

The Son of God

God Manifest in the Flesh

When the Lord Jesus Christ, while here in the flesh, spoke of Himself as the Son of God, His words were construed by those who heard Him as a claim to absolute Godhood. He was not content to be regarded as 'A son of God', but in referring to Himself as "**THE Son of God**" (John 5:25), and yet more emphatically as "**the only begotten Son of God**" (John 3:18), and by calling God His Father in an obviously peculiar sense (e.g. Matt. 11:27), He gave His hearers to understand quite plainly that He was referring to a relationship that was unique, a relationship which for them necessarily involved essential equality with the Father (John 5:18), that is to say, absolute Godhood (John 10:33). The significance of such an interpretation of His words is indicated by the fact that it was on this very account that the nation of Israel finally rejected Him and crucified Him. On the occasion referred to in John Ch. 10, those who heard the Lord Jesus say "I am the Son of God" took up stones to stone Him as one guilty of blasphemy in making Himself God. Upon the same charge, and for

precisely the same reason, He was deemed by the chief priests and the Sanhedrim to be worthy of death, and was delivered up to the Romans to be crucified (John 19:7).

The crux of the matter obviously is, were His hearers correct in their interpretation of His words? Was that what the Lord intended to convey by them? It is difficult to conceive that the Council of the nation, steeped in the Scriptures as they were, could without one solitary exception so misconstrue His claims. Could they make so simple a mistake? Was the cross of Christ, which was the most stupendous event in all human history, the result after all of a little misunderstanding which any one of us might have explained had we been present? The very idea seems absurd, and yet it is a position which everyone who would deny the absolute Deity of Christ must take. The argument of the modernist that Christ never claimed to be God, but only the Son of God, by this claim conceding His inferiority to the Father, and His dependence as a creature upon Him, is exploded by the judgment and crucifixion of Christ. The Jews understood quite well that His claim to be the Son of God was a claim to the Divine nature, a claim to be God even as the Father was God, and on the basis of this claim He was crucified as a blasphemer.

There was an occasion when the apostle Peter was rendered an obeisance which he felt exceeded that which might be accepted with propriety, and promptly refused it (Acts 10:25,26). When a divine glory was attributed to Paul and Barnabas, and divine honours were about to be paid them, their instant response was a categorical denial of all such ideas, and a hasty and determined restraint upon all such activity (Acts 14:11 ff.). With promptitude and clarity these servants of God explained their true position. But when the Jews accused Christ of claiming to be **"equal with God"**, instead of hotly denying any such implications as blasphemous, He calmly accepted them, and proceeded to declare that the eternal

counsels of the Father were designed to ensure **"that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father"** (John 5:23), that even though the Son was presently upon earth in a path of dependent and obedient manhood, nothing could alter or obscure the reality of His community of nature and equality of power with the Father. That **"the Son can do nothing of Himself"** (v19) is as much due to the indissoluble union of the Son with the Father in Godhood, as it is due to His perfect submission to the Father's will in manhood, for no human language could more forcibly convey the absolute Godhood of Christ than the remaining words of that same verse – **"For what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise"**. There is nothing "whatsoever" that the Father does which the Son cannot do, and that in precisely the same way! The next verse also tells us that there is nothing the Father does which the Son cannot comprehend (v20). In other words the Father possesses no single divine power which is not shared by the Son. He, too, is divinely omnipotent and omniscient, and this is exemplified in two great works which are specifically attributed to Him, firstly the resurrection of all men from the dead, and secondly the execution of judgment on all men. Thus will be demonstrated to the whole race of mankind, to believers and unbelievers alike, that Christ is God, equally with the Father possessed of Godhood with its unique and infinite powers. And thus will all men **"marvel"** (v20) at His glory, though it is good now to **"believe"** (v24).

Really we might say with good reason that such passages of Scripture, that is those which infer the Deity of Christ in the Personal characteristics and works which they attribute to Him, are more convincing in their testimony than those which state His glory in so many words, partly because they seem more natural in their witness, and partly because they are not so easily evaded or gainsaid. Though we are told dogmatically that Christ is God (John 1:1;

20:28,29; Heb. 3:3,4), that He was in **"the form of God"** (Phil. 2:6), that **"in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"** (Col. 2:9), enemies of the truth are likely to deny just as dogmatically that sense of such Scriptures as would be obvious to the humble believer.

As to the unique and incommunicable name of Jehovah, it is easy to show that this name is as applicable to the Son as to the Father, for there are Old Testament passages in which this name is found in the Hebrew, which are quoted in the New Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. In fact the name Jesus, given Him by God at His human birth, signifies **"Salvation of Jehovah"** or **"Jehovah the Saviour"**. While the name has been borne by mortal men (Joshua is the same name) to celebrate the fact that Jehovah is a Saviour, this is not the meaning in this case. The names of Messiah declare His Person. He is **"the Mighty God"** (Isa. 9:6), He is **"God with us"** (Emmanuel, Matt. 1:23), and He is **"Jehovah the Saviour"**, for **"HE shall save His people from their sins"** (Matt. 1:21). No mere creature, indeed, could save men from sin. Let us heed the words of one fearless champion of the faith – 'If we let go the Deity of Christ, which is the foundation truth of Christianity, the doctrine of the Atonement is destroyed. For in the whole range of false religions there is not a more grotesquely silly superstition than that the death of a fellow creature could expiate the sin of the world'.

The Gospel according to Mark is generally recognised as the Gospel of the Servant, but the opening paragraph of the Gospel takes care to impress upon us the Personal glory of the One who in grace assumed the servant form. He is **"Jesus Christ, the Son of God"** (v1), and Old Testament Scriptures are quoted to establish the appropriateness of such a title. The first is Malachi 3:1, a verse which is cited three times in the New Testament. On each occasion the verse is not quoted in the Hebrew form. Mark is, in fact, quoting

the rendering given to the verse by the Lord Jesus Himself, as recorded in Matthew 11:10 and Luke 7:27. The difference between the renderings is most significant, In the Hebrew, one Person is in view, **“I will send MY messenger and he shall prepare the way before ME”**; as quoted by Christ two Persons are indicated, **“I send MY messenger before THY face which shall prepare THY way before THEE”**. What lay hidden in Old Testament times in the unity of Jehovah, in the New Testament, since the incarnation of the Son, is revealed in a plurality of Persons. So here are two Persons, One who sends, One who comes, in the one Jehovah. And that the One who comes, the One before whose “way” the messenger is sent, is truly Jehovah, Mark confirms by quoting another prophecy **“Prepare ye the way of the Lord (Jehovah)”** (Isa. 40:3). So Mark would establish for us that the title ‘Son of God’ indicates that Christ is none other than Jehovah.

Isaiah Ch. 8, verse 14, which relates to Jehovah of Hosts is quoted of Christ in the New Testament, both by Peter (1Pet. 2:8), and by Paul (Rom. 9:33). 1Peter 2:3 alludes to Psalm 34:8, and Revelation 22:12 to Isaiah 40:10. The Coming One of Isaiah Ch. 40, announced in v9, **“Behold your God”**, is none other than the Person of the Son, the chapter embracing both His advents. Compare also verse 11 and Psalm 23 with John Ch. 10. If we read Romans 10:9-14 we see that Christ is to be acknowledged as Lord in the sense of Jehovah, for Joel 2:32 is quoted of Him. See also Zechariah 2:8-11 and Ch. 14:3 ff. which refer to the coming of Jehovah at the second advent, when **“His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives”**; this can only refer to the Person of the Son who has taken a human body, even as the One whom Israel “pierced” at Calvary, is **“Jehovah, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him”** (Zech. 12:1,10 cf. Rev. 1:7).

In Zechariah 12:10 (cp. Psa. 22:16) it is Jehovah who

declares of Himself that, **“they shall look upon ME whom they have pierced”**. John refers to this prophecy in his detail of Christ’s death in relation to the soldier piercing His side with the spear: **“they shall look on Him who they pierced”** (John 19:34-37) and obviously refers to the same Person who will be seen coming in glory in a future day, as recorded in Revelation 1:7.

When in chapters 40-48 of Isaiah, Jehovah proclaimed His unique glory, His most emphatic claim is presented in these terms, **“I am HE; I am the first, I also am the last”** (48:12; 44:6). Let it be noted that these very terms, than which Jehovah Himself finds none more expressive, are employed in the New Testament to declare the glory of Christ. The first, **“I am HE”**, is the same as that rendered **“Thou art the same”** in Psalm 102:27 with reference to Jehovah (v12), and is cited with direct reference to the Son in Hebrews 1:10-12. This passage in Hebrews with its reference also to Psalm 45:6,7 is one of the clearest and most unequivocal statements of the Deity of Christ to be found in Scripture. The second expression is related to Christ in Revelation 22:13, and is actually expanded there thus: **“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last”**. The first couplet indicates the sum total of revelation. All divine revelation points to one, true God: none other is revealed. **“The beginning and the end”** indicates that this one God is the source of all existence, and that all that is brought into being is for Himself. **“The first and the last”** states the fact that revelation makes apparent, that He is the only One, there was none before Him, there shall be none after Him. That which is predicated of Jehovah in Isaiah, and of the Father in Revelation 1:8 is predicated of Christ in Revelation 22:13. No words could express more forcibly His equality, and His unity of nature with the Father. He is one with Him in the Godhead, God absolutely as He is God.

For other points of consideration, see pamphlets **“God is One”**, **“I Am that I Am”**, and **“God the Father”**.