

JESUS, SON OF GOD

"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? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:13-17).

An important question that each of us must ask and answer is "Who do you say that the Son of man is?" In our world, there are many answers. Some say that Jesus did not even exist denying the abundant evidence thereof. Others say that He was some prophet but was not God in the flesh. And others, like Peter, say that He is the Son of God. So, who do you say that the Son of man is?

In answer to this question, Peter made the great confession that "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." As the Christ, Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Anointed One, of the Old Testament. In Old Testament times, prophets, priests, and kings were appointed by anointing their heads with oil. With Jesus, He was Divinely appointed before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:19-20) to be all three — prophet, priest, and king. Thus, Jesus is the Anointed One, the Christ, as Peter declared.

Further, Peter confessed that Jesus is "the Son of the living God." Jesus is not merely "the Son of man," but is "the Son of God." He is not the Son of just any god but of "the living God." The term "Son of man" refers to His humanity while the term "Son of God" refers to His deity or divine nature. As the Son of man, Jesus is our merciful and faithful High Priest who was "touched with the feelings of our infirmities" by being "tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). As the Son of God, Jesus is our great High Priest who has "passed into the heavens" to mediate for us (Hebrews 4:16).

Just as Peter confessed Jesus before men, Jesus confessed Peter before the Father, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona" (Matthew 16:17; see Matthew 10:32).

JESUS IS DECLARED TO BE THE SON OF GOD WITH POWER

On the day of Pentecost, when the church was established in the city of Jerusalem in AD

30, Peter declared that Jesus demonstrated that He was sent from God by the miracles, wonders, and signs which He did (Acts 2:22). Later Paul wrote that Jesus Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). These passages teach that Jesus is declared to be the Son of God by the miracles, signs, and wonders which He did. (See also John 3:2; 20:30-31). Let us notice a few.

Concerning the birth of Jesus, Isaiah prophesied, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). Matthew records, "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (1:16). In the original language, the word translated "whom" is singular in number and feminine in gender. Thus, the child was not of Mary and Joseph but of Mary alone. Mary was with child before she and Joseph came together and the conception was by the power of the Holy Spirit. So Matthew continues, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (1:18). Upon learning of Mary's pregnancy, Joseph "was minded to put her away privily" which shows that he knew that he was not the father. Furthermore, Mary, herself, was astounded at her pregnancy. She asked the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). Because Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's eight hundred year old prophecy by being born of a virgin, He is the Son of God.

In chapter 11, Matthew recorded that while John, the baptizer, was in prison, he sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" In response, Jesus said, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:4,5). These things which Jesus did were in fulfillment of Isaiah 29:18-19. Isaiah prophesied that "the Holy One of Israel" would come and in that day the deaf would hear, the blind would see, and the poor would rejoice. Also, notice Isaiah 35:4-6 in which a similar prophecy is declared but this time it concerned God who would "come with vengeance" and "with recompense" and "he will come and save you." "Then," said

Isaiah, the blind shall see and the deaf shall hear... These passages coupled together clearly declare Jesus to be the Son of God.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ also is a powerful proof to His deity. One evidence of the resurrection of Jesus is the body of the Son of God. If Christ was not raised, why was not the body of Jesus produced by those who persecuted Christians? Pilate would have stopped Christianity before it ever started if he could have sealed and guarded the tomb against the power of God (Matthew 27:62-65). And the Jewish council member to whom the tomb belonged (Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:43) would have been the first to let others know where the body of Jesus laid if it had been in the tomb. So what happened to the body of Jesus? There are only three possibilities: First, the Lord's enemies could have taken the body, but this would make no sense seeing that Pilate sealed the tomb and placed it under guard because he feared this very thing. Second, the disciples removed it, but what about the guards, and why would the disciples give their lives for such a falsehood. Third, the Lord was raised by the power of God. This is the only reasonable explanation. Thus, Jesus Christ is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

JESUS POSSESSES THE QUALITIES OF GOD

Since Paul wrote that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9), we would expect to identify divine characteristics in Jesus.

Jesus is eternal. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). Jesus was clearly making reference to Exodus 3:14 where God said to Moses, "I am that I am." As God is eternally existent, Jesus is eternally existent. Abraham had a beginning while Jesus had no beginning. In the true Lord's prayer, 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). Thus, because Jesus is eternal, He is the Son of God.

Jesus is perfect and without fault. Peter declared, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:21-22). It is this perfect and sinless Son of God who is our High Priest (Hebrews 7:26). Thus, because Jesus is perfect, without fault, and sinless, He is the Son of God.

Jesus is the creator of all things. Paul wrote, "For by him 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). Besides being the creator, Jesus is also the sustainer of all things (Colossians 1:17). Thus, because Jesus is the creator and the sustainer of all things, He is the Son of God.

Jesus knows the hearts of men. John testifies of this in John 2:24-25, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." Thus, because Jesus knows the heart of man, He is the Son of God.

Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. While Jesus was in Capernaum, a man sick of the palsy was brought to Him to be healed. Because of the crowd of people, they opened the roof where Jesus was and lowered him down. Jesus seeing their faith said to the one sick with the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mark 2:1-12). But certain of the scribes accused Jesus of blasphemy because "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Jesus perceiving that they so reasoned said, "Why reason ye these things in your heart? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." Thus, because Jesus forgave sins, He is the Son of God.

JESUS IS PLAINLY AND CLEARLY CALLED GOD

Jesus was called God in prophecy. Isaiah wrote, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (9:6). This prophecy was clearly about Jesus (compare Isaiah 9:1,2 with Matthew 4:12-16 and Isaiah 9:7 with Luke 1:32).

Before the birth of Jesus in His eternal existence, John by inspiration declared, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Later in the same chapter, John explicitly identifies "the Word" as Jesus (verse 14).

In Hebrews 1:8 it is recorded, "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."

The conclusion from these references is undeniable. Jesus is God in the flesh! Keep in mind, however, that though He is God, He is not the Father. A clear example of the three persons of the Godhead is found at the baptism of Jesus. Jesus is being baptized. The Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove. And the Father's voice was heard from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"(Matthew 3:17). If the three Persons of the Godhead were one and the same, it would make this marvelous account into an atrocious, contradicting myth.

Jesus asks, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Flesh and blood has not revealed the answer to this most important question, but the Father has clearly revealed it unto us through the Scriptures. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. We know the answer because of the miracles, wonders, and signs which Jesus did, the qualities of God which Jesus possesses, and the plain statements made in Scripture about Jesus being God. Such a conclusion brings with it certain responsibilities for He "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). However, it also brings with it certain blessings for "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). In 1 John 5:5 John asked a penetrating question, "Who is he that overcometh the world"? Listen to the answer, "he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." The only way to overcome the world is through Jesus, the Son of God, because He is the only way unto the Father (John 14:6).

Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God? Then, repent of your sins (Acts 17:30), make the great confession (Roman 10:9,10), be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27) wherein is salvation (2 Timothy 2:10), and God will add you to His church (Acts 2:47). Jesus, the Son of God said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Do you love Jesus? ▣

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**contact the
39th Street Church of Christ
15331 East 39th Street
Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA**

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by
Chuck Northrop

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