

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 324

Series: St. John's Passion - Gospel of John chapters 12-21

Verses: John 19:6-9

Topic: Jesus, Son of God

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John 19:6-9 MKJV Then when the chief priests and under-officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify! Crucify *Him*! Pilate said to them, You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in him. (7) The Jews answered him, We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. (8) Then when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid. (9) And *he* went again into the praetorium and said to Jesus, Where are you from? But Jesus gave him no answer.

The chief-priests and under-officers insist on the crucifixion of Christ and when Pilate asks why they say “We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.” The charge that Jesus was the Son of God was also the accusation at the Sanhedrin (before Jesus was brought to Pilate).

Luke 22:67-71 MKJV Are you the Christ? Tell us. And He said to them, If I tell you, you will not believe. (68) Also if I ask *you*, you will not answer Me nor let Me go. (69) From now on the Son of Man shall sit at the right *hand* of the power of God. (70) And they all said, Are you then the Son of God? And He said to them, You say *it*, because I AM! (71) And they said, What need do we have for any witness? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth.

This was the outrage - that Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God.

In the Scriptures the title “son of God” is applied to Adam (Luke 3:38), angels (Job 2:1), the nation Israel (Exodus 4:22) and the kings of Israel (2 Samuel 7:14, Psalm 2:7). Even born-again believers are said to become sons of God (John 1:12). So why the controversy? If Solomon can be a son of God surely then “one greater than Solomon” (Matthew 12:42) can claim the title?

Firstly because there is a strong connection between being the Messiah, the Christ also being the Son of God. This connection is made at least 17 times in the New Testament firstly with the confession of Peter and then as a standard confession of the early Church. Here are three examples from John's gospel:

John 6:68-69 MKJV Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have *the* Words of eternal life. (69) And we have believed and have known that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

John 11:27 MKJV She said to Him, Yes, Lord, I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world.

John 20:31 MKJV But these are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name.

In Acts we see it as perhaps the earliest Christian creed:

Acts 8:37 MKJV Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, it is lawful. And he (the Ethiopian eunuch) answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Acts 9:20 MKJV And immediately he (Paul) proclaimed Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

Even the High Priest seems to have been aware of the claim that Jesus was “the Christ, the son of God.” Matthew 26:63 ...”I adjure you by the living God that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

The title Son of God seems to have potent spiritual connotations and implications: At the baptism of Jesus God designates as His Son – “Matthew 3:17 MKJV And lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” It is God’s specific identity for Jesus and this statement is even repeated from heaven at the Transfiguration. (Matthew 17:15)

On the other hand the Devil and his demons seemed to use this term in confrontations with Jesus e.g.

Matthew 4:3 MKJV And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If You are *the* Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

Mark 3:11-12 MKJV And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, *they* fell down before Him and cried, saying, You are the Son of God! (12) And He strictly charged them that they should not make Him known.

Those who passed by at the foot of the cross taunted Him with His title saying, in words parallel to those of Satan: Matthew 27:40 ...If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.

In contrast the centurion guarding Jesus acknowledge who He was: Matthew 27:54 MKJV But the centurion and those guarding Jesus, seeing the earthquake, and the things that took place, *they* feared greatly, saying, Truly this One was Son of God.

Sons of gods (with human women) were common in Roman mythology – and were often legendary warriors such as Hercules – the son of Zeus and Leda. So when Pilate hears that Jesus claimed to be the son of God, he trembles. This was no ordinary man; this was a miracle worker with special powers. To crucify Him would be impious and bring down wrath. Pilate was so in awe of the title that he sought to release Jesus.

The title “son of God” definitely puts Jesus as a “divinized” human at least at the level of the angels, a messiah from God, someone to be reckoned with and believed in. From there it was a brief and natural step to see Jesus as THE Son of God, the unique, the only begotten - and from there to the doctrine of the Trinity. (For more on the Trinity see <http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/trinity.htm>)

Jesus struck fear and awe into demons, Pilate and the high-priest simply by being the Son of God. It is an awesome and fearful title of our Great King who is most worthy to be worshiped.

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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