

3. Jesus, the Promised Son (1Q 2022— In These Last Days: The Message of Hebrews)

Biblical Material: Isa. 2:2, 3; Heb. 1:1–4; Exod. 24:16, 17; Isa. 44:24; Heb. 1:10; Luke 1:31, 32; Heb. 1:5.

Quotes

- Hail Son of God, Saviour of Men, thy Name/ Shall be the copious matter of my Song/ Henceforth, and never shall my Harp thy praise/ Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin. *John Milton, Paradise Lost*
- Christ is the perfect embodiment of the Spirit of God. He is the Son of God, the miracle worker, the overcomer, the way maker, and our brother. As fellow children of God, our task is to learn more about His character and to become more like Him. *Benjamin W. Decker*
- Either Jesus is the son of God, or he is not. *Meir Soloveichik*
- There is only one door, one bridge, one ladder, between earth and heaven - the crucified Son of God. *J. C. Ryle*
- He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man ... might become the son of God. *Irenaeus of Lyons*
- After an encounter with the living Son of the living God, nothing is ever again to be as it was before. *Jeffrey R. Holland*

Questions

Why is the Sonship of Jesus so important? How can such a concept both help and hinder a right understanding of God? What are the characteristics of a son, and how are they relevant here? If Jesus is the Son of God, why does he usually call himself the Son of man? How does the Son of God answer the issues raised by Satan in the great controversy?

Bible summary

Isa. 2:2, 3 speaks of many people from different nations deciding to come to God. “The Son is the radiant glory of God, and the visible expression of his true character.” Heb 1:3 FBV. In Exod. 24:16, 17 Moses went up the mountain and met God in the cloud. In Isa. 44:24 the Lord, the Maker of all of us, speaks to us. The Lord is the Creator of the earth (Heb. 1:10). In Luke 1:31, 32 Gabriel announces to Mary that Jesus “will be very great, and he will be called the Son of the Most High.” God never called an angel his Son (Heb. 1:5).

Comment

Hebrews 1:1-3 identifies Jesus as the most complete revelation of God. Though God has spoken in other ways and through human beings in the past, Jesus is the clearest picture of God—because he is God. Consequently Jesus is the primary focus of the book, and in this study we look especially at his Sonship.

The primary emphasis in Hebrews is on Jesus as God, as the one who “mediates” the truth about God, as the fullest and clearest description of the nature and character of God. Most of all is the encouragement to hold onto a trusting relationship with the God revealed by Jesus.

It seems that the Hebrews were losing faith, that they were beginning to doubt, and that the meaning and purpose of the Old Testament was unclear. Paul is writing as a Hebrew to the

Hebrews, to explain how things tie together, drawing on his rich knowledge and experience of the Old Testament witness to God..

Yet as he emphasizes, all the symbols and signs, all the thunder and lightning, could not truly express the presence of God. Not even the Ark of the Covenant, nor the glorious Temple, could say enough about God living with us. So “God sent his Son...” In Isaiah 7:14 and 8:8 the name of this one to come is “Emmanuel.” And when Jesus was born, his parents were clearly told, “You shall call his name Emmanuel” God with us. He is here. God is now present with fallen humanity. He has arrived. Through all of Jesus life, and death, and resurrection comes the proof of the truth of his name. Yet strangely enough, apart from that brief reference in Matthew, Jesus is never referred to as Emmanuel. Why not?

Because through he was truly God with us, Jesus came not as the glorious king but as the suffering servant. His Messianic titles are disregarded, and Jesus referred to himself simply as “the Son of man.” A man among men; human. And this Jesus, this God with us, died with us as a criminal nailed to a cross. Jesus, Emmanuel, was with us for such a terribly short time. So, even though the birth of Jesus really was the beginning of “God with us,” the full reality of the complete presence of God remains unfulfilled. After thirty short years, the bodily presence of the Son of God was ended, first in the crucifixion and then in the ascension. What then of God with us, of the promised one who lives with humanity? Only through the reunion of His return is God with us: Son of God, Son of man.

Jesus, the Son of God, is the promise-maker and the promise-keeper. Jesus has to die because he claimed to be the Son of God, say the Jewish leaders. How ironic—that God is executed because he claims to be God. Nor is it primarily a question of claims, for anyone can make assertions. The truth is that Jesus *is* God, and reveals him in the clearest way. The fact that religious leaders refuse such clear revelation demonstrates that they have a very different picture of God. So Jesus, God-revealer, is rejected and killed, since the God he reveals is not the God that people want.

As we meet Jesus, the Son who comes to show us God, what is our response?

Ellen White comments

The Son of God came from heaven to make manifest the Father. [John 1:18; Mt. 11:27 quoted]. {SC 10,11}

The Son of God came to be a light to the world, to reveal wonders to the children of men that even the angels had vainly longed to understand. He patiently explains the marvelous transformation of sinful mortals into children of God and heirs with himself in the kingdom of Heaven. The introduction of sin had opened the door to every species of suffering and wretchedness, till moral darkness shrouded the earth like a funeral pall; but Jesus, the Restorer, brings man into connection with himself and re-creates him in the divine image. {2SP 250}

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth.... In this he was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth... {CE 74}

He [Christ] represented God not as an essence that pervaded nature, but as a God who has a personality. Christ was the express image of His Father's person; and He came to our world to restore in man God's moral image, in order that man, although fallen, might through obedience to God's commandments become enstamped with the divine image and character--adorned with the beauty of divine loveliness (MS 24, 1891). {7BC 921.9}

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