



Twice the Son of God

Please read the following words as a prayer:

Father in Heaven, we are studying the book of Hebrews. In many places images and symbols explain who Jesus is, and that the God of the Old Testament is the Heavenly Father of Jesus, the Son of God. The language and images are often confusing and difficult. Please help each person who reads this to better understand their meaning. Please give them conviction of the power of your revelation to draw them into a closer fellowship with Jesus. Bring them the peace of Jesus Christ so that they can hold onto their faith in Him and remain faithful to Him. Amen.

(I am offering a prayer at the beginning and end of this sermon because this is the only way I can offer a prayer before preaching this sermon. This is because I cannot meet with you. I would suggest that if you read nothing else, please read the prayer at the beginning and end.)

God controls everything. That's why Paul wrote that "all things work together for good" (Romans 8:28). "All things" in our lives, even the things that other people intend for evil, God uses to glorify His name, and bless His chosen children.

God has a bigger understanding of what is good than we do. God will glorify Himself in absolutely every little detail of every event that takes place in all of creation. He never misses a single detail.

This includes events that led up to Jesus coming to earth. It included a detail that I've always missed in Hebrews 1:5, that Jesus is the "Son of God" according to two different definitions. First, He is the "Son of God," because He existed as the "Son of God" for an eternity before creation (John 17:24 – In His prayer, Jesus spoke of how the "Father ... loved me before the foundation of the world" ESV). Second, David's heirs were called "sons of God" and Jesus inherited that title only when He was born as a baby and heir to David's throne. The same three words, "son of God" mean two different things, and both meanings reveal who Jesus is. This week's lesson focuses on the second meaning for "son of God" as it was given to the descendants of David. Let's see how the writer of Hebrews explains this.

Let's take a look at Hebrews 1:4-5 to understand what is happening when Jesus is called the son of God:

Hebrews 1:4-5 "having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"?"

At first glance it would seem that God only called Jesus His "Son." But in the Bible we see that the angels are also called the "sons of God". Take a look:

- Now there was a day when the **sons of God** came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. Job 1:6 ESV
- Again there was a day when the **sons of God** came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. Job 2:1 ESV

- “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Job 28:4 & 7, ESV

I underlined “sons of God” so that those words would stand out. In each verse above, “sons of God” refers to angels, or heavenly beings. Satan is among them in the first two verses because he was an angel. Most likely the events in these two verses took place before he was cast out of heaven for rebelling against God (Revelation 7:7-12). Sometimes the Bible calls angels the “sons of God.” Why are angels called “sons of God”? They do God’s work. And when they do God’s work, their work reflects God. In a sense His “fingerprints” are in that work. The angels are doing the work. But the plan of God is being carried out. In that sense the angels are “sons of God.” What they do is a product of God’s plan and character. It’s a limited sense of being “sons of God” compared to the meaning of Jesus being the “son of God”.

If you’re like me you’ve probably always looked at these verses and thought that no one but Jesus was ever called a “Son of God.” Here we see that the writer of Hebrews is saying something different than what we might have thought. He’s paying attention to details we didn’t notice. In Hebrews 1:5 the writer of Hebrews indicates that the prophecy that Jesus is the “son of God” refers to Jesus alone, and not to the angels. When Jesus is called the “son of God” in this context, it means something different from what is meant when the angels are called “sons of God.” Let’s see what is meant by “Son of God” in the prophecies mentioned in Hebrews 1:5.

My Son: Begotten

Hebrews 1:5 quotes Psalm 2:7 and calls Jesus a “Son” was “begotten.”

Psalm 2:7 “I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”

When we look at Psalm 2:7 we remember that Jesus was descended from the line of David. When He was born as a human baby, into the line of David, He was “begotten.” Before being born on earth as a human being Jesus was the unique “Son of God” (John 17:24) in heaven. But He was not a “son of David” until He was born as a human being. The prophecy was that the Messiah would be born into the line of David.

Jesus was “begotten” as a “Son” of David. No angel was ever born as a human being into the line of David. As we will see in 2 Samuel 7:14, an heir to David’s throne was also called a “son of God.” The words “son of God” describe who Jesus was before He was born as a human being, and also after He was born as a human being. However, He was first a Son of God because of His relationship to God the Father when He was in Heaven. When He was born as a human being, He took on a new identity as “a son of God” in the sense that all heirs to David’s throne were called a “son of God.” The words are identical, but they refer to two different types of relationship to God. Jesus was twice over a “Son of God.”

That’s quite a bit of information. As we look at the next prophecy in Hebrews, we will be able to fill in some gaps. We will see that the heirs to David’s throne were given a special title of “sons of God” that applied to them in a way that the title “sons of God” did not apply to the angels.

We most likely would overlook this detail, but God didn’t overlook this detail. The writer of Hebrews calls our attention to this detail, and, even then, it is easy to overlook. I think God wants us to notice this so that we will better know the Father and the Son.

The Father Disciplines His Disobedient Son

Hebrews also quotes 2 Samuel 7:14, but it only quotes from the first half of the verse. This is the part of the prophecy that applies to Jesus. However, the prophecy has two fulfillments. To understand the unique meaning of the “Son” used here, we need to get the full context for what is happening when God gives this prophecy to King David. To do that, I’m including verse 15 and all of verse 14:

2 Samuel 7:14-15 “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,” ¹⁵ but my

steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.
ESV

This prophecy has two fulfillments, as do many Old Testament prophecies. The first fulfillment of this prophecy concerns King Solomon, the son of David, and other kings who would follow after him. Remember David replaced King Saul. None of King Saul's sons became king. This prophecy assures King David that not only will his son, Solomon, become king, but that many more generations of his descendants will become king. But the promise is even better than that. God will not withdraw this promise. The first part of this fulfillment does not apply to Jesus but only to King Solomon and other kings descended from David: "When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men". That is the first part of the prophecy that was fulfilled by Solomon and Solomon's descendants who sat on the throne of the southern kingdom. Jesus never sinned (2 Corinthians 5:21, and 2 Peter 2:22), so, the fulfillment of the second part of the verse cannot be directly applied to Him. But it does apply to the line of David.

Last week, when we looked at Hebrews 1:1-4, I referred to the context of this promise. David had conquered Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:6-10) and built himself a palace. He brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. For the first time in the history of Israel, the palace of the king and the Ark of the Covenant were both located in the same city.

David wanted to build a temple for God in Jerusalem. When David told the prophet Nathan, at first, Nathan thought it was a good idea. But later that same night, when Nathan was asleep, God revealed that He did not want David to build the Temple. First of all, the order to build the Temple should have come from God alone, not from the king. God should take the initiative (see 2 Samuel chapter 7).

God's words seem to imply, that part of David's motivation was that by building a temple for God He would get the credit for making God's name great. But the truth was, David could do nothing to make God any greater than He already was. God wanted David to understand that if anyone was going to make someone else great, God Himself was going to make David great.

Sometimes, as believers, we need to be reminded that what is most important is what God does for us, not what we do for God. It is what God does for us that changes things. God can manage without our help. But we can't live for eternity without His salvation. The same is true for everyday things. We wouldn't be alive right at this moment unless God gave us the gift of life. We need to submit to God. He does not need to submit to us.

God's promise was that He would raise up an heir, or a line of heirs, so that for all eternity an heir of David would sit on David's throne. The first king after David was King Solomon. King Solomon did build the Temple for God. But Solomon sinned. Solomon's son was king over the southern part of Israel, but not the northern part. The promise to David still stood. But its greater fulfillment would come through Jesus.

Jesus: Son of David and Son of God

All of the kings descended from David were also known as "sons of God" according to 2 Samuel 7:14. In the time that the Bible was written sons normally did the same kind of work their fathers did. A carpenter's son, was a carpenter. A shepherd's son was a shepherd. And so on. The kings who sat on David's throne were supposed to encourage their people to be faithful to God. When they were faithful in doing their royal work, they became "sons of God." As king of Israel, God's power was like that of a "Father" who made them great.

When Jesus was born into the line of David, He became a "son of David." In the sense that David and His descendants were "sons of God" Jesus became a "Son of God" in a different sense after His birth as a human being.

Please don't miss this. Jesus was already the Son of God before He came to earth. When He was born into the line of David, He was "begotten," in a new way, as a "Son" to God. The kings descended from David were described by God as "sons of God." This title for David's descendants built up an expectation that was fulfilled when Jesus came.

We will take a look at one more prophesy about the line of David that Jesus fulfilled. This prophesy will help us to better understand how 2 Samuel 7:14 can apply to both Jesus and Solomon.

After the time of David, the Old Testament prophets often pointed to David's royal line. God would bless Israel, and the entire world, through a descendant of David. Isaiah gives a promise about the coming deliverer, who will be a descendant of David:

Isaiah 9:6-7 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."

If you've ever heard Handel's *Messiah* around Christmastime, you know some of these words quite well. Most Christians can easily recognize them as a prophecy about Jesus as the Messiah. Even before Jesus came it was recognized as a promise from God about a king "on the throne of David". His reign would grow and grow. There would be no end to the growth of His kingdom. In terms of time, His kingdom would go on and on without an end. He would rule with justice and righteousness.

We are so familiar with this prophecy that we may overlook some of what it actually says. This prophecy is not just about Jesus. It is about a king "on the throne of David."

What started out as a promise given to David concerning his heirs in 2 Samuel 7:14, grew into series of promises from God to bring a deliverer who would cure all the evils of the world. This future king would be known as a "son of David" who was also known as the "Son of God."

Think about this. Jesus was already the unique "Son of God" in heaven. He would become a different kind of "Son of God" when He was physically born into the line of David. No angel could be born into the line of David. Only Jesus could fulfill this prophecy. That's what the writer of Hebrews is pointing out. Only Jesus could do this.

The Jewish people could never have predicted what God was going to do. The way that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies surprised everyone. Some have suggested that Jesus' way of fulfilling these prophecies was so unexpected that even Satan was caught off guard. As a result, Satan unwittingly caused Jesus to be crucified, only to learn later that it was by His crucifixion that He paid the price of all believer's sins. What Satan did to attempt to defeat Jesus only gave Jesus His final victory. Jesus provided a way to save humanity from their sin by believing in Him.

Let us pray:

Father, we marvel at the intricate details you have left for us to study and understand. They are like crumbs of bread left for us to eat and follow the trail that leads us into fellowship with You. Many times we've read the Bible and overlooked precious gems you've left for our benefit. We have also failed to notice many of the rich blessings you have given in our everyday lives. You pay attention to details. Teach us how to do a better job of giving you thanks for all you have done. Help us to better pay attention to the blessings you have given us.

So often we turn away from You because we are too busy trying to keep up with the details of our lives. We see from this study that You pay close attention to details, including our every need. We can trust you with the details of our lives, especially the details we overlook. When we fully trust You to provide for our everyday needs we can be set free from our worries and cares so that we can seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness."

We need You. You alone can be there for us in a way that will never bring destruction to our souls. You can heal our wounds. You can give us eternal life. You can raise us up to be with You for all eternity. Forgive us when we forget to turn to you in awe and praise. Show us how to pray to You without ceasing so that we might know Your peace at all times. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Hebrews 1:1–5

H I G H M I M P R I N T
A W R M A J E S T Y O T
V A E T N C S S E M I T
I Y H C Y R R L A S T G
N S T D N E E R U T A N
G N A Y E A V W H E C O
N I F R E T I A O H I L
I S P O K E N D E P F S
K G D L O D U I A O I L
A N U G P S R Y O R R E
M I M E S D L O H P U G
T H G I R K D A Y S P N
Y T C A X E W O R D A A

Long ago, at **many times** and in **many ways**, God **spoke** to our **fathers** by the **prophets**, but in these **last days** he has **spoken** to us by his Son, whom he **appointed** the **heir** of all **things**, through whom **also** he **created** the world. He is the **radiance** of the **glory** of God and the **exact imprint** of his **nature**, and he **upholds** the **universe** by the **word** of his **power**. After **making purification** for **sins**, he sat down at the **right hand** of the **Majesty** on **high**, **having** become as much superior to **angels** as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the **angels** did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I **have** begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a **father**, and he shall be to me a son”?

([ESV](#))

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