

The Son of God

(Scripture only)

by Terry Hill

Chapter one

The Controversy

This is a theological study concerning the Christ of the Bible. Its purpose is to show that He is truly the Son of God. This is a study that demands our fullest attention. In this study only Scripture is used.

The Son of God controversy

In brief, this study is to understand more fully what John meant when he wrote

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:1-3

Reasoning intelligently, an individual cannot be the same individual (personality) as the one they are with so here the Scriptures reveal two separate individuals (two separate personages or personalities), both of whom are said to be God.

Note in these verses that John does not mention the Holy Spirit. Interesting also is that the Greek actually reads “the Word was “with the God” (Gr. ton qeon). If translated this way, the verse would say “In [the] beginning was the Word, and the Word was with **the God**, and the Word was God”. Note also the bracketed ‘the’ denoting that there is no article. This article [the] in many translations is supplied.

From the beginning of his gospel, John needed to carefully differentiate between God and the Word (God and His Son). He could not afford to cause confusion. I say this because at that time, some were trying to inculcate into the Christian faith heresies concerning Christ. John therefore would have chosen his words very carefully.

The author of these notes regards the gospel of John as a divinely inspired theology (see John 20:31). He believes it was written by him to specifically combat the heresies to which reference has been made above. This I believe was John’s entire purpose in writing it. It was not just another gospel concerning the life and teachings of Jesus like the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

These are called 'the synoptic gospels'. John's gospel is so much different. It is a divine theology. Take note that John did not say it was 'the God' (the Father) who became flesh but "the Word" (see John 1:14). As has been said previously, this is a different personality to the Father. As the scriptures say

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"
Hebrews 1:1-3

Here the Son is said to be the "express image" of God's person (Gr. hupostasis). This means that as an individual personality He cannot be the same personality (personage) as the one of whom He is an image. This is only a reasonable conclusion to draw. Again we are talking in terms of two separate personalities, both of whom are God. This is a major part of the mystery of God. As the writer of Hebrews went on to say

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Hebrews 1:8

The author of these notes reasons that it is only if He is begotten of God (of the Father) meaning God from God that it is possible for the Son to be truly God.

In Hebrews 1:3, the Son is said to be the "express image" of the 'hupostasis' of God, meaning the exact likeness of who and everything that God is. This is in keeping with the NEB translation of John 1:1 which says

"When all things began, the word already was. The word dwelt with God and what God was, the word was." John 1:1 New English Bible

The word 'hupostasis' means substance or under-girding etc. In other words, it is the 'hupostasis' that makes something what it is. This can be seen above where the NEB says "what God was, the Word was".

Christ fully God

In agreement with early Christianity and later orthodoxy, the predominant belief of early Seventh-day Adventism was that in every sense of meaning, Christ is fully God. They did not regard Him as a lesser personality than the Father but equal to Him. According to this reasoning, the difference between the Father and the Son was that the pre-existent Christ is sourced (begotten) of the Father therefore He is a true Son. This means that He has no existence separate from the Father. This was the testimony of Jesus Himself. When Philip asked Jesus to show the disciples the Father, Jesus said

“ ... Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.” John 14:9-11

Here is the mystery of the oneness between God and Christ. If we have seen Christ we have seen the Father. So how are we to reason this mystery? To do so we shall continue to search through the Scriptures to see what evidence we can find to determine what God has revealed concerning the relationship between Himself and Christ.

In this article we shall begin with the profession of faith upon which Jesus Himself said that His Church would be built. As we shall see, this profession is that He is **the Son** of the living God. This is the subject matter of this article.

Jesus the Son of God - The Christian profession of faith

It was the outspoken Peter who gave the greatest example of the profession of the Christian faith.

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” Matthew 16:13

The disciples answered Jesus by telling Him that some were saying that He was John the Baptist or Elijah, whilst others were saying that He was Jeremiah or one of the other prophets. It was following this that Jesus asked the most important question of all. It was not “whom do **others** say that I am” but “**whom say ye that I am?**” (Matthew 16:15). Jesus had now made this a personal question. Just like it does to us today, this demanded a personal confession of faith. It was Peter in his own distinctive style who was the first to answer.

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16)

This was the second time Peter made such a confession. The first time was after the feeding of the 5000 and the rejection of Jesus in Galilee (see John 6:69). Peter did not say that Jesus was going to become the Son of God at the resurrection (this is when some say Christ became a son) or as some say He was a son because He was born of the flesh of His mother Mary (meaning at the incarnation), but that He was the “**Son of the living God**”. We need to remember here that Peter had not yet grasped the idea that Jesus was going to die let alone be resurrected.

Peter did not use the words “Son of God” in any metaphorical (figurative) way but in a sense that was literal. Peter and the others, solely because of the

impress of the Holy Spirit, had discerned the divinity of Christ. This is why they termed Him **the Son** of the living God. For obvious reasons they could not say that He was God. Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit to make his profession of faith (“[Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God](#)”). This profession had nothing to do with the incarnation. It was with reference to Christ’s divinity and His pre-existent relationship to His Father. The disciples had seen the glory of the Son of God. In His beautiful prayer prior to His experience in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus said

[“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” John 17:5](#)

Peter and the other disciples had discerned this “glory”. It was Christ’s pre-existent glory. Now we can see why Jesus responded to Peter’s confession by saying

[“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 16:17](#)

It was the Holy Spirit directly that had urged this confession from the lips of Peter. This was prior to any New Testament Scripture being written. The only Scriptures that the disciples had available to them were what we term today the ‘Old Testament’. Peter’s profession was direct revelation from God. He did not acquire his understanding by human means. He had been shown the divinity of Christ (His glory) and had therefore proclaimed Him to be the Son of God.

As to identity of personality, Jesus was not the infinite God (see John 17:3). He was **the Son** of the infinite God. It was on this profession that Jesus said that the Christian Church would be built. As Jesus said to Peter

[“And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” \(Matthew 16:18\)](#)

Jesus is the divine Son of God. This is His glory. It is also the Rock upon which the Christian church is built. It is the profession of the Christian faith. All else is secondary.

The Jews understood the claims of Jesus

When Jesus was brought before Caiaphas at the night trial, the high priest asked Him

[“I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” Matthew 26:63](#)

Caiaphas was not asking Jesus if He was the Son of God in any metaphorical (figurative) sense. He was speaking literally. This is why Jesus had been brought

before him. He had been accused of blasphemy. He had claimed to be the Son of God. The Jews said that it was because of this He deserved to die. At the day trial the next morning, the Scriptures reveal that the high priests, elders and scribes came together to question Jesus.

“Art thou the Christ? tell us.” Luke 22:67

The Scriptures record that Jesus answered

“If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go.” Luke 22:67-68

Jesus then told them that hereafter the Son of man would sit on the right hand of the power of God. The Scripture then say that after He had said this they together asked Him

“Art thou then the Son of God?” to which Jesus replied, “Ye say that I am”. Luke 22:70

Luke ends the record of this encounter by saying

“And they said, what need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.” Luke 22:71

The questions that Jesus was asked at His trial were obviously with respect to the encounters that He previously had with the Jews. These are such that are recorded in John chapters 5, 8 and 10 etc. We can see therefore that the Jews knew exactly who Jesus was claiming to be. They all knew that in the *literal sense* of it's meaning, he was claiming to be the Son of God, hence the question of Caiaphas – “tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God”. If Christ was not being asked this in a literal sense, then the entirety of the accusations do not make any sense.

The Jews knew exactly who Jesus was claiming to be. Let us not make any mistake about it.

“Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.” John 5:18

Jesus continually spoke of God as His Father and of Himself as God's Son. This was no metaphorical (figurative) claim or understanding of this term. Obviously the Jews saw nothing figurative in it. This is why, by His profession to be the Son of God, they regarded Jesus as claiming to be “equal with God”. If they had believed His words to be metaphorical (figurative) they would not have spoken as they did here, neither would they have had any just cause to bring Him before Caiaphas on the claim of blasphemy etc. This is only reasonable exegesis.

That the Jews took the claims of Jesus literally is not in question.

“ ... For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” John 10:33

It can only be said again that the Jews obviously saw nothing metaphorical (figurative) in the claims of Jesus. They said that by them He was making Himself to be God. Jesus also said to the Jews

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? John 10:36

As can be seen here, Jesus clearly said that His claim was that He was the Son of God but the Jews said this was blasphemy. This is why they were going to stone Him. His were literal claims and the Jews realised it.

The Jews knew that this claim of Jesus was not in the sense that all who are God's people are sons (and daughters) of God. Jesus was **the** Son of God, the only begotten of God. The Jews knew full well that Christ was making this claim in a special sense and not one that was common. They had no misunderstanding as regards the claims of Jesus. This is why they said to Pilate

“We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.” (John 19:7)

If the Jews had regarded this claim to be the Son of God in a common sense, they would not have condemned Jesus to death. It is only reasonable to believe that neither would they have done so if they had thought that He had meant it in some figurative way. They knew that His was a literal claim. This is why they said He ought to die.

A question of Fathers

In personality, Jesus was not claiming to be the infinite God but the Son of the infinite God. This we can also see in His wonderful prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John.

“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” John 17:1-5

Needless to say, Jesus did not regard Himself as “the only true God”. This latter personage was His Father in Heaven (the infinite God). In a previous encounter with the Jews, Jesus had said to them

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.” John 5:19-23

There was no doubting whom Jesus was claiming to be. In the highest sense of meaning He was claiming to be the Son of God. It can easily be seen that He was not using this title in any metaphoric (figurative) sense. Christ was indeed the pre-existent Son of God. This is His identity. It is who he is. There is nothing metaphorical (figurative) about it. He really is the Son of God. Interesting to note is that there are numerous translations of the Scriptures (far too many to quote here) that have “own Father”, particularly the ‘more modern’ versions. It is also interesting to note a few others that say differently. This is such as the Weymouth translation that says

“On this account then the Jews were all the more eager to put Him to death -- because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also spoke of God as being in a special sense His Father, thus putting Himself on a level with God.”
John 5:18 Weymouth

Interesting also is the Daniel Mace translation. This one says

“Therefore the Jews were the more eager to kill him, because he had not only violated the sabbath, but likewise, because he had said that God was his proper father, making himself equal with God.” Mace translation (1729)

Can this be put more plainly? Christ was the Son of God in the very highest sense of its meaning. God was “his proper father”. There is nothing metaphorical (figurative) about it. How much more evidence do we need to believe that Christ really is the Son of God?

Christ claimed Sonship with God. This was when in what is probably the most well known encounter that Jesus had with the Jews He said to them

“... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58)

It’s important to note that this encounter was all about ‘fathers’. The Jews claimed that God was their Father but Jesus disagreed. He had said that they were of their father the devil (see John 8:44). By the way that Jesus used the term “I am”, the Jews obviously knew what He was claiming. We know this because the Scriptures tell us (this was in response to the above words of Jesus)

“Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” John 8:59

In comparison to the world’s total population, there are so very few who actually believe that Jesus really is the divine Son of God. Will we not believe His personal testimony?

Chapter two

Testimonies and challenges

The personal testimony of Jesus

Jesus knew exactly what His relationship was with God. When He heard that the Jews had cast out from the temple the man whose sight He had earlier restored, He found him again and said to him

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God? John 9:35

The man answered Jesus by asking “Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? John 9:36. The Scriptures record

“And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.” John 9:37

Do we wish to argue with Jesus Himself? He very clearly said that He is the Son of God. This was no figurative claim. It was very real and it was literal. The blind man was told that the one that had healed him was the Son of God. Quite obviously this man who had been blind would only have understood this in a literal sense. In more ways than one, his eyes were now open.

There is another experience of Jesus where He claimed to be the divine Son of God. This was when He heard that His friend Lazarus was sick. Jesus said to His disciples regarding that sickness

“This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” John 11:4

Again Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of God. He was clearly not using this title to simply denote the intimacy of relationship that He had with His Father.

Throughout His life on earth, Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. This is why the Jews said He was a blasphemer. Perhaps the best known time is when He said to Nicodemus

“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. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:16-18

Challenged by Satan

Jesus had no problems with His own identity (who He was) but it did concern Satan. When he came to Jesus, tempting Him to doubt His true identity, he said, “If thou be the Son of God” (see Matthew 4:6). It was on the point of Sonship that the devil challenged Jesus. Prove who you are he said, prove that you really are the Son of God. This was at the very beginning of the ministry of Jesus. Satan knew that Jesus regarded Himself as the Son of God. Notice here that Satan said “If thou be the Son of God.

Satan was challenging Jesus to display His powers of divinity. This, according to him, would have proved that He was the Son of God. He was in fact attempting to make Jesus doubt His Father’s testimony. This testimony was that He was the Son of God (Matthew 3:17). Here can be seen the entire point of Satan’s challenge. He was urging Christ to prove His Sonship, meaning to prove His divinity. If we miss this point we miss everything about the temptation. The devil never meant these words to be metaphorical (representative of the loving relationship that Jesus had with the Father). This would not make any sense at all.

The testimony of demons

Satan’s fellow angels also knew the identity of Jesus. With their leader they too had heard of the testimony of God the Father (Matthew 3:17). They said to Jesus

“What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” Matthew 8:29

In His pre-existence, these demons had known Jesus as the divine Son of God. They were the fallen angels. Christ had once been their beloved commander, at least up until the time they had been deceived by Lucifer. Now they were encountering Him in His incarnate state.

“And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.” Mark 3:11

“What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.” Mark 5:7

“Thou art Christ the Son of God.” Luke 4:41

Even in the incarnation, these demons had no problems identifying Jesus. They realised His true identity. Just like all the others we have noted, they did not use this term “**Son of God**” in any figurative sense. Certainly they were not using this term simply as an expression of God’s love for the Son or the intimacy of relationship that the Father had with the Son. This would be a totally ridiculous conclusion to draw. This in turn begs a question. If the demons know and confess that Christ is truly the Son of God, then why do not many Christians know and confess it today?

John the Baptist

John the Baptist had said when in discussion with his own followers (here he was making reference to the baptism of Jesus)

“I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” John 1:32-33

The one whom God raised up (the voice crying in the wilderness) was to pave the way and herald the first advent of Christ. John claimed that Jesus is the Son of God. There is no reason not to believe that all those who heard John’s claims would only have understood this in a literal sense. John himself had heard the Father’s testimony (Matthew 3:17).

The disciples

Nathanael’s initial encounter with Christ is a very interesting one. When Jesus told him that He (Jesus) had seen him under the fig tree he answered

“Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” John 1:49

Nathaniel's experience was more advanced than was Philip’s. So what had Philip acknowledged concerning Jesus?

“Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” John 1:44-45

Philip had told Nathanael that he had found the promised Messiah of the Scriptures but Nathanael had gone further in his profession and had recognised Him as “**the Son of God**”. The messiahship of Jesus (the one whom Moses spoke of in the Scriptures) and His divine Sonship were two different things. Some say that ‘Son of God’ is only a metaphoric term for ‘messiah’. It was not. The Jews did not condemn Jesus for just claiming to be the Messiah but for saying that He was the Son of God.

Martha also said to Jesus (this was at the resurrection of her brother Lazarus)

“Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.” John 11:27

The word “Christ” (Gr. ‘christos’) means the anointed one. Like Nathanael, Martha was saying here that she believed that Jesus was not only the anointed one (the promised Messiah – the Christ) but also the “Son of God”. When the disciples saw Jesus calm the winds on the Sea of Galilee they said to Him

“Of a truth thou art the Son of God”. Matthew 14:33

As we noted above, so we will not comment again here, it was through the direct revelation of the Holy Spirit that God Himself had revealed to the disciples the true identity of Jesus.

The revilers at the cross

Those who reviled Jesus at the cross knew very well who He claimed to be.

“Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” Matthew 27:40

“He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.” Matthew 27:43

These revilers knew that Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God. This was their accusation against Him. This is why they said He was a blasphemer and deserved to die. They were obviously not saying these words because of the loving relationship that Jesus claimed to have had with God; neither did they say them in any metaphorical sense. This much again is only reasonably obvious.

A Pagan’s confession

When Jesus died, even a man the Jews regarded as a pagan recognized the true identity of Jesus.

“Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.” Matthew 27:54

Was this Roman soldier saying this in any metaphorical sense? I would hardly think so. He knew exactly why the Jews had wanted Jesus crucified. He knew exactly who it was that they believed Jesus claimed to be. This is why he said “Truly this was the Son of God”.

The purpose of John’s gospel

John wrote his gospel as the 1st century was drawing to a close. As I have said

previously, this I believe was to refute the heresies that were then being attempted to be brought into the Christian Church. John gave his overall purpose for writing his gospel by saying

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” John 20:31

The disputes that Jesus experienced with the Jews; the words that Jesus spoke to those He encountered (Jews and non-Jews); the miracles documented; the scenes of the death and resurrection of Jesus; were recorded by this beloved disciple to achieve the one end. It was to prove that Jesus was indeed the divine Son of God.

Please take very careful note of what I say next because it is very important.

There are some who say that the term ‘Son of God’ (like the word ‘begotten’) is only with respect to the incarnation, also the miracle birth but if this were true then John made a complete ‘pig’s ear’ of His gospel. I say this because John was led to detail all the signs that show that Jesus is the Son of God (this is the whole point of his gospel) but he makes no reference to the virgin birth or the events at Bethlehem associated with the incarnation. Under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John did not regard the events at Bethlehem as one of the signs that shows that Jesus is the divine Son of God. Again this is only reasonable biblical exegesis.

There are those that say that the words ‘only begotten’, as applied to Christ, are applicable only because of the events of the incarnation but as we can see, this claim would be the result of very poor scholarship. Nowhere either in the Scriptures is the term ‘monogenes’ (the only one of its kind caused to be) ever found applied to the incarnation. We therefore must not follow the reasoning that begotten has application to the events of Bethlehem and the virgin birth etc. There is no evidence to support or foster such a belief. Mark wrote his gospel by beginning

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” Mark 1:1

Like John the gospel writer, Mark never made any reference to the virgin birth or any of the events surrounding it. He was not led to believe this as crucial to understanding that Jesus is the divine Son of God.

The personal testimony of the Father

The words that Jesus heard His Father speak at His baptism were very precious to Him. This was when the Saviour heard it said in an audible voice from Heaven

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Mathew 3:17

What greater testimony could there be than this one? Will we believe it though? Will we take God at His word and believe that Christ really is His Son? We need to remember here that it was a disbelief in God's word that brought about the first sin in the Garden of Eden.

Not only at the baptism of Jesus was the voice of the Father heard but also at the transfiguration

“While he [Peter] yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” Matthew 17:5

Christ has always been the Son of God. This therefore was not a position to which He eventually achieved (either at the incarnation or at the resurrection or at some other time during His earthly ministry). It was one that He had held from the beginning with God His Father. This is why John began his gospel with the words

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” John 1:1

Literal or figurative?

So how do we know whether something in the Scriptures should be taken literally or figuratively?

I have always maintained that unless something is obviously figurative, like Jesus referring to Himself as the living bread or as a door or even a vine (see John 6:51, John 10:7, John 15:5), it should be taken literally. Obviously trees do not clap their hands (see Isaiah 55:12). In most cases it is not too difficult to differentiate between the literal and the figurative. This is unless we are talking in terms of prophecy and then at times it does become that much more difficult. We must ask ourselves therefore if the term ‘Son of God’, as we have seen it for ourselves as applied to Christ in the Scriptures, should be taken literally or figuratively. This means that we need to do some ‘sanctified reasoning’ together.

When God said in His own voice that Jesus was His Son, why should those who heard Him not have taken Him literally? We must also ask the same of Jesus Himself. He said very clearly that He was the Son of God. Did He not mean it literally? If not, why not?

The reason why I ask this is because it was His personal profession that had caused such a stir amongst the Jews. In fact it was this profession that led Him to be crucified. Jesus would not have caused unnecessary uproar. The Jews obviously believed He meant it literally. This is why they said He had blasphemed and made Himself equal with God. They even said that by calling Himself the Son of God He was making Himself God. This is why they wanted Him put to death. Are we to believe that they misunderstood what Jesus was

saying and that He did not correct them? As we have seen, they understood perfectly whom Jesus was claiming to be (see above). This is confirmation that Jesus had it correct, also that the Jews had it correct. The incarnate Christ may not have been God Himself but He was manifesting God in His flesh.

Some say that the phrase 'Son of God' is only representative of the love that the Son has for the Father and vice versa etc. This does not make any sense at all. Why should this have brought about such a violent reaction from the Jews? Why would that make them want to kill Him?

What about the demons and even the devil himself, also those that mocked Him at the cross? They all called Jesus the Son of God. In fact this is why His accusers said He deserved to die. They said that by these claims He was claiming to be equal with God. Obviously none of these were using this term to show the love that the Father and Son have for each other. They obviously believed Christ meant it literally. To believe that the demons and even the devil himself used the term Son of God to show the love between God and Christ is to reason to the point of absolute absurdity.

Some are saying that it was the Bible writers who had selected such terms as Father and Son. This is to reason incorrectly. They did not choose them at all.

The words 'Father' and 'Son' were the words that **others had used** when referring to Christ. Putting this in another way, the Bible writers were simply recording what others **had actually said**. They were not just choosing words for themselves. This was when the Father called Jesus His Son, the Son called God His Father and the demons called Jesus the Son of God etc. It was also when Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of God, as did the disciples and others.

The terms 'Father' and 'Son' therefore were not words selected by the Bible writers to describe the loving relationship between these two, but were **the actual words that others used** when referring to God and Christ. This included the words that God and Christ had actually spoken. This is obviously very important to realise.

When everything is taken into account, we must ask if the term Son of God is to be taken literally or figuratively. I believe the answer to be obvious. By the weight of evidence that we find in the Scriptures, also if we are to remain honest in our deliberations, we must take it literally. Jesus really is the Son of God and God really is His Father.

Further witness

Apart from the places we have already noted, there are many more verses of Scripture where Jesus is referred to as the Son of God. Whilst there are too many to include here, suffice to note that some are Acts 9:20, Romans 1:4, 2 Corinthians 1:19, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:13, Hebrews 4:14, 6:6, 7:3, 10:29 and Revelation 2:18. This is besides where John in his first letter says nine times

that Christ is the Son of God. Perhaps two of the latter we need to quote here. They are obviously very important. John wrote these when heresies were in abundance concerning Christ.

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 John 5:5

As we noted above (Peter’s confession), this is the essence of the Christian faith. It is the belief that Jesus is the divine Son of God. According to the Word of God, this is the faith that overcomes.

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.” 1 John 5:10

The testimony of the Scripture through and through is that Christ is truly the Son of God. This is the witness that all those who belong to God have in him or herself.

Before summarising this presentation, I would quote you one more experience from Scripture. This was Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch. The Scriptures tell us that this disciple was led by the Spirit to the Ethiopian’s chariot. He asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading (Isaiah chapter 53) but the reply he received was that he could not understand without someone to help him. The Ethiopian asked Philip as to whom it was that this passage of Scripture was referring and Philip began to preach to him concerning Christ.

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” Acts 8:36-38

This was the confession of early Christianity. It was that which the apostle Paul preached in the synagogues immediately following His miraculous conversion (Acts 9:20). It was and still is today, that Jesus is indeed “the Son of God”. Today we are faced with the temptation to believe that Christ is not really the Son of God. By specious reasoning, some of today’s theologians, even Seventh-day Adventist theologians, are saying that He is not a true Son. This is no different than the temptation that Jesus faced when He was here on earth.

In summary

In summary, it must never be said that Christ is the Son of God only in a metaphorical (figurative) sense. The evidence is totally overwhelming that His pre-existent Sonship should be taken literally. If we do not take it literally, then I truly believe that we shall be at variance with both the testimony of the Scriptures and the personal testimony of Jesus Himself.

One more question upon which to ponder. On the sixth day of the creation week, the Scriptures tell us

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” Genesis 1:26

The question to ponder is: Who was God talking to here? It was His Son. The Scriptures tell us

“For by him [God’s dear Son] 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

There is no doubt that God created this world through His Son – His only begotten Son. It was through Him also that He provided salvation for every person that has been born into this world.

“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.” John 3:16

This verse has its application to everyone of all races of mankind. It is a universal invitation.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17

God bless you as you consider this invitation.

In closing

In closing I would ask that if you know of others who may be interested in this study then please pass it on. As you consider this request, please remember that before Jesus returned to His Father in Heaven He did say to His followers

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” John 8:32

“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give” Matthew 10:8

Whilst not everyone has been given the gift of healing or the gift of casting out devils, we have all been given the ability to freely share with others what God has freely shared with us. If therefore you know of someone whom you believe

may benefit from this study then please consider passing it on.

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“When a man who is honestly mistaken hears the truth, he will either quit being mistaken or cease to be honest!” (*Source unknown*)