

“SON OF GOD”

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:12-13 NKJV)

Last Sunday I began the sermon by exploring how words can sound alike but be different words, how the same word can acquire new meanings and new ways of using it. I also mentioned how poets can make us aware that the sound of a word adds another dimension to its meanings.

Today, I want you to explore with me how the same words with the same meanings can be understood differently. This is one of the causes of hard feelings. One person says something which means one thing to them. Another person hears the same words, but understands them in a whole other way than the first person meant them. The words might be a business deal. The second person agrees to the deal, but later feels that he was cheated. The first person fulfills the deal as he understood it, but that fulfillment is not what the second person expected.

Words of correction are often understood in two different ways. The person giving correction intends to give instruction about how something should be done by whoever is doing it. The person being corrected may take it personally as a way of belittling him/her.

Today, I want us to see how the phrase “Son of God” was used and understood in three different ways by various people.

“The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar:
Who follows in His train?
Who best can drink His cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain,

1.) Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." (Daniel 3:24-25 NKJV)

What did King Nebuchadnezzar mean by the expression "Son of God?" He was not a believer in the God of the Bible although he had some experiences with God which Daniel had interpreted for him. He was not consciously God's enemy, neither was he a believer.

In the Gospels there are the records of centurions who were not believers, but were not consciously enemies of God who used the expression "Son of God" to describe Jesus. What did they mean by it?

So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39 NKJV) So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:54 NKJV)

In the angel's announcement to Mary, the Holy Child to be born of her was the "Son of God." Mark begins his Gospel, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." On one occasions when Jesus saved them from being drowned by calming a storm, the disciples in the boat worshiped Him saying, "Of a truth, thou art the Son of God."

With those exceptions, in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke: the expression "Son of God" was used by enemies of Jesus. It was used by Satan during the temptations of Jesus in the Wilderness. It was used on at least a half dozen occasions by demons when Jesus cast them out. In His trial before the High Priest and elders of Israel, the High Priest asked if He were the Son of God. Around the cross the mockers said, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God."

2.) "I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." (John 1:33-34 NKJV)

The Gospel of John is quite different in its use of the phrase "Son of God" than its use in the other three Gospels. The explanation is that John begins his Gospel by declaring that the Word was with God, the Word is God, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. John uses every opportunity to show that Jesus is the Word, the Son of God. At the end of his Gospel John affirms this was the purpose of his Gospel. And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31 NKJV)

In addition to the testimony of John the Baptist at Jesus' baptism and of Jesus' disciples when He calmed the storm which threatened to swamp their boat, there are also the records of Nathaniel and of Martha stating their belief that Jesus is the Son of God.

Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." (John 1:48-51 NKJV)

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." (John 11:25-27 NKJV)

A half dozen times in John's Gospel Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of God in addition to referring to Himself as the Son of Man.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." (John 9:35-37 NKJV)

3.) Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. (Acts 9:18-20 NKJV)

After Jesus ascended into heaven, His resurrection, the good news of forgiveness and everlasting life by believing in Him, and that He was the Son of God were the core, the ingredients of preaching.

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us--by me, Silvanus, and Timothy--was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. (2 Corinthians 1:19 NKJV)

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

(1 John 4:15 NKJV)

Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

(1 John 5:5 NKJV)

After someone becomes a Christian, the fact that Jesus Christ their Savior is the very Son of God becomes the center of their faith and life.

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. (Romans 1:1-4 NKJV)

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20 NKJV)

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (Ephesians 4:11-13 NKJV)

In the trials and troubles of life, in our struggle against sin and Satan, we are not alone. We are living with Christ, the Son of God.

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:14-15 NKJV)

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)