

THE SON OF GOD – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Christianity teaches that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. This doctrine is taught by all four gospels.

In Matthew 16, Jesus asks his apostles who they believe he is. Peter answers. He tells him that he is the Christ the Son of God. Jesus says he is right and that God has revealed it. When Jesus was baptised in the Jordan River by the Baptist God was supposed to have said that Jesus was his dearly beloved Son.

What does the title, the Son of God, mean? It's THE Son, not a Son so it denotes something unique and special.

According to mainstream Christian dogma, God is one being who exists as three equal and distinct persons. The Father is the First Person, the Son is the Second and the Holy Spirit is the Third. The Son comes from the Father and the Holy Spirit comes from the two of them although none of the three started to exist but always existed. So if the Son becomes a man it follows that this man is the Son of God even if he had a human father. Calling yourself the Son of God would mean that you are claiming to be God on this understanding. Jesus, however, even if he did accept the three in one doctrine might have meant something else by calling himself the Son of God. And if the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son it follows that he is the Son of the Father and the Son which proves the Trinity, as stated by the Christians, to be lunacy. (The early Church erred in giving the Second Person of the Trinity the name, God the Son, as if he were the only one.) But anyway, if the three are the one being then whatever one does all do. Do they have three wills that work in union?

The Church says they have one will for they are one being. It follows that if Jesus believed in the Trinity he would have had to claim to have been three persons incarnate at the same time for three wills mean three God's so there can be one will.

Christians explain that God is not three persons but three "persons" and even admit that three persons in the sense we take persons cannot be one God (page 50, Jehovah's Witnesses). They are not persons like us but persons is the best word we have to describe them though it is inaccurate. If so, then Jesus is not the Son in the proper sense. It too means something inscrutable and mysterious. But Jesus claimed to be the Son in the sense intended by the Old Testament which was not that sense but in the sense of a unique and special and holy creation of God. The Jews and their scriptures called God Father in the sense of being maker and kindly sustainer of all. Jesus did not think he was God the Son.

The Bible does not say the three are "persons" so Trinitarian theology is a man-made solution to a possible contradiction in the Bible.

Some cults and sects say that if Jesus said he was the Son of God that he meant that he had no human father, that God was his father in the sense that he miraculously caused the conception without sperm. Perhaps. But the Bible does not actually teach this understanding.

The Son of God might be the title for the person who is next to God, God's right hand man on earth. He is the child of God in the same sense as everybody else but is called the unique son because of his inimitable or flawless sanctity. The Jews called lots of holy men the son of God (page 40, The Metaphor of God Incarnate).

The Son of God could simply be a man who was adopted by God as a Son but this would imply that nobody else can be adopted.

Haley says that there is no contradiction between the Bible calling Jesus the only son of God and saying we are sons for it means that Jesus was the only begotten Son of God in the Christian Trinity sense and we are only adopted (page 109). But we are begotten even more than Jesus would be. Christians say that Jesus is caused by the Father even though both are God and equal. God caused God the same being but begetting causes another being. When God makes us he begets us so the doctrine that we are not begotten is an error even if Jesus, as man, was made too. Jesus denied he was God when he said he was the Son of God.

The Gospels lie when they say that Jesus called himself the Son of God. He was given the title and Jesus himself did not call himself son of God in any unique or exceptional way. He would have had no problem with others claiming to be a son of God.

Jesus believed that since God comes first, anybody who claims to have a unique prophetic relation to God or to be God needs to prove it by stupendous miracles and Jesus allegedly stated that the resurrection was that miracle. So when Jesus stated that the greatest man ever born was John the Baptist and that nobody was ever greater than John before the resurrection happened it follows that Jesus was including himself as well as an inferior to the Baptist. To exclude himself would have been arrogant and premature. The Baptist was an apocalyptic prophet who did no miracles and still he was

better. If anybody was the Son of God it was the Baptist and there were early sects that believed that about John. But if John was not the Son of God then Jesus even less so.

Bible critics declare that Jesus never claimed to be the Son of God. They seem to think that because Jesus did not broadcast it more that they are right. But the gospels do not say that he didn't at least at the later part of the ministry. Jesus swore those who believed he was Son of God to secrecy. The gospels leave lots of details out. Since they said that Jesus was God's Son they might have sensed no need to report him broadcasting it. But that is speculation. In any case, we have to go by the writings. The most likely position is that Jesus did not claim to be the Son of God.

Jesus' favourite title was the Son of Man. This title implies that he was nothing more than a man and used this title to emphasise that. But some claim, including Lee Strobel in *The Case for Christ* (page 30), that because Daniel 7:13 speaks of one coming before God like a son of man that Jesus was claiming to be divine! But all Daniel says is that a being came before God like a son of man or like a man or in the image of a man. And that being got the power to rule under God. Nothing indicates that the title denotes divinity or that the being was divine. Son of man is ben adam in Hebrew which not only means man but a man (SON OF MAN, *Biblical Dictionary and Concordance*, NAB). There is no evidence that Jesus was even thinking about the figure in Daniel when he used the title. He did use the imagery of Daniel at his trial but that may have been the first time he started using Daniel's application of it to mean a being who would get great power from God. By the way Strobel thinks Jesus doing miracles on his own authority proved he was God for the power came from God and only God could decide how to use the power. This is a lie because God could give Jesus power to do as he wished without Jesus being God.

The Bible never teaches the Catholic notion that Son of God as in a person that emanates from God and is God. And if God is able to project a replica of himself within himself that does not mean that Son is the right name for the end result. Parent 1 and Parent 2 would be better.

There is no evidence that Son of God in the Bible makes Jesus out to be God.