to come\_ Hebrews 9:11; who for the bountifulness of His Godhead imparted His own title to us all. For kings among men have their royal

style which others may not share: but Jesus Christ being the Son of God gave us the dignity of being called Christians. But some one will say, The name of Christians is new, and was not in use aforetime : and new-fashioned phrases are often objected to on the score of strangeness. The prophet made this point safe beforehand, saying, \_But upon My servants shall a new name be called, which shall be blessed upon the earth\_. Let us question the Jews: Are you servants of the Lord, or not? Show then your new name. For you were called Jews and Israelites in the time of Moses, and the other prophets, and after the return from Babylon, and up to the present time: where then is your new name? But we, since we are servants of the Lord, have that new name: \_new\_ indeed, but the \_new name, which shall be blessed upon the earth\_. This name caught the world in its grasp: for Jews are only in a certain region, but Christians reach to the ends of the world: for it is the name of the Only-begotten Son of God that is proclaimed.

But would you know that the Apostles knew and preached the name of Christ, or rather had Christ Himself within them? Paul says to his hearers, \_Or seek a proof of Christ that speaks in me\_ 2 Corinthians 13:3? Paul proclaims Christ, saying, \_For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake\_. Who then is this? The former persecutor. O mighty wonder! The former persecutor himself preaches Christ. But wherefore? Was he bribed? Nay there was none to use this mode of persuasion. But was it that he saw Him present on earth, and was abashed? He had already been taken up into heaven. He went forth to persecute, and after three days the persecutor is a preacher in Damascus. By what power? Others call friends as witnesses for friends but I have presented to you as a witness the former enemy: and do you still doubt? The testimony of Peter and John, though weighty, was yet of a kind open to suspicion: for they were His friends. But of one who was formerly his enemy, and afterwards dies for His sake, who can any longer doubt the truth?

At this point of my discourse I am truly filled with wonder at the wise dispensation of the Holy Spirit; how He confined the Epistles of the rest to a small number, but to Paul the former persecutor gave the privilege of writing fourteen. For it was not because Peter or John was less that He restrained the gift; God forbid! But in order that the doctrine might be beyond question, He granted to the former enemy and persecutor the privilege of writing more, in order that we all might thus be made believers. For \_all were amazed\_ at Paul, and said, \_Is not this he that\_ was formerly a persecutor Acts 9:21? Did he not come hither, that he might lead us away bound to Jerusalem? Be not amazed, said Paul, I know that \_it is hard for me to kick against the pricks;\_ I know that \_I am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God\_ 1 Corinthians 15:9; but I did it \_in ignorance\_ 1 Timothy 1:13: for I thought that the preaching of Christ was destruction of the Law, and knew not that He came Himself to fulfil the Law and not to destroy it. Matthew 5:17 \_But the grace of God was exceeding abundant in me\_ 1 Timothy 1:14 .

Many, my beloved, are the true testimonies concerning Christ. The Father bears witness from heaven of His Son: the Holy Ghost bears witness, descending bodily in likeness of a dove: the Archangel Gabriel bears witness, bringing good tidings to Mary: the Virgin Mother of God bears witness: the blessed place of the manger bears witness. Egypt bears witness, which received the Lord while yet young in the body : Symeon bears witness, who received Him in his arms, and said, \_Now, Lord, let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people\_. Luke 2:29-30 Anna also, the prophetess, a most devout widow, of austere life, bears witness of Him. John the Baptist bears witness, the greatest among the Prophets, and leader of the New Covenant, who in a manner united both Covenants in Himself, the Old and the New. Jordan is His witness among rivers; the sea of Tiberias among seas: blind and lame bear witness, and dead men raised to life, and devils saying, \_What have we to do with You, Jesus? We know You, who You are, the Holy One of God\_. Mark 1:24 Winds bear witness, silenced at His bidding: five loaves multiplied into five thousand bear Him witness. The holy wood of the Cross bears witness, seen among us to this day, and from this place now almost filling the whole world, by means of those who in faith take portions from it. The palm-tree on the ravine bears witness, having supplied the palm-branches to the children who then hailed Him. Gethsemane bears witness, still to the thoughtful almost showing Judas. Golgotha , the holy hill standing above us here, bears witness to our sight: the Holy Sepulchre bears witness, and the stone which lies there to this day. The sun now shining is His witness, which then at the time of His saving Passion was eclipsed : the darkness is His witness, which was then from the sixth hour to the ninth: the light bears witness, which shone forth from the ninth hour until evening. The Mount of Olives bears witness, that holy mount from which He ascended to the Father: the rain-bearing clouds are His witnesses, having received their Lord: yea, and the gates of heaven bear witness \[having received their Lord \], concerning which the Psalmist said, \_Lift up your doors, O you Princes, and be lifted up you everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in\_. His former enemies bear witness, of whom the blessed Paul is one, having been a little while His enemy, but for a long time His servant: the Twelve Apostles are His witnesses, having preached the truth not only in words, but also by their own torments and deaths: \_the shadow of Peter\_ Acts 5:15 bears witness, having healed the sick in the name of Christ. The handkerchiefs and aprons bear witness, as in like manner by Christ's power they wrought cures of old through Paul. Persians and Goths , and all the Gentile converts bear witness, by dying for His sake, whom they never saw with eyes of flesh: the devils, who to this day are driven out by the faithful, bear witness to Him.

So many and diverse, yea and more than these, are His witnesses: is then the Christ thus witnessed any longer disbelieved? Nay rather if there is any one who formerly believed not, let him now believe: and if any was before a believer, let him receive a greater increase of faith, by believing in our Lord Jesus Christ, and let him understand whose name he bears. You are called a Christian: be tender of the name; let not our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, be blasphemed through you: but rather \_let your good works shine before men\_ Matthew 5:16 that they who see them may in Christ Jesus our Lord glorify the Father which is in heaven: To whom be the glory, both now and for ever and ever. Amen.

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