

Sabbath School Lesson #1 – Son of David – 26 March-1 April 2016

Christ took upon Himself our sinful human nature for the mission of saving us from sin. Of this mission, Matthew wrote: “And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Jesus asked the Pharisees: “What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?” The reply was, “The Son of David” (Matthew 22:42), and this was correct; for when Gabriel foretold to Mary the birth of Jesus, he said: “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” (Luke 1:32). But here comes a puzzling question, which silenced the unbelieving Jews, who had admitted that Christ is the Son of David: “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?” (Matthew 22:43-45). How? – Because it is a fact that the Son of David is Lord of all; David could not do otherwise than call Him Lord.

The wonder is not exhausted, however, for just as David’s Son is David’s Lord, so our Lord is our Son; “for unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the Government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His Government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Further, Christ is David’s Son and David’s Lord, and our Lord also, and our Son; but He is at the same time the Son of God and the Son of man. He was “born of a woman, born under the law” (Galatians 4:4), yet He was the Son of God sent forth into the world. When Mary asked by what means she, a virgin, should bring forth a Son, the angel replied: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

Matthew traces the genealogy of Christ to Abraham, but Luke traces this back through David, the son of Jesse, Jacob, Abraham, to “Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God” (Luke 3:23-38). Adam, the first man, in whom were all the human beings that have since lived on this earth, was “the son of God,” so that it is not merely from the fact that Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Son of God, but also because He is the Son of Adam, that is, “the Son of man.” The truth contained in this simple statement has power to lift every man born of a woman into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Still again, consider this: In the garden of Eden, just after the first pair had sinned, God said to the serpent: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head” (Genesis 3:15). The Seed of the woman is not merely to be delivered from Satan’s power, but is to crush his head – to destroy him. But who is the Seed of the woman? – It is Christ, you say. Undoubtedly; but the term is unlimited, and therefore it applies to every child born of a woman, whose faith grasps it. The seed of the woman is also the seed of Abraham; and “if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). So it is given to every son of man to crush Satan? Yes; have you never read, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly?” (Romans 16:20). Christ had to become flesh and blood, like the children of men, in order “that He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). He has “authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man” (John 5:27), and to execute the same judgment “this honour have all His saints” (Psalms 149:5-9).

For Christ is “the firstborn among many brethren.” He is in all things like them, only as firstborn He has in all things the pre-eminence. ‘But His birth was supernatural,’ you say, “for He was born of the Spirit.” Ah, how little we know that what we call the natural is supernatural; we are so familiar with the phenomena of birth that we forget that nobody understands its miraculous way. Christ was born of the Spirit, but even in this He was “like unto His brethren,” for Elihu says: “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life” (Job 33:4). Ever since the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters, and brought order out of chaos, there has not been any manifestation of life that has not been of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God in every man’s nostrils (Job 27:3) has kept him in life, and given him power even to wage rebellion against his Maker if he would.

Remember that miracles are God’s ordinary work. He never goes out of His way to do anything. When God fed the Israelites in the desert with bread from heaven, it was only that they and we might ever remember that the bread we make from maize is also rained down from heaven (see Psalms 65:9-11; Isaiah 4:10). When Christ turned the water into wine, at

the wedding in Cana, He merely shortened the ordinary process, omitting some intermediate agencies, to let us know that He is the True Vine. The grape vine takes up water by its roots, and in the course of months of sunshine it becomes wine. Christ had the life that supplies light to the sun, so He did in a moment the work that He commonly does in months. In the miracles God is not doing something extraordinary, for the purpose of astonishing us, but by leaving out the usual agencies, is letting us see that He is the power that is working and accomplishing the result, even when the ordinary time and agencies are employed.

Every birth is a miracle of the creation of God. So in the miraculous birth of Christ, by dispensing with the ordinary agency in the birth, God would demonstrate to us that the human agent is but the channel of the Divine creative life. He shows us how completely His Spirit ought to control in every birth. In the case of John the Baptist (Luke 1:15) and Isaac (Galatians 4:23, 28-29) we see this exemplified when the ordinary agencies were present.

The world was lost. Millions of human beings were serving in cruel bondage, toiling in the most abject, degrading slavery, sold for nothing, with only death offered as the reward of their labour. The Son of God, in His Father's house in heaven, looked down in pity on them, and said, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren" (Hebrews 2:11). He was not ashamed to call them brethren. But brethren who all had lost the knowledge of God, and so they were going to destruction, because just as to know the only true God is life eternal (John 17:3), so not to know Him is everlasting death; they did not know that God is the Father of all, and Christ came to make known to them their birthright. The "Son of the Highest" came as the child of the lowest; the Son of God was born of a woman, and thus henceforth was not ashamed to hold His original Sonship by virtue of the fact that He was the Son of man.

Do you think it was nothing that He was sinless? You who talk of 'heredity,' and who sink down in indifference or despair because you had sinful men for your ancestors, give your thought to Him "who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3). He was descended from Adam, as we all are, and all that was evil in human nature seemed to be concentrated in His ancestry. That ancestry included Phares, who was the child of prostitution and incest; it takes in the harlot Rahab; David is most prominent in it, and the woman with whom he committed adultery was the mother of the line that reached from him to Christ. Farther down in that line we find Jehoram, the fratricide, who, by reason of his excessive wickedness, died a loathsome death, despised by his people; Ahaziah, whose "mother was his counsellor to do wickedly," and who "did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab," of whom it was said, "there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord;" Ahaz, who did "according to the abomination of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel;" and Manasseh who "seduced Israel" to do "more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel," and who "shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." If you knew of such wickedness among your forefathers you would try to conceal it, and would say that you could not possibly be expected to be sinless with such an inheritance; yet Christ of His own free will had all the weakness and wickedness of His ancestry set forth for all generations to read; and "He knew no sin." How could He be spotless with such a godless ancestry? You may say, 'It was all due to His miraculous birth.'

Yes; and He who knew no sin was "made to be sin for us," "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12). That is, He restores to all who will have it, their birthright. Yet more: He opens up to us the way of life, showing us not only how we may take our rightful place as sons of God, as pure as though we had never sinned, inheriting our nature direct from God, instead of from sinful flesh, but by His birth He shows what ought to be and may be the privilege of every child born of godly parents. Do you doubt it? you will not, when you have meditated long upon what it means to live in the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit; to have only the mind and will of God, and to yield the body as the holy temple of the Spirit of God, so that all the parts are only instruments of His righteousness. When parents are in that state, then it must be that their children will be "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" and to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord will be like training the flowers of Eden. It will be the same miracle that would have been manifest in every birth, if sin had not brought the curse; but "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," so that the life of Jesus may be perfectly manifested in mortal flesh. He frees us from "the corruption that is in the world through lust," making us "partakers of the Divine nature."