

JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD

1. In the Bible, the phrase “son of” denotes membership in a class.¹

- a. A “son of Israel” is an Israelite. A “son of David” is an descendant of David. A “son of God” is a godlike person.
- b. “Sons of God” are often angels.
 - (1) **Dt 32:8** 8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.
 - (2) **Job 1:6** 6 There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh, and Satan also came among them.
 - (3) **Job 2:1** 1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh, and Satan also came among them to present himself before Yahweh.
 - (4) **Job 38:7** 7 ... When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?
 - (5) **Ps 29:1** 1 Ascribe to Yahweh, sons of God, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength.
 - (6) **Ps 89:6** 6 Who in the skies can be compared to Yahweh? Who among the sons of God is like Yahweh?
 - (7) **Da 3:25** 25 I [Nebuchadnezzar] see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt. And the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.
 - (a) Is this Jesus?
 - (b) **Da 3:28** 28 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him.

2. To be “a son of God” means one enjoys a covenant relationship with God. It is used:

- a. Of Israel.
 - (1) **Ex 4:22** 22 Thus says Yahweh, Israel is my firstborn son.
 - (2) **Dt 14:1-2** 1 You [Israel] are the sons of Yahweh your God. You shall not cut yourselves or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead. 2 For you are a people holy to Yahweh your God, and Yahweh has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.
 - (3) **Is 1:2** 2 Children have I [Yahweh] reared and brought up, but they [Israel] have rebelled against me.
 - (4) **Hos 1:10** 10 The number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea that cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, You are not my people, it shall be said to them, Children of the living God.
 - (5) **Hos 11:1** 1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.
 - (6) **Ro 9:4** 4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

¹ D. W. B. Robinson and A. R. Millard, “Sons of God,” ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1122.

- b. Of David and his descendants.
 - (1) **2 Sa 7:14** 14 I will be to him [David’s seed] 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.
 - (2) **Ps 2:7** 7 I will tell of the decree: The Sovereign said to me, You are my Son. Today I have begotten you.
 - (3) **Ps 89:26-28** 26 [David] shall cry to me, You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. 27 And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. 28 My loyal love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him.
- c. Of all believers.
 - (1) See *Believers as Sons of God*.

3. Jesus, though, isn’t just “a son of God.” He is “the Son of God.”

- a. **Mt 2:15** 15 This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, Out of Egypt I called my son.
- b. **Jn 3:16** 16 God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- c. **Jn 3:18** 18 Whoever believes in [the Son] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.
- d. **Jn 10:34-36** 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your Law, I said, you are gods? 35 If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken— 36 do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?
- e. John calls believers τέκνον and reserves the term υἱός for Jesus.

4. That Jesus was “the Son of God” first meant that he was “the Messiah.”

- a. “The Son of God” is probably not a title Jesus used to claim divinity.
- b. It is nevertheless a significant title, the most significant Messianic title in the NT.
 - (1) **Jn 1:49** 49 Nathanael answered [Jesus], Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel [Messiah]!
 - (2) **Jn 11:27** 27 [Mary] said to [Jesus], Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.
- c. Paul consistently asserts that Jesus is “the Son of God,” that is, the Messiah.

5. However, later “the Son of God” came to mean Jesus was “God the Son” in a Trinitarian sense.

- a. Jesus claimed to have life in himself, as the Son of God.
 - (1) **Jn 5:26** 26 As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.
- b. The Jewish leaders said Jesus was blaspheming because he was saying, “I am the Son of God.”
 - (1) **Jn 10:36** 36 Do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?
- c. The Jewish leaders understood Jesus to have claimed equality with God.

- (1) **Jn 19:7** 7 The Jews answered [Pilate], We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.
- d. To some, that Jesus was “the Son of God” meant that he was the Messiah. To others, it meant Jesus was claiming equality with God as God the Son. To Jesus, it meant both. To us it is to mean both.
- 6. 2 Samuel 7, Psalm 2, and Psalm 89 hint the Son of David will also be God the Son.**
- a. The “son” in 2 Sa 7:14 refers both to Solomon and to Jesus.
- (1) **2 Sa 7:14** 14 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....
- b. Ps 2 hints God will set his own begotten Son as King on Zion.
- (1) **Ps 2:5-8** 5 [The Sovereign] will speak to [the nations] in his wrath and terrify them in his fury saying, 6 As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill. 7 I will tell of the decree: Yahweh said to me, You are my Son. Today I have begotten you. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance and the ends of the earth your possession.
- c. Ps 89 hints “the Son of David” will also be “the Son of God.”
- (1) **Ps 89:26-27** 26 [David] shall cry to me, You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. 27 And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.
- (2) **Col 1:18** 18 [The Son] is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
- d. The author of Hebrews quotes Ps 2 and 2 Sa 7 to prove Jesus’ preeminence over angels.
- (1) **Heb 1:5** 5 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?
- 7. Jesus is the Son of David, the Son of God, the Son of Man, and God the Son.**
- a. Jesus is qualified to wear many hats at once.
- b. Jesus is the unique person of the universe. All depends on him.
- c. Without Jesus’ first and second comings, we would be lost forever.
- 8. It is necessary for salvation to believe that Jesus is “the Son of God.”**
- a. **Jn 20:31** 31 These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Bibliography

Hengel, M. *The Son of God*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.

Notes