

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

Found in Scripture

(All quotations from the NASB 1995 Bible)

Based on "Paradoxical Nomenclature"
By Bryan Matthew Dockens

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- Many descriptions of the identity of Jesus Christ are revealed in Scripture.
- Several of them seem to contradict one another, superficially, but actually do one of two things (perhaps both):
 1. They are paradoxes, revealing the enormity of whom the Anointed One is
 2. They simply indicate that analogies are not intended to be taken further than their context.

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Shepherd** and the **Lamb!**

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."
(John 10:11)

"I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."
(John 10:14-15)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Shepherd** and the **Lamb!**

"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord ..."
(Hebrews 13:20)

"For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls."
(1 Peter 2:25)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Shepherd** and the **Lamb!**

This identifier of "shepherd" sets forth His role as One who leads those most in need of guidance.

"Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd."
(Matthew 9:36)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Shepherd** and the **Lamb!**
- Without undermining His pastoral protection, Jesus is also "the Lamb of God."

"The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"
(John 1:29)

"Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God!'"
(John 1:35-36)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Shepherd** and the **Lamb**!
- The Lamb moniker appears more than two dozen times in the book of Revelation as well.
- Whereas Christ as Shepherd puts His followers in the roles of sheep, requiring leadership and protection, Christ as Lamb does not at all imply that He lacks direction.
- Rather, He is called "the Lamb who was slain." This speaks to His sacrifice for sin.

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Shepherd** and the **Lamb**!

"Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.'"

(Revelation 5:11-12)

- The contrasting positions of shepherd and Lamb are not overlooked in Scripture.

"... for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes." **(Revelation 7:17)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Lamb** and the **Lion**!

- Lions are the natural predators of lambs (1 Samuel 17:34-35), yet Jesus, the very "Lamb of God," is also "the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

"... and one of the elders said to me, 'Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.'" **(Revelation 5:5)**

- Christ is so named for the mighty power inherent in a lion insomuch as He "has overcome."

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Lamb** and the **Lion**!

- This description acknowledges the fulfillment of what was foretold by the patriarch Jacob concerning the descendants of his son Judah:

"Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."

(Genesis 49:9-10)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Root** and the **Branch**!

- Roots and branches are opposite ends of the tree.

- While roots plunge deep into soil to obtain water and to make the tree sturdy, branches stretch into the sky to obtain sunlight, and both are needed to grow a tree.

- By the mouth of prophets, God declared that His Messiah would be both the Root and the Branch.

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Root** and the **Branch**!

"Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious."

(Isaiah 10:11)

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, "The Lord our righteousness."" **(Jeremiah 23:5-6)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Root** and the **Branch**!
- The One foretold in prophecy is "the Root of Jesse," David's father, and "the Branch" from David, the great king of Israel.
- He is both David's source AND his offspring, which has potential for confusion, as Jesus Himself noted.
"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: 'What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?' They said to Him, 'The son of David.' He said to them, 'Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet?'" If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?"
(Matthew 22:41-45)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Root** and the **Branch**!
- This refers to the dual nature of Jesus Christ:
"... concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord ..." **(Romans 1:3-4)**
- Being both Man, specifically a descendant of David, and man's Creator, Jesus can honestly assert:
"... I am the root and the descendant of David ..."
(Revelation 22:16)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Master** and the **Servant**!
- Often, He was called "Master" by His disciples.
"Simon answered and said, 'Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets.'" (Luke 5:5)
 (cf. Luke 8:24, 45; 9:33)
- He remains the "Master in heaven":
"Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven."
(Colossians 4:1) (cf. Ephesians 6:9)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Master** and the **Servant**!
- His preeminence and universal authority demand recognition as the Master.
"He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything." **(Colossians 1:18)**
- *"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'" (Matthew 28:18)*

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Master** and the **Servant**!
- Yet, Jesus is a Master like none other. He taught:
"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." **(Mark 10:45)**
- *"And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called "Benefactors." But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.'" (Luke 22:25-27)*

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Master** and the **Servant**!
- Jesus came to earth to serve, teaching humanity how to live in godliness, and sacrificing Himself bodily for the sins of mankind. All of His service toward man was in submission to the will of His own Father, which is why His disciples referred to Him this way in prayer:
"For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel ..."
(Acts 4:27)
- *"... while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus."* **(Acts 4:30)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

•He is the **Advocate** and the **Judge!**

- He is our Advocate, our representative before the Father.

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ..." **(1 John 2:1)**

"Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." **(Romans 8:33-34)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

•He is the **Advocate** and the **Judge!**

- In a courtroom, the work of advocacy falls on an attorney who intercedes for the accused before the judge.

"Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." **(Hebrews 7:25)**

- In a situation of apparent bias that would require any other jurist to recuse himself, Jesus is not only the Advocate, but also the Judge.

"For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son ..." **(John 5:22)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

•He is the **Advocate** and the **Judge!**

- We will be judged by the Word, Who is Christ.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." **(John 1:1)**

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." **(John 1:14)**

"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." **(John 12:48)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

•He is the **Advocate** and the **Judge!**

- Indeed, Christ will be our Judge.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." **(2 Corinthians 5:10)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

•He is the **Brother** and **Father!**

- Christ is brother to all the saved inasmuch as there is shared submission to the heavenly Father.

"The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'" **(Matthew 25:40)** (cf. John 20:17)

- He claimed a brotherly relationship with all those who obey His Father.

"For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." **(Matthew 12:50)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

•He is the **Brother** and **Father!**

- Through His incarnation, He is in brotherhood with all mankind.

"Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted." **(Hebrews 2:17-18)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Brother** and **Father**!
- As the firstfruits of the resurrection, Jesus is also "the firstborn among many brethren."

"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren ..." **(Romans 8:29)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Brother** and **Father**!
- He is more than the brother of the saved, though. He is also "Eternal Father" according to a Messianic prophecy from the prophet Isaiah.

"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."
(Isaiah 9:6)

- His paternal position is not a discrepancy, but a different poetic expression of His many roles. He does have a paternal view toward His disciples.

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Son of Man** and the **Son of God**!

- He called Himself the "Son of Man":
"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" – then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home."
(Matthew 9:6)

- He called Himself the "Son of God":
"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."
(John 3:18)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **Son of Man** and the **Son of God**!

- A direct descendent of David, and the only begotten Son of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is both man and deity.
"The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.'"
(Luke 1:30-35)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **High Priest** and the **Sacrifice**!

- Jesus is our High Priest who offers sacrifice to God.

"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." **(Hebrews 4:14-15)** (cf. Hebrews 3:1)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

- He is the **High Priest** and the **Sacrifice**!

- Jesus offered Himself as sacrifice for our sins.

"... but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him."
(Hebrews 9:26b-28)

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

•He is the **Warrior** and **Prince of Peace!**

- Jesus is the warrior who leads us to victory.

"The LORD your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy." **(Zephaniah 3:17)**

- Jesus provides true peace, reconciling us to God.

"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." **(Isaiah 9:6)**

Paradoxical Descriptions of Jesus Christ

•He is the **Alpha** and the **Omega!**

•He is the **First** and the **Last!**

•He is the **Beginning** and the **End!**

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."
(Revelation 22:13)

The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit are One, united in Love for humanity!

"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

(Ephesians 3:14-21)

HOW TO OBEY THE GOSPEL

Hear the word of God (2 Thessalonians 2:14-15; James 1:21)

Believe the gospel message (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24)

Repent of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31)

Confess Jesus Christ (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32-33)

Be Baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4)

Remain Obedient (Matthew 7:21; Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 3:12)