

Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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Broadcast Date: 10 March 2013

No. T0771

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Who is this Jesus?: The Son

Today's talk is the first in a series of four, focusing on the truth contained in the names of the Lord Jesus when He is spoken of as the Son of God, the Son of Man and then the Son of David. However, the Lord is also addressed simply as "The Son" and it is this name that I want us to think about this morning.

By way of introduction I want to read to you two passages of Scripture. First the opening verses of the Letter to the Hebrews. "God having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to us in [the person of the] Son, Whom He has established heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who being [the] effulgence of His glory and [the] expression of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, having made [by Himself] the purification of sins, set Himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high" (Hebrews 1:1-3, JN Darby Translation).

Then in Colossians, "Giving thanks to the Father Who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:12-20, New King James Version).

Immediately we have to acknowledge the unparalleled majesty of this Person. God previously had appealed to His people through the actions and words of various prophets; now, however, He is speaking, not only through His Son, as His mouthpiece, but in His Son, as His message (Hebrews 1:2). His Son will make God known, because He also is God! The Son, Jesus Christ, is the heir of all things, the Creator of all things, and the sustainer of all things (Colossians 1:17). He is the bright shining of God's glory, and the perfect expression of His Person (Hebrews 1:3). And, as we well know and marvel at, He is also the One Who paid the price necessary to satisfy God's holy throne and secure our pardon. Having done these incredible things, He sits Himself down at God's right hand (Hebrews 1:3) because He has every right to do so. He is the Son!

It is wonderful to realise that God, Who, in the Old Testament said that "He would dwell in the thick darkness," (2 Chronicles 6:1) has now revealed Himself "in His Son" or as some have translated it "in Son" (Hebrews 1:2). And this is not a partial revealing! In Paul's letter to his friend Timothy, we read, "God was manifest in flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). To make manifest is to reveal completely, to make apparent.

The Lord Jesus said to Phillip, one of His disciples, "He who has seen Me, has seen the Father" (John 14:9). In entering this world as a tiny baby, Jesus, God the Son, has revealed to us the true nature and person of God, His Father. Colossians 1:15 says that He "is the image of the invisible God." In Hebrews it is written that He is "the very image of [God's] substance" (Hebrews 1:3). We could also have read earlier on in Colossians that, "in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

We cannot possibly hope to understand fully what these words mean but it is true that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us (see Matthew 1:23), He is God the Son. And as we take time to read about Jesus in the Gospels and quietly meditate on His words, His work and His Person we begin to see God as Father perfectly revealed and expressed in a perfect Man here in this world. This One we have read about is "the Son".

At least three times in John's Gospel we read, "The Father loves the Son" or its equivalent, John 3:35, 5:20 and 17:24. He loved Him all through eternity, we read this truth in John 17, "You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). And God the Father continued to love Him in His life down here on earth. If it was possible, He had added reason to love His Son because He would "lay down His life" (John 10:17). This makes the sacrifice of Jesus Christ all the more wonderful to me. It was the Son, the One Whom the Father loved so completely, Who came here, sent by His Father to be the Saviour of the world.

Do not ever doubt, dear Christian, your value to God. He gave His Son to save you! Paul underlines this truth when he writes, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He Who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32).

But not only do we learn something of the depth of the love of God in the gift of His Son, we are also instructed that it was only this Person, and no other who could complete such a monumental task. We read at the beginning of this talk Hebrews 1:1-3 and were told of the majesty and creative power of the Son. At the end of that section we also read, "when He had by Himself purged our sins..." (Hebrews 1:3). We could also read the Lord's own words when speaking to His Father, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4).

No other could possibly undertake to satisfy God in relation to the sin of the world, and so we read, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

And to further emphasise this we have already read, "Giving thanks to the Father Who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins," (Colossians 1:12-14). These verses in Hebrews 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:12-20 speak of the power and greatness of the Person of the Son, the Lord Jesus. He it is Who created all things and it was for Him that they were created (Colossians 1:16). He sustains all things and will inherit all things. This is the One Who has secured our salvation. No wonder it is called in the letter to the Hebrews, "so great salvation"! (Hebrews 2:3)

But these verses that we have read also honour the Lord Jesus, as the Creator. Evolution is taught as a scientific fact in our schools and universities. I am certainly not equipped to dispute this or to debate it. What I can do, however, is read the Bible, the Word of God. Whatever science presents as fact that contradicts the Word of God I have to set aside. We have read, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him" (Colossians 1:16) These verses are stating that Jesus, the Son, is the One Who created everything, not just the things that we can see but also those unseen powers or forces that so completely control the physical universe. Powers like magnetism, gravity and electricity among many others.

Our scientists, engineers and chemists can plan, design and invent because of the consistent properties of the material universe. Space exploration is only possible because of the precise time-keeping of all the various planets, and man's ability to harness the predictable forces of gravity.

We marvel at many of the achievements of mankind, but we must never forget that it was God, God the Son Who first set these things in motion and created these forces and powers and embedded these properties within the physical universe. He alone is worthy to be praised!

The word "awesome" is used rather too freely today: a well cooked meal can never rightly be described as "awesome"; a football match or a new film at the cinema might be good or even great but never awesome! God however is "awesome" and so is His creation!

The Bible also makes it very clear that our response to Jesus, "the Son", will determine our eternal destiny and relationship to God. "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:35-36).

This quotation starts by affirming God the Father's love for his Son, "The Father loves the Son". Not only does He love His Son, but He has also "given all things into His hand". In view of these two facts, it is obvious why our response to, and attitude to, Jesus Christ the Son of God is so important. God the Father has made very clear His feelings for His Son, He loves Him and has such confidence in Him that He has "given all things into His hand". Do we agree with God?

The second part of this quote makes clear how important this is. "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36). Many of the people who met the Lord Jesus thought Him remarkable; some thought Him a great teacher, some called Him a great prophet. Of course, Jesus was both, but He was more than this. We need to be like Peter and say, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). We need to believe in the Son and then we will possess everlasting or eternal life and not be subject to the wrath of God.

Eternal life is not just never-ending life. It is that, but it is so much more than that. Jesus defined it in His prayer to His Father. "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). It is to know God as Father as revealed by Jesus Christ the Son and to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son sent by the Father to fully represent and reveal Him here. The Apostle John expresses this so much better than I possibly can when he writes, "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

If we read earlier that the Father had committed all things into the hands of the Son, then it necessarily follows that specifically ultimate judgement lies with Him. "For neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honours not the Son honours not the Father that sent Him" (John 5:22-23).

The incarnation of the Son into this world marked a watershed in God's dealings with His creature man. God had spoken in various ways in times past; man had ignored Him and even gone so far as to create and carve their own gods. God had patiently overlooked this ignorant behaviour, but now His Son has come. It is God's final appeal to mankind.

Paul, when addressing the Athenians on Mars Hill, said, "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:29-31). In John's Gospel we read that the Father has "given all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22) and here in Acts we read that it is a Man who will judge the world (Acts 17:31).

These verses are not in conflict with each other, nor do they tell us that there will be two judges. No, God the Son has become a Man, and as Man He will judge not just the world, but the entire universe. There are those who would deny that Jesus is the Son of God, or God the Son; they claim instead that He is a great, if not the greatest, prophet.

John 5:22-23 and Acts 17:29-31, among others, blow that idea completely out of the water! The baby at Bethlehem (see Luke 2:4-20), the young boy going up to Jerusalem with His earthly parents (see Luke 2:41-52) and the Carpenter of Nazareth (see Mark 6:3) is no less than God the Son! Our relationship with Him determines our blessing today and our destiny through eternity. If we believe on Him we have life, eternal life; if we do not believe on Him we will never see life and God's wrath abides on us for ever.

There are some wonderful verses in the Epistle to the Hebrews which we must just think about, Hebrews 7:24-28. The Israelites were familiar with the concept of priesthood. A priest was a man like themselves who was able to represent them before God, represent God to them and also support and sympathise with them in their need. I am sure that there were good priests and poor priests but sooner or later they all failed and all died. Jesus, the Son, is altogether different! "But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; Who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son Who has been perfected forever" (Hebrews 7:24-28).

It is a tremendous encouragement to know that at this very moment, a Man, Jesus Christ, God the Son, stands in the presence of His Father as my Great High Priest. He won't fail, forget about me or die. His intercession for me is constant and perfect, He can genuinely sympathise with me because He also lived here once, and walked the path of faith victoriously. "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them!" Among all the other qualities listed in these verses, this truth shines out: Jesus is the Son, God the Son!

Do you believe what John wrote? "The Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14). Let us strive to understand, with the help of God the Holy Spirit, the wonderful implications of this fact!

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