



Christian Questions

Think about the Bible like you never have before

Dear David,

Thank you for your question. You wanted to know who the son of God is.

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said; Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:13-16)

The description “son of God” is not used exclusively of Jesus in Scripture. Luke’s genealogy calls Adam “the son of God” (Luke 3:38). Genesis 6:2 associates “the sons of God” with angels entrusted with mankind’s welfare prior to their illicit conjugation with women. Angels are also referred to as “the sons of God” (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). God calls his regathered people Israel his “sons and daughters” in Isaiah 43:3-7. “We have one Father, God,” cried the Jewish audience in John 8:41 in response to Jesus’ accusations. Prospective members of the church, “those who receive him (Jesus),” are called “sons of God” (see John 1:12; Romans 8:14,19; Philippians 2:15; 1 John 3:1,2). Is there a difference in the term applied to Jesus?

Yes, there is. Not Adam, not the angels, not the nation of Israel, and not even the prospective church can claim the special relationship Jesus has with our heavenly Father. Jesus alone is the “beginning of the creation of God” (Revelation 3:14), and he alone reflects the characteristics of God to such an extent that knowing him was tantamount to personally knowing God (John 10:30). Nowhere is this special relationship better expressed than in what may arguably be the most widely quoted verse in the Bible: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten (Greek: *monogenes*) son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

John believed that the Jesus he knew on earth was the one and only, unique, and dearly beloved, son of God. He alone had expressed God’s image and character. Later Paul told Jewish Christians that this beloved Jesus had overcome death and now reflected the glory of God with a position fitting for the loved one that he was and for the work he had done: “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3).

Although others might be called “sons of God,” only Jesus was called “only begotten son.” He was truly unique and especially loved of God.

The thoughts expressed in the above paragraphs were taken from an article entitled, “God’s Only Begotten Son,” by Len Griebs. You may find the entire article on the Internet by typing “heraldmag.org:sonofgod.”

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to listen live to our weekly podcasts or to hundreds of archives at www.ChristianQuestions.com.

Sincerely,

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