

John 20:30-31, Selected Scriptures

Jesus, Son of God

(pt. 1)

“The God of the Bible has a Son.” What do we mean? What do we *not* mean?

Why does the Word of God make such a big deal out of this? (John 20:30-31; 1 Jn 2:20-25)

To better appreciate and understand John’s thesis statement (Jn 20:31)

Let’s examine Jesus’ Sonship under 4 Headings:

1) Acknowledging the Current Confusion.

We need to be aware of the heretical view of the cults/Islam and acknowledge the confusion that exists with children and less taught adults.

2) Establishing the wide range of meaning of both ‘S(s)on’ and ‘S(s)on of God.’

The word “Son” or “S(s)on of God” is applied to no less than six different “beings.”

i) _____.

(Job 1:6; 38:7; Psalm 29:1)

ii) Adam

(Luke 3:38; Acts 17:26-28)

iii) God's _____ people.

(Ex. 4:22-23; Hos. 11:1; Ps. 80:15)

iv) Faithful _____.

(Matthew. 5:9; Luke 6:35-36)

v) The Davidic _____.

(2 Sam. 7:12-26; Psalm 89; Ezk. 21:10)

vi) The 2nd Member of the _____.

(Hebrews 1; John 1; John 3:16-36)

3) Noting the Frequent Usage and Meaning of this Most Important Christological Title.

(124x in the N.T. Scriptures)

The term "Son of God" underscores both Unity and Distinction within the purview of Trinitarian
_____.

4) Appreciating the Practical, Personal, & Theological Significance of this Christological Title.

(Matthew 22:37; John 5:1, 5, 10-13; John 20:28-31)

For Further Reflection: *Lord help us to be doers of the Word and not just sermon connoisseurs*

What's the most important thing you heard today? How were you encouraged, challenged, and/or convicted? What do you want to study further as a result of listening to today's message?

When we say, "the God of the Bible has a Son." What do we mean? What do we *not* mean? Why does the Word of God make such a big deal out of this? (John 20:30-31; 1 Jn 2:20-25)

How do Muslims and some of the major cults (like Jehovah Witnesses) misinterpret and misapply the doctrine of Christ' "Sonship?" How might children and less taught adult believers (accidentally) misunderstand this Christological title? (Jesus is the Son of God).

Pay special attention to heading two: the wide range of meaning of both "son" and "son of God." Sometimes we do not pay close enough attention to the biblical context or how different words can mean different things in different contexts.

Define the following theological terms: Eternal Sonship of Christ. The Hypostatic Union (Dual Natures) of Christ. The Incarnation of Christ. Monotheistic Trinitarianism. The Messianic Sonship of Christ. Divine Sonship.

When something is repeated over and over again in the inerrant Word of God what point is God the Spirit often trying to get across to us?

Talk about the biblical meaning of "Jesus, the Son of God." Provide Scriptures to support your answer.

What is the practical, personal, and theological significance of this Christological title?

The Eternal Sonship of Christ. Extended commentary by Pastor John MacArthur. "1. I am now convinced that the title "Son of God" when applied to Christ in Scripture always speaks of His essential deity and absolute equality with God, not His voluntary subordination. The Jewish leaders of Jesus' time understood this perfectly. [John 5:18](#) says they sought the death penalty against Jesus, charging Him with blasphemy "because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." In that culture, a dignitary's adult son was deemed equal in stature and privilege with his father. The same deference demanded by a king was afforded to his adult son. The son was, after all, of the very same essence as his father, heir to all the father's rights and privileges—and therefore equal in every significant regard. So when Jesus was called "Son of God," it was understood categorically by all as a title of Deity, making Him *equal with God* and (more significantly) *of the same essence* as the Father. That is precisely why the Jewish leaders regarded the title "Son of God" as high blasphemy.

If Jesus' sonship signifies His deity and utter equality with the Father, it cannot be a title that pertains only to His incarnation. In fact, the main gist of what is meant by "sonship" (and certainly this would include Jesus' divine essence) must pertain to the eternal attributes of Christ, not merely the humanity He assumed.

2. It is now my conviction that the begetting spoken of in Psalm 2 and Hebrews 1 is not an event that takes place in time. Even though at first glance Scripture seems to employ terminology with temporal overtones ("this day have I begotten thee"), the context of [Psalm 2:7](#) seems clearly to be a reference to the eternal decree of God. It is reasonable to conclude that the begetting spoken of there is also something that pertains to eternity rather than a point in time. The temporal language should therefore be understood as figurative, not literal. Most theologians recognize this, and when dealing with the sonship of Christ, they employ the term "eternal generation." I'm not fond of the expression. In Spurgeon's words, it is "a term that does not convey to us any great meaning; it simply covers up our ignorance." And yet the concept itself, I am now convinced, is biblical. Scripture refers to Christ as "the only begotten of the Father" ([John 1:14](#); cf. v. [18](#); [3:16](#), [18](#); [Heb. 11:17](#)). The Greek word translated "only begotten"

is *monogenes*. The thrust of its meaning has to do with Christ's utter uniqueness. Literally, it may be rendered "one of a kind"—and yet it also clearly signifies that He is of the very same essence as the Father. This, I believe, is the very heart of what is meant by the expression "only begotten."

To say that Christ is "begotten" is itself a difficult concept. Within the realm of creation, the term "begotten" speaks of the origin of one's offspring. The begetting of a son denotes his conception—the point at which he comes into being. Some thus assume that "only begotten" refers to the conception of the human Jesus in the womb of the virgin Mary. Yet [Matthew 1:20](#) attributes the conception of the incarnate Christ to the Holy Spirit, not to God the Father. The begetting referred to in Psalm 2 and [John 1:14](#) clearly seems to be something more than the conception of Christ's humanity in Mary's womb.

And indeed, there is another, more vital, significance to the idea of "begetting" than merely the origin of one's offspring. In the design of God, each creature begets offspring "after his kind" ([Gen. 1:11-12; 21-25](#)). The offspring bear the exact likeness of the parent. The fact that a son is generated by the father guarantees that the son shares the same essence as the father.

I believe this is the sense Scripture aims to convey when it speaks of the begetting of Christ by the Father. Christ is not a created being ([John 1:1-3](#)). He had no beginning but is as timeless as God Himself. Therefore, the "begetting" mentioned in Psalm 2 and its cross-references has nothing to do with His origin.

But it has everything to do with the fact that He is of the same essence as the Father. Expressions like "eternal generation," "only begotten Son," and others pertaining to the filiation of Christ must all be understood in this sense: Scripture employs them to underscore the absolute oneness of essence between Father and Son. In other words, such expressions aren't intended to evoke the idea of procreation; they are meant to convey the truth about the essential oneness shared by the Members of the Trinity.

My previous view was that Scripture employed Father-Son terminology anthropomorphically—accommodating unfathomable heavenly truths to our finite minds by casting them in human terms. Now I am inclined to think that the opposite is true: Human father-son relationships are merely earthly pictures of an infinitely greater heavenly reality. The one true, archetypical Father-Son relationship exists eternally within the Trinity. All others are merely earthly replicas, imperfect because they are bound up in our finiteness, yet illustrating a vital eternal reality.

If Christ's sonship is all about His deity, someone will wonder why this applies to the Second Member of the Trinity alone, and not to the Third. After all, we don't refer to the Holy Spirit as God's Son, do we? Yet isn't He also of the same essence as the Father? Of course He is. The full, undiluted, undivided essence of God belongs alike to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is but one essence; yet He exists in three Persons. The three Persons are co-equal, but they are still distinct Persons. And the chief characteristics that distinguish between the Persons are wrapped up in the properties suggested by the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Theologians have labeled these properties paternity, filiation, and spiration. That such distinctions are vital to our understanding of the Trinity is clear from Scripture. How to explain them fully remains something of a mystery.

In fact, many aspects of these truths may remain forever inscrutable, but this basic understanding of the eternal relationships within the Trinity nonetheless represents the best consensus of Christian understanding over many centuries of Church history. I therefore affirm the doctrine of Christ's eternal sonship while acknowledging it as a mystery into which we should not expect to pry too deeply."

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