

Chapter Seven

Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans

The Gospel Concerns the Son of God

“¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, . . . ³ concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;” (Romans 1:1 and 3).

The “gospel of God” that Paul was “separated unto” concerns the Son of God, “Jesus Christ our Lord.” The gospel is Christo-centric. If the incarnation of the eternal Son of God is taken away from the gospel, it is no longer good news. The gospel is not about sociological reformation (the social gospel). The gospel is not about a good man with great philosophy. The gospel is a story of God’s love sent to earth written in the heart of the eternal Son of God incarnate in human flesh. The gospel is about God becoming man for the purpose of redemption. Paul puts it another way in the book of Hebrews.

“¹ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by {literally, *in*} his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; ³ 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).

The term *Son of God* has definitive doctrinal significance and meaning. The doctrinal significance and meaning of the term *Son of God* is essential to the gospel message. *George W. Zeller* and *Regenald E. Showers* give a threefold theological significance to the term *Son of God* in their book **The Eternal Sonship of Christ** (published by Loizeaux Brothers, Inc.)

I. A son is a separate person from his father.

“¹⁹ Then answered Jesus and said unto 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. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will” (John 5:19-21).

“³⁷ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. ³⁸ For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. ³⁹ And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:37-40).

II. A son is the heir, not the servant, of his father.

“¹ Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; ² Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house. ³ For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. ⁴ For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God. ⁵ And Moses verily *was faithful* in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; ⁶ But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (Hebrews 3:1-6).

“⁵ For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? ⁶ And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. ⁷ And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. ⁸ 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. ⁹ Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. ¹⁰ And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: ¹¹ They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; ¹² And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. ¹³ But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? ¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Hebrews 1:5-14)?

“¹ Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; ² But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. ³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: ⁴ But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. ⁶ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. ⁷ Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4:1-7).

III. A son has the same nature as his father.

“⁹ And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. ¹⁰ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed. ¹¹ He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. ¹² Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? ¹³ And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place. ¹⁴ Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. ¹⁵ The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. ¹⁶ And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. ¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. ¹⁸ 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 5:9-18).

“²⁴ Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. ²⁵ Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. ²⁶ But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: ²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, which *gave them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ I and *my* Father are one. ³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. ³² Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? ³³ The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. ³⁴ Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? ³⁵ If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; ³⁶ 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? ³⁷ If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. ³⁸ But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.” (John 10:24-38).

“²³ That all men should honour {revere, venerate, worship} the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. ²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. ²⁵ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. ²⁶ For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; ²⁷ And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. ²⁸ Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹ And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:23-29; the terms *Son of God* and *Son of man* denote two natures perfectly united in Jesus Christ. The term *Son of God* denotes the nature of deity. The term *Son of man* denotes the nature of humanity although sinless.).

Modalism

Modalism is probably the most common theological error concerning the nature of God. It is a denial of the Trinity which states that God is a single person who, throughout biblical history, has revealed Himself in three consecutive modes, or forms. Thus, God is a single person who first manifested himself in the mode of the Father in Old Testament times. At the incarnation, the mode was the Son. After Jesus’ ascension, the mode is the Holy Spirit. These modes are consecutive and never simultaneous. In other words, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit never all exist at the same time, only one after another. Modalism denies the distinctiveness of the three persons in the Trinity even though it retains the divinity of Christ.

Present day groups that hold to this error are the United Pentecostal and United Apostolic Churches. They deny the Trinity, teach that the name of God is Jesus, and require baptism for salvation. These modalist churches often accuse Trinitarians of teaching three gods. This is not what the Trinity is. The correct teaching of the Trinity is one God in three eternal coexistent personages: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Tritheism

Tritheism is the teaching that the Godhead is really three separate beings forming three separate gods. This erring view is often misplaced by the cults for the doctrine of the Trinity, which states that there is but one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the trinity is, by definition, monotheistic. That is, it is a doctrine that affirms that there is only one God in all the universe.

Tritheism has taken different forms throughout the centuries. In the early church the Christians were accused of being tritheists by those who either refused to understand or could not understand the doctrine of the Trinity. In the late 11th century a Catholic monk of Compiègne in France, Roscelin considered the three Divine Persons as three independent beings and that it could be said they were three gods. He maintained that God the Father and God the Holy Ghost would have become incarnate with God the Son unless there were three gods.

Present day Mormonism is tritheistic -- but with a twist. Mormonism teaches that there are many God’s in the universe, but they serve and worship only one of them. The godhead for earth is to them really three separate gods: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father used to be a man on another world who brought one of his wives with him to this world - they both have bodies of flesh and bones. The son is a second god who was literally begotten between god the father and his goddess wife. The *holy ghost* is a third god. Therefore, in reality, Mormonism is polytheistic with a tritheistic emphasis. Of course, tritheism clearly contradicts the teaching of the Bible regarding monotheism.

“You are My witnesses,” declares the Lord, “And My servant whom I have chosen, In order that you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me,” (Isaiah 43:10).

“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me,” (Isaiah 44:6).

“Do not tremble and do not be afraid; Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, Or is there any other Rock? I know of none,” (Isaiah 44:8).

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The Gospel Concerns the Son of God

1. Discuss the meaning of the statement, "The gospel is Christo-centric. If the incarnation of the eternal Son of God is taken away from the gospel it is no longer good news." _____

2. Give the threefold theological significance to the term *Son of God* from this lesson.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

3. Read John 5:19-21. Discuss the significance of these verses regarding question 2, point A. _____

4. Read John 6:37-40. Discuss the significance of these verses regarding question 2, point A. _____

5. Read Hebrews 3:1-6. Discuss the significance of these verses regarding question 2, point B. _____

6. Read Hebrews 1:5-14. Discuss the significance of these verses regarding question 2, point B. _____

7. Read Galatians 4:1-7. Discuss the significance of these verses regarding question 2, point B. _____

8. Read John 5:9-18. Discuss the significance of these verses regarding question 2, point C. _____

9. Read John 10:24-36. Discuss the significance of these verses regarding question 2, point C. _____

10. Read John 5:23-29. Discuss the significance of these verses regarding question 2, point C. _____

11. Discuss the meaning of the terms *Son of God* and *Son of man* regarding Jesus Christ. _____
