

REVISITING THE CONCEPTS OF THE SON OF GOD AND THE SON OF MAN

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Abstract

This article addresses the Son of God and the Son of man terminology from its OT canonical root. BEN-ADAM is the Hebrew for “Son of Man” used both in generic and personal senses. God sees and identifies a prophet as the “Son of Man” for example Ezekiel because of his submission to the power of the Spirit and consequently being qualified to speak for God, a thing that bespeaks the purpose for which man was created. Readers of this article have been cautioned by H.E.Tohdr (13) not to place the son of man of prophets exactly at par with that of the Son of man of Jesus. For he was of a higher substance with the Son of man identified by God. The Son of man is a title Jesus used in Mr.2:10;2:28;13:26 apparently to avoid the use of Messiah, which had a political overtone in Judaism. In Daniel 7:13-14 one like the Son of man is given universal domino. Jesus used the Son of man and Son of God interchangeably (Matth.16:13-17). Jesus as it is applied to John 5:18 b, he said that God was his own Father, making himself equal with God. The same thought is frequently emphasized that all men should honour the Son just as they honour the Father (John 5:23). The Jews clearly understood in the Jewish setting as meaning God, or equal with God. This article shows that it is not a denier the word may not have other meanings but the deity is implied in the words as applied to Jesus. This article employed the Library research method and reviewed critical literature on the subject. The objective of the study was for bible-believers who have taken the phrase “Son of God” refers to in some instances the virgin birth of Christ is doubtful. But this was not the origin of His person and that did not make Him the Son of God. The article concludes that the miracle by which the eternal Son of God became flesh was wrought by the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, his birth was a miracle and absolute sense of the word, a virgin birth. But never has any in history thought Holy Spirit as the Father of Jesus.

Keywords: Son of God, Son of Man, Scripture, Concepts, Bible

Introduction

The terminology for the “Son of God and Son of Man” in theology, seems not to be clearly understood among current-day Pentecostal believers. Scholars differ in their opinion when it comes to the understanding of the Son of God and Son of man terminology used in the Bible. People are mounting different shapes of opinion about “Son of God” and Son of man terminology among believers. The terminology of Son of God and Son of man of Jesus is an identification made by God. It is interesting to note that the popular notion that the “Son of man” indicates Jesus' humanity as the Son of God does his divinity is quite indefensible. The terminology when used properly as a title means a supernatural figure charged with the superlatively great task of destroying evil and acting as a truly cosmic figure.

Given traditional exegesis of the gospel the terminology Son of man is held to signify especially the humanity of Christ's incarnate manhood as contrasted with the majesty of His Divinity denoted by the “Son of God”. Similarly, it is thought to emphasize His universal role as the son of Adam in contrast with the narrow list conception associated with the title Son of David. The title Son of man as used by Jesus Christ to apply to Himself is found some 78 times in the gospel (also in Acts 7:56; Rev.1:13; 14:14). In all circumstances it designates Him as the God-Man.

The Son of God as a title of the Messiah is seen in Psalm 2:7 and John 1:49 and at a deeper level, a description of the Messiah in his unique relation, with the Father (John1:14-18; 3:16). Because of its usage in the bible the expression has been taken up by theologian for whom it normally is a way of speaking of the Second Person of the Trinity. As the Son, he is eternally generated by the Father (J.D. Douglas, et l.,1989, 354).

The miracle by which the eternal Son of God became flesh was wrought by the Holy Spirit, no argument at all; (the third Person of the Trinity), his birth was a miracle and absolute sense of the word, a virgin birth. But never has any in history thought Holy Spirit as the Father of Jesus. This article was to oppose some erroneous scholars who have been teaching that the title Son of man” was assumed by Christ because of his miraculous birth. But Jesus has always permitted the Jews to recognize him as the son of Joseph. Although his birth was a miracle absolute sense of the word, a virgin birth has any in history thought Holy Spirit as the Father of Jesus.

Spirituality of the Son of Man

The son of man is characterised to be a man full of the Spirit of God. Ezekiel is noted to be the prophet with the Spirit of God. He is carried by the Spirit and in the Spirit, to see the abominable practice of Israel took place in the temple at Jerusalem (Ezekiel8:3,12,

17). He saw as a prophet with the Spirit where they worship images of abominable beasts, accompanied by the burning of incense. Right in the presence of the seventy elders of Israel including the supposedly faithful Jaazaniah, who was from the holy lineage of Shaphan (Ezekiel8:7-13) (John F.WALWOORD AND Roy B.Zuck1985, 1234-1344). Ezekiel was the one the Spirit of God entered while Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit of God Himself (Luke 1:35), both are men of the Spirit. Most important Jesus was perfectly divine while Ezekiel experience divinity only as a communicable attribute.

In Ezekiel 8, the son of man can receive divine revelations. He is carried by the Spirit and in the Spirit, to see the abominable practice of God's chosen people going on in the temple at Jerusalem (Ezekiel8:3,12, 17), where they worship images of abominable beast, accompanied by the burning of incense. Right in the presence of the seventy elders of Israel including the supposedly faithful Jaazaniah, who was from the holy lineage of Shaphan (Ezekiel8:7-13).

As the Spiritual man that Ezekiel is he was not only able to see in spirit but he was also compassionate, a virtue that characterized the Son of man in the Gospel. Jesus full of the Holy Ghost in Matthew 9:36, read "When He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion because He saw that they were weary and scarred like sheep without a shepherd. In the same light, Ezekiel is associated with divine compassion events such as resuscitating dry bones; we see the possibility of restoration for the house of Israel. This entirely depends on repentance and the agency of the Spirit and the Word of God. (Ayodeji Abodunde et l.,ed. .2013, 88-89)

Ayodeji Abodunde et l., ed., revealed that one scholar that has dealt theological of Ezekiel as a prophet of the Spirit was "Daniel Block" who christened Ezekiel as a prophet of the Spirit. Block has a great testimony of the Spirit of God in Ezekiel when he undertakes extensive research on Ezekiel. He devoted three pages of his article to doing justice to the place of Spirit in the Old Testament. He observed the various verbs used in describing the Spirit as "to pant" "breath" "wind" "vapour" "heat" "blood" "life" etc, the Hebrew, *ruah* or wind, occurs more often in Ezekiel (52times) than it does in Isaiah (51times) and Jeremiah (18 times). He detailed how wind or the Hebrewrush is used in Ezekiel as an agent of conveyance, animation, and inspiration and how it means "mind" and a sign of divine ownership (Ayodeji Abodunde et l., ed. .2013, 88-89).

Son of Man are men full of the spirit of God and also they are human, being human enough, through his restriction and privation, to feel for the calamity that was to befall them: the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. No wonder God being the discernor of all the hearts warned Ezekiel not to weep when this happen. So by the power of the Spirit, he was able to speak, for God and with the same power of the Spirit, he was

able to bear the priestly pains of suffering for his people (Ayodeji Abodunde et l., ed., 2013, 93).

Again the resurrection and the coming of the new age point to a previous state of suffering and death. Both Ezekiel and Jesus passed through traumatic periods in their earthly ministries for the sake of the people which they serve. This was characterizing their own priestly Spirit, the Spirit of God in them. (Hebrew 2:14-16). For Jesus, the suffering was vicarious to the extent that He became the Sacrificial Lamb in the Atonement. For Ezekiel, the suffering was such that drew him, body and soul into his experience which prefigured the Atonement (Bullock 1982, 29-3).

Criticisms of Son of Man Terminology

Liberals writers like Reimarus (1694-1768) to Albert Schweitze over the years have made the great mistake of construing Matthew 10: 23b eschatological and arguing that Jesus when He gave instructions to the twelve disciples for their mission did not yet regard Himself as the heavenly Son of man. We saw liberals generally picture Jesus as sitting down to wait for the Son of man to come in the clouds, suffering great disappointment and finally deciding that He self be the Son of man (Schweitzer, Quest pg335. Edwin Lewis, NH, 131).

The context should have prevented this error. In Matthew's record Matthew 8"20; 9:6 Jesus had previously been familiarly designating Himself as the Son of man in the presence of His disciples. When He said in Mathew 10:23b: "You will not finish with the cities of Israel until the Son of man comes" they understood His plan to come where they were preaching, as given in Matthew 11: 1; luke10:1.. "When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples he departed thence to teach and preach in their (Disciples) cities." Chapter 11 records Jesus' ministry as He follows up the twelve and in chapter 12 they are all together again.

Again some scholars criticize and held that the NT usage was influenced by the Son of man in the similitude of Enock but since the relevant parts of the book may well be later than the gospel, it is equally possible that the influence was the other way round. Even more debatable is the attempt which has been made to connect the Son of man with the primal or Heavenly Man thought to have figured in oriental mythology (F.L.CROSS, et l.,1974, 1290).

The critic is neither here nor there some argue that Jesus used a personal pronoun and that the passage echoing Daniel giving Him the status of Judge or redeemer was later Christian development: others that He spoke of final vindication through the son of man without casting Himself for the role (F.L.CROSS, et l.,1974, 1518). In a dramatic twist, people

thought Hebrew 1:5 think of Christ as an angel whom God had exalted above others, investing in him with his majesty and calling him by the name of Son. But the Nativity stories in Matthew and Luke Vergilus (1945, 726) who thought it might seem to suggest a literal sonship, but the thought is rather that Christ had entered the world like Adam that God Himself is manifested in Christ and this is affirmed still more explicitly by the Fourth evangelist who sees in Christ the incarnation of Logos which had with fro all eternity within the being of God. (Vergilus 1945, 726)

One striking important point is that before the gospels were written his (Jesus) followers had come to believe that when he had referred to the advent of the son of man he had been speaking obliquely of himself. Not infrequently the later gospels (Matthew and Luke), sharing this view, substituted the phrase son of man for Mark's original "I" (Matth.16:13; Mk8:27). In at least two passages (Mk2:10; 2:27) the phrase "Son of man" is almost certain to be seen as a mistranslation of the Aramaic and should be rendered "Man". (Vergilus 1945, 727)

Son of Man in Old Testament Terminology

It is in Psalm 8:4 we read "Son of man" only in the Old Testament except in Daniel and Ezekiel as bar-nasha in Aramaic and ben-adam in Hebrew. The word "ben" etymologically means "son of". Ben-adam is therefore a description of a generic man, that is, a man in the collective sense. Like Adam in Genesis, "ben-Adam" in Ezekiel is both a generic as well as a specific name or title. (Ayodeji Abodunde et l.,ed2013, 85).. In Ezekiel 2:3 the Lord has to identify Ezekiel with the human genre; the need was so high for God that He (God) address him (Ezekiel) as the son of man 93 times. Only on two occasions has God addressed the prophet by his name. And that is first in the word of God coming to the prophet and when Ezekiel lost his wife.

It was in Ezekiel only the scripture mentioned 93 times "Son of Man" and God identifies the prophet as Son of man. The same in Daniel 7:13 only once that the "Son of man" mentioned and He is given dominion. The divine and human aspects are characteristics we found in the New Testament "Son of man terminology" but the dual personality of the Son of Man in Old Testament Daniel and Ezekiel has always been the subject of debate among scholars in recent times (Barnabas Lindars, S.S.,1983, 60-63).

We saw this terminology used in the OT particularly addressed to Ezekiel by God calling him a prophet. It is sometimes found as a parallel to "man" (eg., in Psalm 8:4; 80:17) and in Daniel 7 it has an apocalyptic significance. This last idea is expanded in Similitude of Enoch where there is particular emphasis on his role in judgment. (F.L.Cross, ed., 1974). In Daniel 7:13-14 we read that only the divine aspects of the Son of man" are portrayed

but in the gospels both divine and human aspects are features. Ayodeji Abodunde et al., ed (2013, 86) have asked the question: “where does Ezekiel fit in here?”. The question of honour and dishonour and exaltation and humiliation, fit into a single personality, would best address the ambiguous picture of the “Son of man” both for Ezekiel and Jesus (Barnabas Lindars, S.S.,1983, 102-103).

It was a point of fact that H.E.Todr stated that “one of the most important issues which modified the Jewish religion during the pre-Christian and late-Hellenistic periods was the decisive step taken towards a radically transcendent concept of eschatological saviour (who is identified with the Son of man” terminology) (H.E.Todr 1965,13). However, an analysis of available documents reveals that the title “Son of Man” was habitually used in first-century Judaism (I. Howard Marsal et al, eds 1963). In Hebrew, the usage of the phrase “Son of Man” seems to mean essentially man, a distinct member of the order of humanity. It applied to Ezekiel repeatedly (Ezk.1:1,8) and to Daniel once (8:17) (Merrill C.Tennet, et al, ed., 1983, 805).

The role the Son of man played in the OT was he speaks for God because he is a holy man with divine powers to receive messages from God. He could do this only by the Spirit of God entering into him (Ezekiel2:1-2,8) and equipping him with the word of God (Ezekiel3:13, 10). H.E.Todr has sounded a note of warning that the way we can refer to Ezekiel and other prophets as divine is not in the same category as we would place Jesus. (H.E.Todr1965,22). The difference is that in the case of Ezekiel the Spirit of God entered into Ezekiel while Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit of God Himself (Luke1:35). More also Jesus was perfectly divine, Ezekiel experience divinity only as a communicable attribute.

In the Old Testament Ezekiel 8, the son of man can receive divine revelations. He is carried by the Spirit and in the Spirit, to see the abominable practice of God’s chosen people going on in the temple at Jerusalem (Ezekiel8:3,12, 17), where they worship images of abominable beast, accompanied by the burning in sense. Right in the presence of the Seventy elders of Israel including the supposedly faithful Jaazaniah, who was from the holy lineage of Shaphan(Ezekiel8:7-13), (John F.WALWOORD AND Roy B.Zuck,1985, 1234-1244)

The Son of man of the Old Testament must prophesy against the rebellious people and their land (Ezekiel 2,4,15). He spoke to them and against them with one who has divine authority but his prophetic responsibility extended over and beyond the land of Israel. The scope of the Son of man in Ezekiel's prophetic ministry affirms this son of man’s divine mind, for God is not only God of the Jews but God of the entire world. To exercise his Sovereignty, God shows concern for Moab, Edom, Philistia (25:1-17), Tyre (26: 1-28:19),

and Egypt(29:32:32)). God made sure that He used the “son of man” to deal with those other nations before consummating the fall of Jerusalem (Derek Thomas, 1993,108-209).

This speak of the universality of the Son of man in Ezekiel’s prophecies that make’ him a fitting figure to be the “Son of man”; which at the same time highlights the impartiality of God. This place his son-of-man status on par with that of Jesus, at least as far as universality is a concern. Very instructively C. Hassel Bullock maintains that Ezekiel is said to be a bridge between the Testaments (C. Hassel Bullock 1990, 424-426). Bullock link Ezekiel and the Apocalypse of John, and Paul, Matthew, Mark and Luke, he shows how Ezekiel and Jesus are prophets with similar modes of communication, notably, parables. Both have deep knowledge of the Lord as seen in Ezekiel’s recognition formula, “You shall know that am the Lord” and Jesus’ “I am” saying, as in John’s Gospels. Finally is the common use of their “son of man” terminology.

Besides this healthy relationship, Daniel Block is not happy with the way most theologians refer to the Holy Spirit in the OT only in passing. For this reason, he has devoted twenty-three pages in a JETS article to do justice to the place of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament (Daniel I. Block,1989,27-29). (He was also cited in (Thomas, pg40 and Rogers pg349.) Daniel Block notice that out of the various verbs used in describing the Spirit as “ to pant” “breath” “ wind” “vapour” “heat” “blood” “life” etc, the Hebrew, *ruah* or wind, occurs more often in Ezekiel (52times) than it does in Isaiah (51times) and Jeremiah (18 times).

Block has christened Ezekiel, the prophet of the Spirit. He details how the *Hebrewruah* is used in Ezekiel as an agent of conveyance, animation, and inspiration and how it means “mind” and a sign of divine ownership. There is little wonder, therefore that the “son of man” must use the Spirit to bring restoration to Israel. The Spirit is the means to bring revival and renewal (Daniel I. Block,1989, 154-155).

Son of Man Terminology in the New Testament

The one Old Testament usage of the “Son of man” title which colours all the New Testament use of the phrase as applied to Jesus is Daniel 7:13, 14. The passage clearly states that: “I saw in the night vision and behold one like the Son of man came to the Ancient of days and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people, nation and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not be destroyed”.

From this very point of view; the Lord Jesus Christ identified Himself in the New Testament narrative as the “Son of man” in this particular sense was clear from his use of language when he was put on trial before the Jewish authority and powers. He let them

know that they will soon see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven (Mark14:62; Matth.26:64; Luke22:69).

Jesus went ahead of them in this quotation of Daniel 7:13,14 by adding a phrase from Psalm 110:1 stating that: The Son of man sitting at the right hand of God, as referred to in the NT (Acts2:34; Heb.1:13; 10:12,13), pointing to His awaiting in heaven (Acts3:21) the time of His appointment to take the earth as His visible kingdom.

Luke 19:11-27 alluded to this visible kingdom by illustrating a parable; at the time appointed the Father, Jesus will come as the heavenly Son of man to rule the world. From this, his analysis of Jesus before the Jewish authority and powers shows two future stages in the doing of the Son of man. First His resuming His seat in heaven and his coming again.

When he was also put on trial Jesus told the Jewish authority that His return as the heavenly Son of man would be unostentatiously visible everywhere for people to see. It will be accompanied by lightning and thunder which everybody would see. Jesus looked back to identify his coming with the Son of man which prophet Zechariah 12:10-14 which contains the significant words: “they shall look upon me whom they have pierced”.. in Mathew 24:30 Jesus then said. And at time be seen the sign of the Son of man in heaven and people would morn (Zechariah 27.).

According to J.D. Douglas, (805) Jesus in his earlier evangelical ministry said to those following him (Luke22:28-29) in his trail in the regeneration when the Son of man sits upon his glorious throne, they would be judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Warfield now added “whenever in the Apocalyptic literature meets the figure of the Son of man, it is transcendently conceived. When Jesus our Lord Himself derived from it His favourite self-designation of Son of man, He took it over in a transcendental sense and meant by applying it to Himself to present Himself as a heavenly Being who had come forth from heaven and descended to earth on a mission of mercy to lost men (Warfield,1916, 46).

Although the terminology of the Son of man as Jesus uses it always refers to Himself as the One who is coming again to rule the world. But in a clear examination, this does not mean that everything He says of the Son of man is the eschatological implication and applies it to Himself in any situation. J.D. Douglas (805) says since His incarnation He is the Son of man. Thus He asked as Matthew (16:13) records His question, “Who do men say the Son of man is” (J. D. Douglas 805)

The popular notion, therefore, would be that the Son of man indicates Jesus' humanity as the Son of God his divinity is quite indefensible. The terminology when used as a title, as already indicated, is properly supernatural figure charged with the superlatively great task of destroying evil and acting as a truly cosmic figure (F. Jackson and K.Lake1938).

Understanding New Testament “Son Of God” Terminology

The founders of the Hebrew religion didn't make provision at all for nothing less than monotheistic and the terminology “Son of God” as it is found in the OT must not be understood in any way literally. The terminology “Son of God” has its origin in the Semitic idiom which expresses any intimate relation as one of sonship. It must be noted that what was understood for them is that just as royal ministers are sons of the king, so the angels are sons of GOD and this name is likewise given to judges and sovereigns, ruling in God's name.

The encyclopedia of Religion edited by Vergilius Ferm states that Israel as God's people is personified as his son. That the name is nowhere applied definitely to the Messiah except in certain passages in Psalms, where the interpretation is doubtful. In apocalyptic literature, the name is used with Messianic reference in only one or two instances. The NT writers repeatedly described Jesus in his Messianic character, as the Son of God. Their idea is still fundamentally the Semitic one of close relation, but its merge in the further idea that Christ in some way participates in the divine nature (Vergilius Ferm 1945,726).

The key text for proper understanding of the word “Son of God” as applied to Jesus is John 5:18b. Jesus said that “God was his own Father, making himself equal with God” the same thought is frequently used that all men should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. (John 5:23). In John 10 Jesus' own words “I AND THE Father are one” touched off violent opposition (Merrill C.T ENNEY, et l., ed., 1963, 803).

His accusers accused him of blaspheming in the name of God for being a man making himself God. The answer Jesus gave them at this crucial moment was simple: why do you say to him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘it is You that blasphemes because I said I am the Son of God (John10:36). Merrill C.Tenney., et l., ed., (1963, 804) saw the Jewish fears averred that the word Son of God was clearly understood in the Jewish setting as meaning “God” or “equal” with God (Merrill C.Tenney., et l., ed., (1963, 804), and so they reacted. It is not possible a fact that the word “Son of God” in another context may have other meanings like Sons of God, Children of GOD. But deity is implied in the words as applied to Jesus.

Richard Watson's theological dictionary joining this debate on his part pointed out that the title “Son of God” contains a revelation of the Divinity of our Lord, as a person of the same nature and essence as the Father. Various attempts have been made to restrain its significance. The opinion he put forward was that the title was assumed by Christ because of his miraculous birth. But Jesus has always permitted the Jews to recognize him as the son of Joseph. We saw this when arguing with the Jews, he expressly establish that God was his Father Christ did not refer to the miraculous conception. The other opinion was

that the title Son of God was simply an appellation of Messiah. It was an official, not a personal designation (Richard Watson, 2000, 497).

But in all of these, it is recorded that evangelic history fully disagrees with this notion. By showing that the Jews regarded the title Son of God as necessarily involving a claim to divinity, although they did not regard the term, Messiah. In the OT the title Son of God was a personal designation. Sonship was essential but Messiahship was a nonessential characteristic, an appointment office. Such passages as Psalm 2:7; Prov.8:22, 30:4 the use of the “wisdom” which corresponds to “the Word” and Micah 5:2 furnished the Jews with the idea of a personal Son in the divine nature.

What we notice is that this same idea of divine Sonship is suggested in the NT by Matthew 3:17 and the epithet “only begotten”. Passages which declare that all things were made by the Son and that God “sent his Son” imply that the Creator was the Son of God before he was sent into the world. The passage which connects the title “Son” immediately and by way of eminence with the divinity such as John 5:17 and 10:30 also must be considered. The title “Son of God” was used in contrast to human nature in Romans 1:3-4, the first chapter of Hebrews, Romans 8:3, Hebrew 3:5 and all those passages in which the first person is called the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The term “Son” preserves the scriptural character of the Father and set up an everlasting barrier against the Arian heresy of inferiority of essence because as Son, he must be the same essence as the Father. *See Theological Institutes 1:528-562* (Richard Watson, 2000, 497).

But the author of Hebrew 1:5 considers Jesus in the Semitic idea as an angel whom God had exalted above all others, investing him with his majesty and calling him by the name Son. But the nativity stories in Matthew and Luke might seem to suggest a literal sonship but the thought is rather that Christ had entered the world like Adam by an immediate divine creation. Paul the apostle also assumes that God himself is manifested in Christ and this is affirmed still more explicitly by the Fourth Evangelist, who sees in Christ the incarnation of the Logos which had dwelt from all eternity within the being of God (Vergilius Ferm, 1945, 726).

This advance on the older conception of Messianic Sonship was due not so much to a speculative as to a religious need. If Christ were to bring men into fellowship with God he must be intrinsically divine, not merely a heavenly being, however exalted. The later Christology takes its rise from the Logos conception of Sonship as outlined in the Fourth Gospel. It was soon recognized that in his metaphysical account of the nature of Christ, the evangelist had left many vital questions unanswered. Did the Logos share in all the attributes of God? Was he originated by God, or co-eternal? Did Christ have two personalities, a human and a divine and if so what was the relation between them? This

discussion occupied the Greek theologian throughout the second and third centuries and came to a head in the Arian controversy which ostensibly was settled by the Nicene Creed. At this point however it began again under new forms and has never come to any real conclusion. No metaphysical definition of the nature of Christ will ever be possible. This is realized by the Fourth Evangelist himself who falls back in the end on ethical categories. The Father loves the Son. Christ is perfectly at one with the will of God and is thereby his Son.

Therefore the title Son of God as used by Jesus to apply to Himself is found some 78 times in the Gospel narrative (also Acts 7:26; Rev.1:13; 14:14). In all circumstances it designates Him as the God-Man (J.D. Douglas 805).

Trinity In Out Look

There is nowhere in the Bible one can find the word TRINITY both in Old Testament and New Testament. The understanding of TRINITY has become necessary because it has been one contentious area in the understanding of the whole scripture among bible students of all ages. But TRINITY is taught as you open pages of the bible both in Old Testament and New. The discussion of the divine attribute has emphasized the necessity of affirming distinction in God. Sound philosophy has no objection to the scriptural implication that certain manifoldness, along with unity is characteristic of the Divine being; indeed it concludes that He must be thus conceived in a consistent representation of Him as living and self-conscious Spirit. Whether philosophy, in its explication of the general idea of God, can draw out precisely that theory of necessary distinctions which is expressed in the Christian doctrine or the Trinity, is not clear.(Henry C.Sheldon1903, 192)

At any rate, the doctrine of the Trinity has a historical basis and is best approached from that side. Whatever word philosophy may have to offer on the subject is properly postponed till a review has been made of the historical data. What we have as the chief compendium of historical evidence in this relation is of course the New Testament. But it will not be impertinent to glance somewhat beyond the New Testament era since the order of teaching which followed if it appears relatively continuous and dominant, may be regarded as testifying to the dogmatic impulse which was received from the apostle and their co-labourers.

In the first place, we have to note the chain of testimony as it relates to the divinity of Christ. This will follow in the regress order from the fourth century. Alister E. McGrath posits that the foundations of the doctrine of the Trinity are to be found in the pervasive pattern of divine activity to which the New Testament bears witness. The Father is

revealed in Christ through the Spirit. There is a closer connection between the Father, Son and Spirit in the New Testament writings. Time after time, New Testament passages link together their three elements as part of a greater whole. The totality of God's saving presence and power can only, it would seem be expressed by involving all the three elements (1Corinthians12:4-6; 2Corinthians 1:21-2; Gal.4:6; Eph.2:20-2; 2Thess.2:13-14; Titus3:4-6; 1Peter1:2) (Alister .E. McGrath 2000,320).

In the Old Testament, the Trinitarian structure can also be found in three major "personifications" of God's(1) wisdom; (2) GOD's The Word of God and (3) the Spirit of God. Although these three "hypostatizations "of God, (to use a Greek word in place of the English "personification") do not amount to a doctrine of the Trinity in the strict sense of the term. Rather they point to a pattern of divine activity and presence in and through creation, in which God is both immanent and transcendent. A purely Unitarian conception of God proved inadequate to contain this dynamic understanding of God. And it is this pattern of divinity activity which is expressed in the doctrine of the Trinity.

The doctrine of the Trinity can be regarded as the outcome of a process of sustained and critical reflection on the pattern of divine activity revealed in Scripture and continued in the Christian experience. This is not to say that Scripture contains a doctrine of the Trinity; rather, scripture bears witness to a God who demands to be understood in a Trinitarian manner. (Alister .E. McGrath 2000,320-21).

The vocabulary associated with the doctrine of the Trinity is unquestionably one of the biggest difficulties for students of the bible. The phrase "three persons, one substance" is not exactly illuminating, to say the least. However, understanding how the terms came to emerge is perhaps the most effective way of appreciating their meaning and importance. Tertullian was responsible for the development of the distinctive Trinitarian terminology.

Citing Tertullian, AlisterE.McGrath submits one analysis of Tertullian that coin 509 new nouns, 284 new adjectives and 161 new verbs in the Latin language. Happily, not all seem to have caught on. It is thus hardly surprising that a shower of new words resulted when he turned his attention to the doctrine of the Trinity. Three of these words are of particular importance: (AlisterE.McGRATH 2001, 319-22):

(1)*Trinitas*. Tertullian invented the word "Trinity" (Latin: *Trinitas*), which has become so characteristic a feature of Christian theology since his time. Although other possibilities had been explored, Tertullian's influence was such that this term became normative within the western church.

Persona Tertullian introduced this Latin term to translate the Greek word *hypostasis*, which had begun to gain acceptance in the Greek-speaking church. Scholars have debated at length over what Tertullian meant by this Latin term, which is

invariably translated into English as “person”. The following explanation commands a wide degree of assent and casts some light on the complexities of the Trinity.

The term *persona* means “a mask” such as that worn by an actor in a Roman Drama. At this time, actors wore masks to allow the audience to understand which of the different characters in the drama they were playing. The term *persona* thus came to have a developed meaning, along the lines of “the role that someone is playing”. It is quite possible that Tertullian wanted his readers to understand the idea of “one substance, *three persons*” to mean that the One God played three distinct yet related roles in the great drama of human redemption.

Behind the plurality of roles lay a single actor. The complexity of the process of creation and redemption did not imply that there were many gods; simply that there was one God, who acted in a multiplicity of manners within the “economy of salvation”.

(3)*Substantia* Tertullian introduced this term to express the idea of a fundamental unity within the God-head, despite the inherent complexity of the revelation of God within history. “*Substance*” is what the three persons of the Trinity have in common. It must not be thought of as something which exists independently of the three persons; rather, it expresses their common foundational unity, despite their outward appearance of diversity.

It is a noticeable fact that the earlier forms of Trinitarianism are among the most metaphysical and speculative of any in dogmatic history. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of revelation, not of natural religion and therefore the first work to be done respecting it is to deduce it from the language of Scripture. It is not directly formulated, as an affirmative proposition, in any single text; if 1 John 5:7 is spurious. (William G.J.Shedd,1969, 250-258).

We might just attempt to trinity as it has become beyond our scope and any step taken to grasp it will itself inconsistent to the level of its inconsistency. However, William G.J.Shedd, suggested that the revelation itself teaches that these personal characteristics in God are so marked and peculiar, such that the three Divine persons are objective to each other. God the Father and God the Son are so distinct from each other, that some actions which can be ascribed to the one cannot be ascribed to the other. The Father “sends” the Son; this act of sending the Son cannot be attributed to the Son.

He maintains that an examination of the scripture gives the following series of twelve actions and relations of the three Trinitarian persons, which prove that they are objective to one another; that one may do or experience something personal to himself and it is not personal to the other. One divine person loves another, John3:35; dwells in another, John14:10-14; suffers from another, Zach.13:7; knows another Matthew11:27; addresses another, Hebrew1:8; is then the way to another, John14:6; specks another, Luke3:22;

glorifies another, John17:5; confers with another, Gen.1:26, 11:7; plans with another Isaiah9:6; send another, Gen.16:7, John14:26; rewards another, Phil.2:5-11; Hebrew2:9. Here are twelve different actions and relations which demonstrate that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not the same person (William G.J.Shedd, pg270-279).

From these afore going you can see the Second person in the trinity is conscious that he is the Son, and not the Father when he says "O Father, glorify thou me" John 17:5. The first person is conscious that he is the Father and not the Son, when he says, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" Hebrew1:5. The third person is conscious that he is the Spirit and neither the Father nor the Son when he says "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" Acts13:2. These three hypostatical consciousness's constitute the one self-consciousness of the Divine essence. Because of, and as the result of these three forms of consciousness, the Divine essence is self-contemplative, self-cognitive and self-communing.

Though there are three forms of consciousness, there are not three essences, three understandings or three wills, in the Godhead; because consciousness is not an essence and understanding or a will. There is only one essence, having one understanding and one will. But this unity of essence, understanding and will, has three different forms of consciousness: namely, the Paternal, the Filial, and the Spiritual; because it has three different forms of subsistence: namely, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. If it had only one form of subsistence, as in the Sabellian scheme, it would have only one form of consciousness. It would exist only as a single subject and would have only a corresponding consciousness. But this would not be a full and true self-consciousness, because this requires the three distinctions of subject, object and percipient-subject, which are not given in the Sabellian triad (William G.J. Shedd 1969,270-279).

The great mystery of the Trinity is that one and the very same substance can subsist as an undivided whole in three persons simultaneously. That a substance can be divided up, and distributed, to constitute a million or a billion individuals, as in the instance of human nature or species, is comparatively easy to comprehend. But that a substance without any division, or distribution, can at the same instance constitute three distinct persons, baffles human understanding. In the sphere of matter, this would not only be incomprehensible, but absurd. (William G.J. Shedd 1969, 297).

We then can say: Christ in the form of God means, not the eternal accidents, but the essential attributes of God. And Christ in equality with God, we conclude in Equal in the estate, in honour and rank and glory as the Son of God and one with Him in power and dominion over the finite universe. It is evident that Christ was a man, that he might suffer and die for the offences of man; for justice and reason, both required that the nature that

sinned should suffer for sin. But He was God that the suffering might be stamped with an infinite value (Adam Clarke, 1967, 110-111).

Conclusion

The whole confusion can be resolved; if the title “Son of God” as given to our Lord is not used concerning his miraculous conception, if it is not an appellative of his human nature which is occasionally applied to him as a figure of speech when Divine acts and relations are spoken of if it is not given him simply because he assumes our nature nor explained by any office with which he is invested or event of his mediator undertaking, then it follows that it is a title characteristic of his mode of existence in the Divine essence and of the relationship which exist between the First and Second persons in the ever-blessed trinity.

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