

SON OF GOD

2. Meanings in the Old Testament: While to the common mind "the Son of man" is a title designating the human side of our Lord's person, "the Son of God" seems as obviously to indicate the divine side. But scholarship cannot take this for granted; and, indeed, it requires only a hasty glance at the facts to bring this home even to the general reader, because in Scripture the title is bestowed on a variety of persons for a variety of reasons. First, it is applied to angels, as when in Job 2:1 it is said that "the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh"; they may be so called because they are the creatures of God's hands or because, as spiritual beings, they resemble God, who is a spirit. Secondly, in Luke 3:38 it is applied to the first man; and from the parable of the Prodigal Son it may be argued that it is applicable to all men. Thirdly, it is applied to the Hebrew nation, as when, in Ex 4:22, Yahweh says to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, my first-born," the reason being that Israel was the object of Yahweh's special love and gracious choice. Fourthly, it is applied to the kings of Israel, as representatives of the chosen nation. Thus, in 2 Sam 7:14, Yahweh says of Solomon, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son"; and, in Ps 2:7, the coronation of a king is announced in an oracle from heaven, which says, "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." Finally, in the New Testament, the title is applied to all saints, as in John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." When the title has such a range of application, it is obvious that the Divinity of Christ cannot be inferred from the mere fact that it is applied to Him.

3. Sense as Applied to Jesus: It is natural to assume that its use in application to Jesus is derived from one or other of its Old Testament uses; and the one almost universally fixed upon by modern scholarship as that from which it was derived is the fourth mentioned above—that to the Jewish kings. Indeed, it is frequently asserted that in the Jewish literature between the Old Testament and the New Testament, it is found already coined as a title for the Messianic king; but the instances quoted by Dalman and others in proof of this are far from satisfactory.

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