

# Truth for Today

*The Bible teaching radio programme*

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**Broadcast Date:** 7 April 2013

**No.** T0775

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## Who is this Jesus?: The Son of David

Today we come to the last talk in our present series, 'Who is this Jesus?' We have considered Him as 'The Son', as 'The Son of God' and as 'The Son of Man'. The title for today's talk is Jesus as 'The Son of David'.

In the Old Testament only those who were the natural offspring of David were called the son of David, so the title 'son of David' was a natural one and had no other use or meaning. You can read the lists of David's sons in 2 Samuel 3:3-5 and 1 Chronicles 3:1-9. However, they are not complete lists, as we know there were sons born to David's concubines as well as to his wives.

In the New Testament we get the title 'Son of David' used 18 times. Perhaps I would be better saying at least 18 times, just in case I've missed some out! There are other similar phrases, "seed of David", and "offspring of David", etc. but for our talk today, we will focus on the title 'Son of David'. I don't think we get this title outside of the synoptic Gospels; that is Matthew, Mark and Luke, and in all but two occasions (Matthew 1:20 and Luke 3:31) it is used in connection with our Lord Jesus Christ.

The very first verse of the New Testament reads, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham", Matthew 1:1. What an introduction to the One who would be the theme of not only Matthew's Gospel, but of the whole New Testament! There are two genealogies of Jesus Christ in the Gospels, one in Matthew, and one in Luke. There's none in either Mark or John, and for good reason. We'll return to this later in our talk.

In these two genealogies we find the other two men who are called the son of David in the New Testament. If we read Luke 3:31, we will see that Nathan the son of David, is included in the list of names which begins with Jesus, and goes through David, all the way back to Adam. So in the same way as it was used in the Old Testament the title is used here of Nathan, one of the natural sons of David.

If we go back to Matthew 1:2, we will see that the list of names begins with Abraham, and runs forward, again through David, to Joseph. Read Matthew 1:20, and you will hear the angelic word spoken to Joseph, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost". Joseph was not born to, or raised by David; nevertheless he could trace his family history back to David and therefore is called a 'son of David'. This is quite remarkable, as there is approximately 1,000 years between the births of these two men, but in case there was any argument about the legitimacy of Joseph's family history, the angel clearly underlines that Joseph was 'of David'. Now this is instructive and helps us understand how the title 'Son of David' is used in connection with our Lord Jesus Christ.

The genealogies of our Lord Jesus Christ were not researched by the disciples in the way some people research their family history today. The Jewish people were very careful, and knew their ancestry and what tribe they belonged to. These recorded genealogies were known, and could be relied upon. There could be no dispute as to the lineage of the Messiah; He was to be the "Lion of the tribe of Judah", as we read in Revelation 5:5. In Philippians 3:5, the Apostle Paul traces his roots back to the tribe of Benjamin.

The four Gospel writers each present the Lord Jesus Christ in a different way:

- Matthew is writing for the Jews and presents Jesus Christ as the 'King'.
- Mark is writing for the Romans and presents Jesus Christ as the 'Servant of Jehovah'.
- Luke is writing for the Greeks and presents Jesus Christ as the 'Perfect Man'.
- John is writing for the whole world and presents Jesus Christ as 'God'.

This would explain why neither Mark nor John record the Lord's genealogy. As a servant, where He came from was not important. Mark is taken up with His faithful and obedient service to God. There is a greater emphasis in Mark's Gospel on what the Lord did, rather than on what He said. You'll find the words 'straightway' or 'immediately' used frequently to convey the thought that Jesus was here not "to be ministered unto, but to minister", Mark 10:45. It is a wonder of God's grace that He chose Mark, (who, it might seem, was not always a profitable servant, if we read Acts 15:38) to write the story of the One who was the 'Perfect Servant'!

John had perhaps a deeper appreciation than the other disciples of the love of his Lord and Master. It was he who lay on Jesus' bosom in the upper room, as the Lord kept the Passover with the twelve disciples and, after Judas went out, instituted the Supper. John never mentions himself by name in his Gospel, choosing rather to refer to himself as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). From the cross, the Lord Jesus entrusted the care of His dear mother to John (John 19:25-27).

John tells us plainly why he wrote his Gospel. Read John 20:30-31 and you will see it was to convince the whole world that "Jesus was the Son of God". There is no eternal life for any who will not confess Him as 'The Son', as we have previously considered in this series of talks. John begins his Gospel by declaring that "the Word was God" (John 1:1). Yes, the one who "was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), was God. Not 'was a god' as some would say but, "**was God**". Now that's the vital difference! Obviously as John was taken up with His Deity, there could be no question of a genealogy for the One who existed before all things.

The different ways in which the Gospel writers (under control of the Holy Spirit) present our Lord Jesus is a wonderful study, and one which will richly bless any who take the time to do it. The Apostle Paul writing to the Hebrews says, "Consider Him..." Hebrews 12:3. How thankful we should be that through the Gospels we can look upon Jesus "as he walked", and through the epistles we can "see Jesus" where He is now at God's right hand.

I don't want to say much more about the two genealogies but we must note the difference between them. Matthew begins with Abraham and through David to Joseph the earthly father of the Lord Jesus. This was the royal line and vindicates Christ's claims as King. Therefore 'Son of David' fits very well within the scope of Matthew's Gospel. Luke begins with Mary's father, Heli and through David and Abraham goes right back to Adam. Although Mary was a virgin and her child did not possess Adam's sinful nature, the Lord Jesus was a true man - body, soul and spirit. Therefore the 'Son of Man' fits very well within the scope of Luke's Gospel.

To understand something of the title 'Son of David' it is vital that we know about David. Who was he? What kind of man was he? The story begins in 1 Samuel with Samuel the prophet who prophesied during the time when the nation of Israel desired to have a king, to be like the other nations (1 Samuel 8:1-22). Eli the priest and his sons were dead (1 Samuel 4:12-18) and although God was displeased, He gave the people of Israel Saul as their king. Saul was a mighty man, physically strong and good looking. In 1 Samuel 9:2, we read, "from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people". God was with Saul to begin with, but He later turned from him because of his foolish ways (1 Samuel 15:10-35).

It is not long before we read of David. Samuel (as instructed by God), anointed David to be king of Israel after Saul (1 Samuel 16:13). David was a shepherd and cared for his father Jesse's sheep (1 Samuel 16:10-12). He was a brave young man, who in the process of looking after the sheep had killed a lion and a bear (see 1 Samuel 17:36). He was also a skilled musician, and ended up playing the harp to soothe King Saul when he was troubled (1 Samuel 16:23). David was the author of most of the Psalms, which would become the 'song book' of Israel, and which are still a great blessing to the people of God today. Wonderful it would be if we could all sing truthfully, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1). The Psalms will again be taken up and used by the nation of Israel in a future day, when the Lord Jesus Christ, the 'Son of David' is on His throne.

Perhaps the most well known of all the stories from the life of David is that of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1-58). Goliath was a giant and had body armour and weapons of war (1 Samuel 17:4-8), David was a young lad with his shepherd's sling (1 Samuel 17:33-40). We know what happened, and David was careful to attribute the victory to the LORD of Hosts (1 Samuel 17:45). The champion of the Philistines was defeated and the armies of Israel got the victory over the enemies of God.

After Saul's death (1 Samuel 31:1-13, 2 Samuel 1:1-27), David became king over Judah (2 Samuel 2:1-7) and seven years later over all of Israel, reigning for forty years (see 2 Samuel 5:1-5). He sinned (see 2 Samuel 11:27). Oh, how greatly he sinned, but God was merciful to forgive him (see 2 Samuel 12:1-31). Through the highs and lows of his life, God was with him and David had this testimony that he was "a man after [God's] own heart", 1 Samuel 13:14. David was a great warrior, and after his death, his son Solomon reigned in peace because of his father's hard fought victories. Although it was in David's heart to build a house for the LORD, because he was a man of war he was not allowed to do so. It was his son Solomon who built the temple of the LORD (see 1 Kings 6).

Perhaps there are four major points in the life of David that would speak to us of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. He was the 'Anointed of God';
2. He was a 'Shepherd';
3. He was the 'Deliverer'; and
4. He was 'King'.

In these 4 points the picture or type we have in David is eclipsed by David's greater Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so this brief summary of the life of David brings us back to our subject' Jesus the 'Son of David'. I made a list of the references found in the New Testament to the "Son of David" or "David's son". As I have already said, I found 16 of the 18 references were in relation to our Lord Jesus Christ and all contained in the Gospels. I found 9 references in Matthew, 3 in Mark and 4 references in Luke's Gospel. Not surprisingly there is no reference to the 'Son of David' in John's Gospel.

All three synoptic Gospels record the healing of the blind men, (Bartimaeus being one of them) as the Lord went through Jericho for the last time on His way to Jerusalem, where He would be put to death (Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43). I find this most interesting. It is as if all these writers were determined to leave on record that these poor blind men gave adequate witness to the fact that Jesus was the 'Son of David'. The nation had rejected Him, the religious leaders were blind spiritually to who He was, but these blind beggars knew He was the 'Son of David'. Although they were told to "hold their peace", in other words "to be quiet", they continued to cry out, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us" (Matthew 20:31, Mark 10:48; Luke 18:39). And He did!

The other reference found in all three Gospels is the time when Jesus questioned the Pharisees and scribes as to who He was (Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44). Let me read from Matthew 22:41-46: "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions".

This is it! This is the point when their unbelief totally condemned them and by their own words - they were silenced. Their knowledge of the Old Testament scripture told them that Christ, the Messiah, was the 'Son of David' but as 'David's Lord', He would be greater than David! They were not prepared to confess Jesus as the Messiah (the Christ) and so rejected the One who was both 'David's son' and 'David's Lord'! The question the Lord Jesus asked then is still as pertinent today.

As John Newton puts it in his hymn:

*'What think you of Christ?' is the test,  
To try both your state and your scheme;  
You cannot be right in the rest  
Unless you think rightly of Him.*

Apart from Matthew, there is only one other reference in Luke's Gospel to the 'Son of David'. Let me read it to you. It is found in Luke 1:30-33, "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end". The message was so great that the archangel Gabriel was sent to deliver it to Mary. We read in Matthew 1:21 that His name was to be "JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins", but here in Luke we read, "He shall be great, the Son of the highest, the Son of David, the King of kings". Although the words I have just used are slightly different, the reference to "his father David" confirms that He was "David's Son". There will be no end to His kingdom! We know David's kingdom ended in broken conditions but the Lord Jesus Christ will "reign over the house of Jacob forever".

The great thought of Jesus as the 'Son of David' is his Kingship. The despised and rejected 'King of the Jews' will soon be enthroned as "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS", Revelation 19:16. Today the Lord Jesus is reigning in the hearts of His people. Christ's kingdom and glory is not seen openly in the world today. Perhaps some Christians are confused by this - that the Kingdom of God is not seen in fulfillment today. The Kingship of Christ, the 'Son of David', has primarily in view the Jews, God's earthly people. The epistles would instruct believers of this dispensation that Christ is "head of the body, the church", Colossians 1:18.

In Ephesians 5:25-27 we read what Christ has done, is doing and will yet do for the Church:

- "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (that is in the past);
- "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (that is the present),
- "that he might present it to himself a glorious church" (that is in the future).

When will Christ take the Church to himself? That we do not know, but we can quote the words of Peter, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise", 2 Peter 3:9. In John 14:3, Jesus says, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also". In Revelation 22:20, we get the last promise of our Lord Jesus and also the prayer of the saints of God. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus".

And so we believe that the day when Christ's power and glory will be seen in this world is not too far away. But that day will not arrive before the Church is snatched away from this earth, the day we call the 'rapture', 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18. Following a period of tribulation, Christ will establish His kingdom and He will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem. In that day the kingdom, which is in 'mystery' now, will be seen in 'manifestation'. "The LORD alone will be exalted in that day", Isaiah 2:11. The Lord Jesus Christ "shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth", Psalm 72:8. The titles to the Psalms form part of the Scriptures, and the title for Psalm 72 is, "a Psalm for Solomon". I believe we need to look at both the reign of David and of Solomon if we are to get even a small picture of how great the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ will be!

We believe that this present day of grace is a period not seen by the Old Testament prophets, a parenthesis in the ways of God with His ancient people Israel. The King is still rejected today. The superscription was put above His head on that central cross in words of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (see Luke 23:38; John 19:20), thus rendering the whole world guilty of rejecting Him. Those who by faith receive Him today are part of the Church, which Christ will soon present to Himself. Israel will then again enjoy the blessing of God, but only after great mourning and repentance.

The prophet Zechariah prophesied of that day in Zechariah 12:10 where we read, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn". This national repentance will usher in a wonderful day - a millennium (a thousand year) reign of Christ, King David's greater Son.

May God bless you all.

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