

The Son of God

Part IV of V of the series:
“The Cosmic War of the Sons of God”

I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

(Psalm 2:7-8)

Hourglass and the Son of God

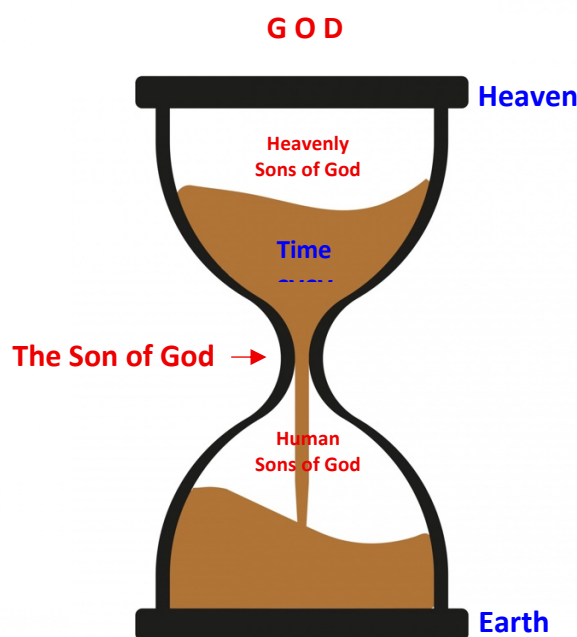
Many of our Christmas songs sing about **Jesus as the Son of God** who fights a **war against the Devil**. For example, you know it well: “**O come, O come, Emmanuel | And ransom captive Israel | That mourns in lonely exile here | Until the Son of God appear.**” It then goes on to say, “**O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free | Thine own from Satan’s tyranny | From depth of hell thy people save | And give them victory o’er the grave.**” Or take this one: “**God rest you merry, gentlemen | Let nothing you dismay | Remember Christ our Saviour | Was born on Christmas day** [No, I don’t think he was born

on Christmas day; conceived maybe!] | To save us all *from Satan's power* | When we were gone astray..." But then it goes on to say, "From God our heav'nly Father | A blessed angel came; And unto certain shepherds ... How that in Bethlehem was born | The *son of God* by name."

On a similar note, I've heard it said that the title for Jesus most often on the lips of demons in the Gospels is "Son of God." This is confirmed by the data (Mark 3:11; Luke 4:41; Matt 8:29 (Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28)). Of course, these are all stories of exorcisms and an exorcism is literally a battle of God vs. the devil. So what is going on with this title "Son of God" and its relationship to Satan? This question leads to an amazing biblical theological truth.

To help prepare you for what we entered into last week, this week, and then next week, and that we began even in our first week, picture a common hourglass, that ancient timekeeping device consisting of two glass bulbs connected by a narrow neck, allowing sand to flow from the upper bulb to the lower one. The sand takes a fixed amount of time, typically an hour, to pass through, measuring time as it flows. Now, let's allow each part of the hourglass to represent something. The sand's movement will still depict time. The top of

the glass will represent **the heavenly realm** and its bulb will represent the heavenly beings, those gods of week 2 and especially “sons of God” that we looked at last time. **The bottom** of the glass will represent earth and its bulb will represent **the earthly sons of God** which we will discuss next week. In **the middle** we



have the funnel, the narrowing of the tube. This section will represent **the Son of God**—Jesus, through whom the two realms, the movement of time, and the two distinct classes of sons of God must travel. He is the center, the neck through which all the sands must pass. This is what we will discuss today.

Beyond the hourglass—behind it, under it, around it, over it —is **God**, the one who stands outside of the entire thing, the one who is utterly distinct and the Creator of all the realms and those who inhabit them in this hourglass. He was the focus of our discussion in Week One and we must not forget that, especially today, because an incredible thing happens when you consider everything I’ve said thus far. Because this God is *Triune*: One eternal all-powerful Being who exists as three distinct Persons or Subsistences, one of those Persons—the Second Person—therefore exists outside of the hourglass. And yet, this very *same person* is somehow *inside* the glass and becomes the very focal point of the entire thing. How can this be? Today we are going to look at the Son of God, focusing especially on this title and how it relates to the Cosmic War we’ve been addressing for this series.

The OT Son of God

Psalm 2

The idea that Jesus is the Son of God is **not something that the NT made up**. In fact, this has deep and profoundly important OT roots that we must grasp before looking at

what the NT says. I think a good place to begin is in [Psalm 2](#). It is a Royal Psalm, tied directly to Psalm 1 as the opening two songs of the entire Psalter. Psalm 1 begins and Psalm 2 ends the same way. “*Blessed (’ashre) is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked...*” ([Ps 1:1](#)). “*Blessed (’ashre) are all who take refuge in him*” ([2:12](#)). The “him” at the end of Psalm 2 is specifically said to be “[the Son](#).” “*Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish (’bd) in the way (derek).*” Similarly, Psalm 1 ends, “... the way (*derek*) of the wicked will perish (’bd)” ([1:6](#)).

Who is this “son?” Psalm 2 famously [begins in a war](#). “*Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?*” ([Ps 2:1](#)). So it is a war that earthly peoples are waging. But [vs. 2](#) adds to it. “*The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together.*” The kings are specifically said to be “of the earth,” and so it stands to reason that the “rulers” may not be. In fact, the LXX uses the word [archōn](#) here. And we’ve seen how this is a word that often refers to heavenly rulers or princes such as the *archōns* of Persia and Greece ([Dan 10:13, 20](#)).

[Who are they standing against?](#) The Psalm continues, “*Against the LORD (Yahweh) and against his Anointed*

(*mashiach*/messiah)” (Ps 2:2). Who is this *messiah*? Vs. 4 says, “He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord (*Adonai*) holds them in derision.” This clearly shows the first two persons of the Holy Trinity. One in heaven and another Lord: *Adonai*. As Origen said, “Not only by their appearance have they moved the crowds against Christ, but whatever has been done by them is counted as if they had assailed the Father. So, it is said that these had turned against the Lord and his anointed” (Origen, *Selections from the Psalms* 2. 1–2).¹

This is confirmed in vs. 6 where one talks to the other. “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” He then gives a prophecy. “I will tell of the decree: The LORD (Yahweh) said to me, ‘You are *my Son*; today I have begotten you” (7). So there we have the Son language for the first time in the OT clearly articulated.

In fact, this verse is alluded to (Matt 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; John 1:49; and perhaps Matt 28:18-20; Rev 2:26-27; 11:15) or directly quoted (Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5) at least a dozen times in the NT, each time not as talking to David, but to David’s greater Son ... Jesus.

¹ Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Psalms 1–50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 13.

What comes next in **vs. 8** is absolutely vital. “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage (“inheritance” KJV), and the ends of the earth your possession.” What in the world is this talking about? That is the question we now need to dig into.

Deuteronomy 32:9

Where does this idea about the Son inheriting nations originate? That’s a question that not a lot of people ask. I guess they just assume that it begins right here. But it doesn’t. To answer that, we need to go back to a passage we looked at last week. This is one of those passages that the rabbis of the second century deliberately changed. **Deut 32:7-8** said, “Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you. When the Most High gave to the nations their *inheritance*, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of *the sons of God*.” There’s our “sons of God” language that we looked at. But now we want to look at **vs. 9**. “But the LORD’s (Yahweh) *portion* is his people, Jacob his

allotted *heritage/inheritance*.” And *there’s your inheritance language*.

But now you need to think about something. We have the LORD or Yahweh being the one who is inheriting Israel. So ask yourself a question. What kind of people inherit things? Fathers? No. *Sons inherit*. Think about the Prodigal’s Son story. Daddy didn’t inherit anything in that story. This is why Elyon (the Most High) gives the inheritance in Deut 32:7. This title is the equivalent of El among the Canaanites, the father god who had the seventy sons of God. In fact, Elyon is always related to the nations and/or divine council in the OT (see *Gen 14:18-20* and Melchizedek, Num *24:16* and Balaam; *Deut 32:7-9*; Ps *46:4*; *47:2*; *83:18*; *Isa 14:14* and Lucifer; etc.).

I believe the very reason why the rabbis changed the text to “*sons of Israel*” is precisely to obscure this truth about vs. 9. If sons of God inherit the nations from the heavenly Father, then it must be the *Son* of God who inherits Israel. But if it is “*sons of Israel*,” rather than “*sons of God*,” then no one is the wiser, and everyone keeps reading vs. 9 like you probably have your entire life. *It’s just “God” inheriting Israel*, whatever that means. Move along.

But now if you read Deut 32:9 with Psalm 2:8, things begin to fall into place. Originally, the Son inherited and took possession of Israel. But in Psalm 2, the promise is that if he just asks the Father, he will inherit *all the nations*, not just one of them. See the connection?

Now, you might be having problems with this being “Yahweh” inheriting and he’s not called “the Son” in Deut 32:9. After all, didn’t we just read that Yahweh in Psalm 2 is the Father? How can Yahweh be the Son?

For this, you simply need to know that the OT speaks about Israel worshiping only One God (cf. Deut 6:4, “Hear O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one”). That has always been true. And yet, several texts identify *two Yahwehs*. For example, Gen 19:24. “Then the LORD (Yahweh) rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD (Yahweh) out of heaven.” The Rabbis of the days of Jesus and even before we talking here about there being two Yahwehs—one in heaven and one on earth.² And yet, all Jews believed in only one God. Therefore, they referred to this Second Yahweh as a second “power” in heaven.³

² Cf. R. Ishmael b. Yosi (170-200 C.E.), Gen 19:24 (*b. Sanh.* 38b or 4:5, V.11 A-C); *Genesis Rabbah* 51.2.

³ See Alan Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven* (Boston: Brill, 1977).

The church was very aware of this interpretation, and when Jesus came along, this became one of the most popular verses to use of the Father and Son. Justin Martyr (*Dialogue* 127), Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.6.1), Tertullian (*Against Praxeas* 13), Cyprian (*Against the Jews* 3.33), Athanasius (*Discourses Against the Arians* 2.15.13), Basil (*On Proverbs* 7:22), Chrysostom (*Homily 3: 2Tim 1:13-18*), and Augustine (*Tractates on John* 51.3) all used it this way.⁴ It even made its way into a creed: “Whoever shall explain, The Lord rained fire from the Lord (Gen 19:24) not of the Father and the Son, and says that He rained from Himself, be he anathema. For the Son Lord rained from the Father Lord” (*First Creed of Sirmium*, Canon 17).

In the context, this second LORD, the one on earth, is the Angel of the LORD, the one who showed up at the tent of Abraham with two other angels (Gen 18:1ff.) who then went on to Sodom, while the LORD stayed behind to give a great promise of a son to Abraham. The Angel is simply called “Yahweh” in many places, especially at the Burning Bush where he tells Moses to say to the people, “The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the

⁴ See Matt Foreman and Douglas Van Dorn, *The Angel of the LORD: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Study* (Dacono, CO: Waters of Creation Pub., 2020): Appendix 2.

God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever” (Ex 3:15; cf. vs. 2).

As he himself says, this Angel simply is the God of the Patriarchs. Jacob says, “*The God* before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, *the God* who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, *the angel* who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys” (Gen 48:15-16). Why would Jacob say this? Remember when he wrestled with a man all night long? Hosea explains, “In his manhood *he strove with God. He strove with the angel* and prevailed ... the LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD is his memorial name” (Hos 12:3-5). John Owen says of this, “In the first place he is called a ‘man’ (‘a man wrestled with him,’ Gen 32:24). In the second, Jacob calls him an ‘Angel’ (‘The Angel which redeemed me,’ 48:16). In the third, he is expressly said to be ‘God, the LORD God of hosts’ (Hos 12:3, 5).”⁵

You need to remember something we saw last time. These “sons of God” were themselves often translated for us as “*angels of God*.” These *princes* of the nations like Persia and Greece—they *are angels*. Thus, the Son of God who inherits Israel is the Angel of the LORD, just like the other

⁵ John Owen, “Exercitation on the Angel,” *The Angel of the LORD In Jewish and Christian History*, ed. Douglas Van Dorn (Dacono, CO: Waters of Creation Pub., 2020), 36-37.

angels inherit their nations, so also the Angel of the LORD inherits Israel. Son to sons, Angel to angels. God to gods. That's the parallel. And yet, **the Angel of the LORD is no created angel**. Jehovah's Witnesses and ancient Arians are quite wrong here. Rather, he is himself the God of Israel. He is the one who compares to no one. He is the Creator of all the angels. He is, to use the language of the psalm, the only "begotten" of God—"very God of very God, of one substance with the Father." Again, that's why our first sermon was so vital, so that you do not make heretical mistakes when hearing about the Son of God.

Psalm 110:3

Let's look at this "begotten" language again. Take a look again at the language of Psalm 2: "The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you'" (Ps 2:7). There is a parallel to this in Psalm 110, perhaps the other most quoted OT text in the NT other than Psalm 2. It begins, "The LORD (Yahweh) says to my Lord (Adonai): Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool" (Psalm 110:1). This verse is quoted (Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 29:42-43; Acts 2:34-35; Heb 1:13) or alluded to (Matt

26:64; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Luke 22:69; 8:34; 1Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12, 13; 12:2) nearly **twenty times** in the NT—the most of any OT passage. It is always cited of Jesus.

Notice how in the verse there are **again two “Lords.”** But this time, one is Yahweh and the other is Adonai, just like in Psalm 2. Both are David’s Lords. One is the Father. The other is the Son. What’s so interesting is that just like Psalm 82:1 or Deut 32:8, etc., we see **a radical change in the text** of **vs. 3**. The Hebrew says, “**Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments, from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.**” But the Greek says, “**With you is dominion in the day of your power, in the splendors of your saints: I have begotten you from the womb before the morning star⁶.**” “The dew of your youth” is *very* different from “I have begotten you ... before the morning.”

Again, we have evidence that very early Fathers such as **Justin** (see [*Dialogue LXIII*](#)), **Tertullian** ([*Against Marcion 5.9*](#)),⁷ **Hippolytus** (*Against Noetus* 16), **Cyprian** (*Against the Jews* I),

⁶ Brenton and Lexham LXX have “morning.” Tertullian and the Fathers have “morning *star*.” The word is *heōsphorou*, and is related to Lucifer (*luciferum* in the later Vul). In the supernatural imagery of the Psalm, this is much better than simply “the morning.”

⁷ N. 5601 in the link with Tertullian is excellent.

Augustine (*On the Trinity* 12), and many others were quoting this from the LXX. Melito of Sardis even says that this verse teaches the begetting of the Son from “the womb of the Lord—the hidden recess of Deity out of which He brought forth His Son ... before Lucifer” was even created (Melito of Sardis, *The Key*). The creeds are predominately getting this theology from this verse.

Obviously, this was being used to prove that Jesus is the eternally begotten Son, a truly mind-blowing doctrine. How can a begetting be eternal? But there’s something else that should be said. The next verse directly compares the Son to Melchizedek. “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek’” (Psalm 110:4). And of course, this verse is cited several times in Hebrews (5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:3, 17, 21). And the language it uses of Melchizedek is truly strange. He is “without father or mother or genealogy.” He has “neither beginning of days nor end of life.” He is literally, “Made like to the Son of God” (Heb 7:3; YLT). He was greater than Abraham (4). He appears not to be a “mortal man” (8). He has an “indestructible life” (16).

Amazingly, there were speculations circulating in the First Century that Melchizedek was himself just a proper name for the Angel of the LORD. Some said he was a supernatural entity (2En 71:34). The Scrolls substitute Yahweh for Melchizedek in Isa 61:2, “The year of Melchizedek’s favor” and that he is actually the God of Psalm 82:1 (11QMelch 2:7-14), and therefore the one who will inherit the nations!⁸ This theology was actually converting many rabbis to Christianity and it was obviously vitally important to Hebrews, which spends nearly three chapters talking about.

And the rabbis of the second century knew it. Therefore, they devised a plan to halt the speculation that the Christians were using to identify Jesus as Melchizedek. They would instead tell the world that Melchizedek was Shem, the son of

⁸ “On the heights [God] will declare in their favour according to their lots; for it is the time of the ‘year of grace’” for Melchizedek (Isa 61:2, ‘Year of the LORD’s favor’), to exalt in the trial the holy ones of God through the rule of judgment, as it is written about him in the songs of David, who said, ‘God will stand up in the assembly of God[El], in the midst of the gods he judges’ [Ps 82.1]. And about him he said: ‘Above it return to the heights, God [El] will judge the peoples’ [Ps 7.8-9]. As for what he said: ‘How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah’ [Ps 82.2]. Its interpretation concerns Belial and the spirits of his lot, who were rebels all of them turning aside from the commandments of God to commit evil. But Melchizedek will carry out the vengeance of God’s judgments on this day, and they shall be freed from the hands of Belial and from the hands of all the spirits of his lot. To his aid shall come all the gods of justice; he is the one who will prevail on this day over all the sons of God, and he will preside over this assembly. 11QMelch 2:7-14. So, Melchizedek is the God of Ps 82:1 and 8 who inherits the nations.

Noah. However, there was a problem with this. According to the LXX, Shem died hundreds of years prior to Abraham's birth. Therefore, they deliberately dropped 650 years of history(!!!) out of the genealogy of Shem to Abraham, thereby making it so that Shem could now magically overlap Abraham historically and could be identified as Melchizedek. No more supernatural interpretation. And lest you doubt me, hear the words of [Ephrem the Syrian](#) (306-73) who said, "The Jews have subtracted 600 years [in Genesis 5] from the generations of Adam, Seth, etc., in order that their own books might not convict them concerning the coming of CHRIST: he having been predicted to appear for the deliverance of mankind after 5500 years."⁹ Does it not make sense then that they would also tamper Gen 11's genealogies and with [Psalm 110:3](#), given that it has such a vital prediction about Jesus being begotten before the world began? Of course it does, and it is really the only explanation that makes good sense, especially given the war we are discussing. It was positively diabolical.

⁹ [Henry B. Smith Jr.](#), "Methuselah's begetting age in Genesis 5:25 and the primeval chronology of the Septuagint: A closer look at the textual and historical evidence," *Answers Research Journal* 10 (2017): 169 n. 3. For much more see [Douglas Van Dorn](#), "Myths, Genealogies, and Scripture Alone: A Sermon on 1Tim 1:1-7," [rbcnc.com](#) (12-5-2021).

Psalm 82

At any rate, I've just mentioned how **Psalm 82** was read by the Jews at Qumran as referring to Melchizedek, whom Hebrews identifies with Jesus. We saw last week that **vs. 1** **was also deliberately tampered with** by the rabbis of the second century because of its profound Christological implications. But now we are ready to see even more.

Recall that **vs. 6** is where it mentions the “**sons of God**.” These are the “gods” of vs. 1 that are being judged for ruling the nations in unrighteousness. Therefore, vitally, Psalm 2:8's great question that if the Son will just ask, the Father will give him all the nations as his inheritance becomes a prophecy that is now codified in **Psalm 82:8**, “**Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!**” So we move **from Deut 32:9's Son inheriting Israel to Psalm 2:8's promise that he will inherit the nations to Psalm 82:8's prophecy that this will now come true**. All of this is tied directly to Jesus being the Son of God.

The NT Son of God

John 10:34 and Psalm 82:6

Now I want to move to the NT in order to see how this works itself out in the life of Jesus Christ. Since we are in Psalm 82, let's first think about **John 10:34**. In the passage, Jesus is being confronted by the Pharisees. They are about to stone him (**John 10:31**). So Jesus relates that all he has been doing are “**good works**,” a theme directly linked to **Psalm 82:2-4** and the evil works that the gods of vs. 1 were doing.

The Pharisees respond that they are not going to stone him for good works, but **for blasphemy**, “**because you, being a man, make yourself God**” (**33**). This is critical. Their complaint is that Jesus is calling himself God—the God of the OT. But how so? This is where so many get deeply confused, not realizing that they are unwittingly promulgating an anti-Christian Jewish myth, the very thing Paul warned the first century church about (**Tit 1:14**).

In **vs. 34** we read Jesus' answer. “**Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’?**” Let's stop here. **To what does Jesus refer?** Because it talks about “*your Law*,” the Jews said this took place *at Sinai*.¹⁰ Of course, this is later Jews such as we find in the second century and later. Almost all Christian commentators realize that Jesus is actually **citing Psalm 82:6**

¹⁰ See **James Ackerman**, “**The Rabbinic Interpretation of Psalm 82 and the Gospel of John**,” *HTR* 59.2 (1966): 186-87.

which uses this exact language. “I said, ‘You are gods, sons of the Most High [Elyon; the same name for God in Deut 32:7], all of you.’”¹¹ So far, I totally agree.

Where I disagree is when the commentators say things like this, “In the Old Testament, human judges could be called ‘gods’ because they were viewed as acting in God’s place in dispensing justice.”¹² This is just simply not true, and was debunked almost 100 years ago.¹³ Of course, many people cite Psalm 82:1 as proof.¹⁴ But that’s precisely why we looked at this verse last week to demonstrate that this was a deliberate tampering with the text by the rabbis *because of Jesus!*

So what is Jesus actually doing? Following the excellent article by Michael Heiser on this against Mormonism,¹⁵ Jesus is not claiming that human rulers are “gods,” and therefore, “I’m a god, you’re a god,” and in those immortal words of

¹¹ As the *Reformation Study Bible* rightly notes, “The quotation is found in Ps. 82:6. The term “law” was not restricted to the Pentateuch, or *Torah*, but referred to any part of the Old Testament as also having legal authority (John 15:25).” R. C. Sproul, ed., *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version* (Orlando, FL; Lake Mary, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2005), 1532.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Cyrus Gordon, “אלהים in Its Reputed Meaning of Rulers, Judges,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 54 (1935): 139–144.

¹⁴ For example, James White, “Carmenn Massa and Dodging the Real Arguments,” *Alpha and Omega* (Sept 16, 2009). White doubled down a year later and has never posted any kind of change of opinion. See “Talk About Scholarly Hubris,” *Alpha and Omega* (Sept 27, 2010).

¹⁵ Michael S. Heiser, “You’ve Seen one Elohim, You’ve Seen Them All? A Critique of Mormonism’s Use of Psalm 82,” *FARMS Review* 19.1 (2007): 221–66.

Jack Nicholson's President Dale in *Mars Attacks*, “**Little people, can't we all just get along.**” People don't stop to think about **how ludicrous this is**. Especially after Jesus finishes talking and it has hardly helped his cause. Citing this Psalm has only made them want to stone him all the more for blasphemy!

Instead, **follow his train of thought**. After quoting Psalm 82:6, “**If he called them gods to whom the word of God came...**” (**John 10:35**). “Gods” refers to the *heavenly beings* of vs. 1. Meanwhile, the Word of God that came is actually the Divine Logos, in other words Jesus himself. He is the God of vs. 1 who judges the Gods! This is clear because in the next phrase he talks about the Scripture—“**and Scripture cannot be broken.**” “Scripture” is now distinct from the Logos. “Scripture” refers to the judgment against this gods that Jesus gave them they would “**die like men**” (**Ps 82:7**).

Jesus continues, “**Do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world** (that is, Jesus himself, whom they are presently confronting), ‘**You are blaspheming,**’ because I said, ‘I am *the Son of God*?’” (**John 10:36**). Do you follow it? **He cites the “sons of God”** precisely because

he is **the divine Son of God**, the one who inherits all the nations in **Psalm 82:8**? He is distinct from the wicked heavenly sons of God. He is the Son of God who came from heaven. Where are these usurpers, not the Pharisees, but guys like Zeus or Apollo?

Jesus then goes on to talk yet again about his good works. “**If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me.**” Why would he say this? Because it was doing good works to the nation you were over that was the prerequisite for inheriting the nations. The gods failed at this (**82:2-4**). Because of it, they were being judged.¹⁶ But not Jesus. He obeys God exactly as commanded as God’s Son.

But **Jesus takes this one step further**, for Jesus now separates himself from even these other gods as he now proclaims, “**Believe the works, that you may know and understand that *the Father is in me and I am in the Father***” (**John 10:37-38**). Jesus equates himself with the Father. He is no mere son of God, even an angel. He is **the Second Yahweh**. He is the **Melchizedek** of the Scrolls from **Psalm 82:1**. He is **the God who stands in the midst of the gods** in the divine council judging them. He is the God who was sent to do the

¹⁶ For more on Psalm 82 see **Douglas Van Dorn**, “[God Stands in the Divine Council](#),” *RBCNC* (Sept 17, 2017).

good works so that he might inherit the nations.¹⁷ Do you see how actually blasphemous it is to deny this and say that human judges are actually the gods? It is a fundamental denial of Jesus' divine status as the Son of God. It is also, as we will see next time, putting the cart of human sons before the horse of heavenly sons. People get this wrong, in part, because they do not understand Bible's story of the sons of God in total. They also don't realize they have been **duped** by textual manipulations made by Jesus-hating Rabbis 1,900 years ago. As Paul said, they have been bewitched.

Son of God at Birth: The Covenant-War Announced

Well, we can't linger here. Instead, let's move through the life of "Son of God" in the NT. Let's start at **Jesus' birth**. How does Jesus as "son of God" at his birth relate to the cosmic war? It is worth noting that **Mark's Gospel begins** this way, "**The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God**" (**Mark 1:1**). And curiously, he immediately begins with a quotation from Isaiah, "**Behold, I send my messenger** (*malak, aggelōn, angel*), **before your face, who will prepare**

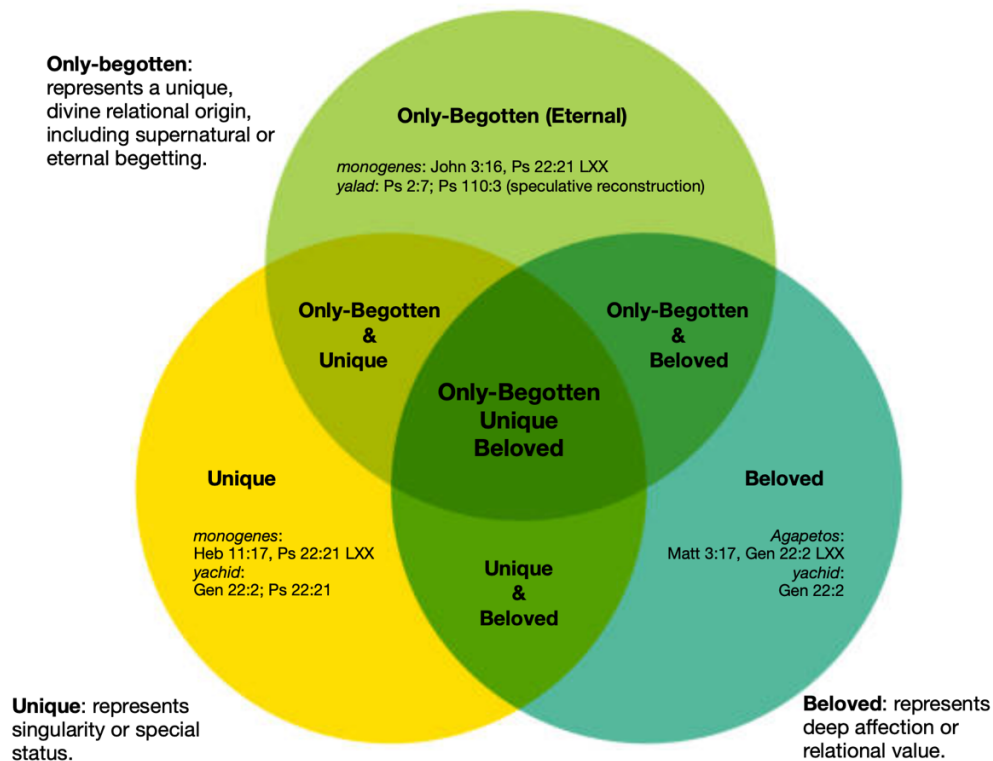
¹⁷ For more see **Douglas Van Dorn**, "**[‘You’ Are Gods?](#)**" RBCNC (10-21-2012).

your way.” Remember after the war of Psalm 2? “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way.”

At his birth, Luke tells us that the angel answered Mary and said, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). As our songs said, simply coming here as God’s son was an act of war against Satan’s kingdom. He had come to retrieve what Adam had abdicated as our prophet, priest, and king.

In John’s Gospel we have something very important. John says that, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the *only Son of God*” (John 3:18). There’s your “Son of God” reference, but now it is attached to what the ESV translates as “only,” not a great translation. The word is *monogenēs*, and you probably know it more famously as “*only begotten*” (KJV). Much better! The difference in translations has to do with the etymology of the word and scholars are not in total agreement. I believe that the word is actually a *triple entendre* that includes the

John 3:16 and the Only-Begotten Son Triple Entendre



meanings “unique” (Heb 11:17), “only-begotten” (thematically: Ps 2:7; Ps 110:3), and “beloved” (Gen 22:2 LXX).¹⁸ Of course, we’ve seen the “begotten” idea in Psalm 2 and 110 and here it is again. Jesus as the eternally begotten of the Father. Those two words are put together on purpose to create a paradox. Jesus was not created. Yet he is always the

¹⁸ On “begotten” see Lee Irons, “[The Eternal Generation of the Son](#),” last accessed 8-15-2014. Basically, two etymologies have been proposed for *monogenes*. “Gennao” (Ps 2:7 LXX) means “to bear, beget.” “Genos” means “unique, class, kind.” It also has very close affinities with “beloved” (as in God’s beloved son; Matt 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 20:13). “Monogenes,” Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 739.

Son. The point is to distinguish the Son from the Father but also to identify the Son as one with the Father—of the same substance with the Father. God of God.

The warfare idea attached to the Son is present in **John 3:18** in that Jesus becomes the Judge of the world. But he also, as the only-begotten, *loves* the world and dies for it in John 3:16, and this is itself an act of war as we will see.

Son of God at Baptism: Covenant-War Affirmed

We next see the cosmic war and the Son of God at Jesus' baptism where the Father cries out from heaven, “**You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased**” (**Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22**). There's the “good works” stuff again. We are saved by works—Jesus' works! I just mentioned how “beloved” is related to “only begotten,” and this is a prime example.¹⁹ And even in John's Gospel it is at the baptism that John the Baptist confesses after seeing the Spirit descend and remain on him that “**I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God**” (**John 1:33**).

¹⁹ As in the previous note, *agapētos* (“beloved”) is the word the LXX translates for “**only** [hrb: *yachid*] **son Isaac**” (**Gen 22:2**). However, Hebrews chooses *monogenes* when it translates the very same verse (**Heb 11:17**). Therefore, *monogenes* and *agapētos* can be synonyms. [See diagram above](#).

Jesus' baptism is a declaration of war. The reason why, for Christians this is the case as Heiser puts it, is because it reflects a public pledge of loyalty to Jesus, the risen Savior, in the cosmic war against evil.²⁰ In 1Pe 3:14–22, Peter connects baptism to the flood and the fallen angels of Genesis 6:1–4, imprisoned in Tartarus (2 Pet 2:4). Baptism, as a “pledge of a good conscience” (1Pe 3:21), a loyalty oath like soldiers take, declaring allegiance to Christ who as we will see has already conquered as the Son of God. As such, it follows that Jesus' own baptism was a similar act of war, where the Father's declaration goes along with the Son's pledge that he will do all as the prophet, king, and especially priest to conquer Satan through his ministry, ala the divine priest-warrior King of Psalm 110!

Son of God at the Temptation: Battle Won

Immediately after his baptism at age thirty—the age the priest was ordained (Num 4:3; Luke 3:23) in water according to law (Ex 29:4), Jesus is taken into the wilderness to be tempted. A fascinating parallel exists in Matthew's version.

²⁰ Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*, First Edition (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 335–339.

“Then [immediately after the baptism] Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (Matt 4:1).

What’s the parallel? “Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur” (Ex 15:22). Paul calls the Red Sea a “baptism” (1Cor 10:2). The thing is, just a handful of verses later (29), we learn that Israel stops at a place called “Elim” (אֵילִם, 'elim). The thing is, elim is a word-play on *elim* (אֵילִם, 'elim): “Who is like you, O LORD, among *the gods*” (15:11). That’s why there are *seventy palm trees* here. Remember how many sons of God there are? Furthermore, Moses immediately leads Israel into the wilderness where God “tests” them. Same word as Matthew uses (*peirazō*).

Thus, when Jesus gets into the heart of his temptation, he is taken to a “*high mountain*,” Matthew tells us. His location is almost certainly the Bashan wilderness north of the Sea of Galilee, and thus the high mountain is almost certain Mt. Hermon (Matt 4:8). Twice, the devil has said to him, “If you are the Son of God,” and then he tempts him (4:3; 6). Now, he offers him all the kingdoms of the world if he will just bow down to him on Baal’s mountain. The Son of God title is thus used again, right here at the point of temptation

in the great battle of Jesus vs. Satan. But Jesus overcame and the angels attended him (11).

Exorcisms: House Plundered

As we've seen, often when Jesus was casting out demons, they declared that he was the Son of God. Exorcisms are a direct assault on the kingdom of Satan. "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" (Matt 8:29). The whole thing began to make the Pharisees furious and so, as he was casting out spirit of a blind, mute, demon-possessed man (Matt 12:22), they accused him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons (24). This is that passage we saw two weeks ago where Jesus identifies Baal with Satan and Jesus words to them were words of warfare. "If I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? ... But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. How can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man?" (27-29). Jesus was waging the war as the Son of God. The demons knew it. The Pharisees, however, were acting like their father the devil.

Son of God at Transfiguration: Covenant-War Declared

As Jesus is called **the beloved Son** at his baptism, so the Father repeats this at Jesus' **Transfiguration** (**Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35**). As I just said with the high mountain in the temptation, this was surely the same “high mountain” at the transfiguration.²¹ The thing is, the Transfiguration is a fulfillment of the messianic prophecies of Psalm 89. From its location on Mt. Hermon (**Ps 89:12**) to its Davidic king (**20, 35-36**) conquering the evil forces (**10**), the transfiguration was **a declaration of war** that could not be missed by the devil—right there on the ancient mountain of the divine council of El and Baal themselves.

Jesus confirms this for he tells his *seventy* returning disciples that he saw Satan “**fall like lightning from heaven**” (**Luke 10:18**). This was said immediately after the Transfiguration in response to their amazement that the spiritual forces of evil were suddenly no match even for them. We will take a **much deeper look at this all** in our final installment next week.

²¹ See **Douglas Van Dorn**, “**A Declaration of War: A Sermon on Luke 9:18-36**,” *RBCNC* (6-4-2023) for both mountains and for what follows.

Son of God at his Trial: Covenant-War Victory Predicted

At **Jesus' trial**, you may recall that the high priest put Jesus under oath saying, “**I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God**” (**Matt 26:63**). This has to be coming from Psalm 2 where by Christ (Messiah) and the Son of God are mentioned together. He knew the implications and he wanted to know if Jesus would admit that he was waging war to inherit the nations.

But **the high priest had a twisted and perverted view** of this prophecy and its fulfillment. Like the others, he wanted a Messiah who would overthrow Rome and make Israel top-dog among the nations. Jesus only says, “**You have said so,**” a classic Jesus non-answer that actually answers the question without answering the question. But Jesus then throws a twist on it. We could do an entire series on the parallel phrase “Son of Man” that Jesus responds with. But he says, “**I tell you from now on you will see *the Son of Man* seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven**” (**64**). For this they claim he has blasphemed, because people do not realize that “**Son of Man**” is as heavenly a title as Son of God is! It is the parallel in that it comes from Daniel 7 where the Son of Man comes to the Father in the

divine council to receive his kingdom. And yet, he comes as a man, not as an angelic being.

At any rate, once he is put **on the cross**, there is **one more temptation**. Fulfilling Psalm 22, the people “**wag their heads**” (**Matt 27:39**; see **Ps 22:7**) and say, “**If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross**” (**27:37**). Then we will believe in him (**42**). “**Let God deliver him now, if he desires him**” (**43**; see **Ps 22:8**). “**For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’**” Don’t fulfill your mission. Don’t suffer as you must. Come down. Show your power. Satan’s last bid.

Son of God at his Death: Covenant-War Ratified

At that moment, **Jesus died**. The Curtain was torn in two. Darkness cover the land. And for one singular moment, the hounds of hell believed they had won. “**But when the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, ‘Truly this was *the Son of God*’**” (**Matt 27:54**). At that moment, Jesus descended into the realms of Sheol and as Psalm 24 says, he stormed the Gates of Hell. “**Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is**

this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!” (Ps 24:7-8).

Jesus, the Son of God, had come. Here, Jesus in the dark underworld after his crucifixion, proclaimed victory over these “spirits in prison,” the fallen watchers long ago imprisoned with their demonic host (1Pet 3:19; 2Pe 2:4). “The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze” (Rev 2:18). “I am here, and hell can no longer keep its captives.” Death and hell shall no longer have power over those who have faith in me, for I am the conqueror, the Rider on the White Horse. The one who sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war (Rev 19:11-14). In the words of Genesis’ on their first album *From Genesis to Revelation*, “The heads they are a-rolling | ‘Cause the conqueror is on his way | And the justice day is coming | For the conqueror is on his way.”

Son of God at his Resurrection: Covenant-War Victory

This is assured at Jesus’ resurrection, which is his vindication by God to all. Paul begins the latter to Romans that he “was declared to be *the Son of God* in power according to

the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 1:4). The resurrection means that Christ is alive. Death no longer has power *over him*. And once alive, he lives forever in his glorified body as the Son.

Finally, there is **the ascension**. Paul tells us that when God raised him from the dead that he “seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church” (Eph 1:19-22). But who is this? Vs. 6 identified him as God’s “beloved,” the language of the Son. Again, Hebrews tells us that in these last days God has “spoken to us by *his Son*, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom he also created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs” (Heb 1:2-4). These show you that Jesus has in

fact not only conquered death, but is now powerful over all the spiritual forces in the cosmic battle of the sons of God.

But there is one more thing to tell you about Jesus, the Son of God. That is, all of this work was not merely to destroy the works of the devil (1Jn 3:8), though that is why he appeared! His work as God's Son was for you—that you may be freed from the tyranny and kingdom and domain of Satan and have peace and hope and life forevermore through and in God's Son. Listen to this good news! It is for you who do not believe. It is even more for you who do.

“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep... For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet... When all things are subjected to him, then *the Son himself* will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all” (1Cor 15:20-28). His resurrection guaranteed that there would be others—even those who have faith in the Son.

Indeed, “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of *his beloved Son*, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation...

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (Col 1:13-20). His kingdom is our kingdom. And not only this, but listen to our hope as we await his return. For we “wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” (1Th 1:10).

All this Jesus did for you as the Son of God. But you must believe it. “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh *I live by faith in the Son of God*, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20). Is this your confession? Can you say this with the Apostle? Turn to him in faith. Do not wait. And keep trusting to the end. For “Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God” (1Jn 5:5)? What a powerful God the Son is. He is God, your Creator. He is also the Judge. Because the Son rules over all powers, we can trust him with our daily fears and struggles. No spiritual force, not Satan, not temptation, not despair—can overcome the exalted Son. He is the Son of God, our faithful high priest. And he knows

your temptations and your weaknesses. He has endured them before you, as the Son!

With John, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life” (1Jn 5:13). So until he returns, “Let us all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Eph 4:13). Let us “hold fast our confession,” for “we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God” (Heb 4:14).

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise him all creatures here below.

Praise him above you heavenly host.

Praise the Father. Praise the Son. And praise the Holy Ghost.

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