

- **Luke 1:35, 39-43**—“And the angel answering said to her, **The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and power of the Highest overshadow thee, wherefore *the holy thing* also which shall be born shall be called *Son of God*.** . . . And Mary, rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, as Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and cried out with a loud voice and said, Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of ***my Lord*** should come to me?”

"That holy thing" refers to His manhood, taken into His Person, as being *intrinsically* holy (“with positive intrinsic superiority to evil”)—such was and is the condition of His human nature. “There was in Him, as man, an energy of holiness that absolutely shut out sin, that shut out all evil.” (C. Crain)

“Christ had human nature, but not fallen. In His case alone was humanity holy, free from every blemish and taint, and pure according to God. It was not only not fallen, but fit without blood to be the temple of God. This is far more than could be said about Adam in his pristine innocency. When Adam came from the hand of God, good as he was, it could not be said that he was holy. There was absolute absence of all evil. God made the man upright before he sought inventions. There was untainted innocence; but holiness and righteousness are more than creation goodness and innocency. **Holiness implies the intrinsic power that rejects evil in separation to God: and righteousness means consistency with the relationship in which one is set. Both these qualities we see, not in Adam but, in Jesus even as to His humanity.** ‘That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.’ He was ‘the Holy one of God,’ ‘Jesus Christ the righteous.’ Indeed He was the only one of whom it was or could be said of **His human nature that it was holy, as it clearly is of humanity in His person that the expression ‘that holy thing’ is used.** The divine nature was not born of the virgin; and it was little needed to call that holy. There was the highest interest and moment in knowing the character of His humanity. Scripture as to this is most explicit. His humanity was holy from the very first, spite of being born of a fallen race.” (William Kelly [WK])

With respect to Luke 1:35, observe that in Matt. 1:23, a passage also speaking of the “virgin birth” of our Lord, it is stated that they “*shall call*” (future tense) His name Emmanuel, which means “*God with us.*” The fact that He would be called “*God with us*” means that He is just as much God after taking holy manhood into His Person as He was before. That is, He is still the same Person! Likewise with respect to the fact of His being called (future tense) the “*Son of God*” upon taking holy manhood into His Person.

“This [Luke 1:35] does not say that Christ became the Son of God by His birth. A comparison with the parallel promise in Matt. 1:23 demonstrates this. Each refers to the supernatural virgin birth of Christ. Matthew 1:23 says, ‘They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, *God with us.*’ Christ did not become God by His virgin birth. He could be called *God* at His birth because He already was God. Similarly, in Luke 1:35, He could be called *the Son of God* because He already was the Son of God.” (Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms*)

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and power of the Highest overshadow you, ***therefore the holy thing also which shall be begotten, shall be called Son of God***”—because the Incarnation did not change who He always was as Son of God from all eternity. The Son of God took holy manhood into His Person. Since the eternal Son is yet one Person after the Incarnation, He is *still*, and is justly called, *Son of God*.

“Both before and after becoming man, His divine personality [*as Son of God*] is always maintained in Scripture. Nor did He take another personality [*another person*] by becoming man. It is one and the same Person that Scripture presents throughout.” (R.A. Huebner)

When He became flesh, He who was eternally the Son of God, was still the Son of God—in virtue of the miraculous virgin conception (Luke 1:35), which was necessary so that there would not be two persons in union with one another, but one Person (the eternal Son) who took manhood into His Person.

According to Luke 1:35, the action of the Holy Spirit was such, in the miraculous conception of the holy humanity, conceived of the virgin's nature and substance, that the angel Gabriel says that

the holy thing born of her should, on this account also, bear the name which He had from all eternity—*Son of God*. That is, as born of woman, He is *still* Son of God. “*The assumption of flesh in no way lowered His Sonship: Son of God eternally, He was still and no less Son of God when born of the Virgin.*” (WK)

We have here "His perfection as man; for, as born of the Virgin Mary, His flesh was holy. He was the Son of God not only when He created the world, but *also* in the world, as the man born of this same Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost." (J.N. Darby)

The *name* Son of God is "applied to the three estates of Christ: Son of God, Creator, in Colossians, in Hebrews, and in other passages which allude to it; Son of God, as born in the world; and declared Son of God with power as risen again from the dead" (JND). "He is Son of God before the worlds, Son of God incarnate, Son of God risen from the dead. He is God; He is Jehovah" (WK).

Compare the following for the significance of *His name* and *eternal relationship to the Father*—that is, *the Son of God, eternal Son of the eternal Father, co-equal in every way in the eternal relations of the Triune Godhead*:

“And as they went to bring his disciples word, behold also, Jesus met them, saying, Hail! And they coming up **took him by the feet and worshiped him**. Then Jesus says to them, **Fear not**; go, bring word to my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me. . . . But the eleven disciples went into Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, **they worshipped him**: but some doubted. **And Jesus coming up spoke to them, saying, All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth**. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them to **the name [not ‘Names,’ but the singular Name of the fully revealed God, the Triune Name] of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit**. And behold, **I am with you** all the days, until the completion of the age” (Matt. 28:9-10, 16-20)

“But Jesus answered them, ***My Father worketh hitherto and I [the Son] work***. For this therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only violated the Sabbath, but also said that **God was his own Father [in such a manner as to be] making himself equal with God.**” (John 5:17-18)

“**That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father**. He who honours not the Son, honours not the Father who has sent him.” (John 5:23)

“**I [the Son] and the Father are one**. The Jews **therefore** again took stones that they might stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewn you of my Father; for which work of them do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for **blasphemy**, and because thou, being a man, **makest thyself God**. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, ‘Ye are gods’? If he called *them* ‘gods’ to whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), do ye say of him **whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am Son of God?** (John 10:30-36)

“The Jews answered him, We have a law, and **according to our law he ought to die, because he made himself Son of God.**” (John 19:7)

“**He that beholds me [the Son], beholds him [the Father] that sent me.**” (John 12:45)

“Jesus says to him, Am I so long a time with you, and thou hast not known me, Philip? **He that has seen me [the Son] has seen the Father**; and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:9)

“**I [the Son] came out from [Gr. para, from with] the Father and have come into the world [‘being the Son, He both willed and submitted to be sent, and being sent, He did the will of Him that sent Him’]**; again I leave the world and go to the Father.” (John 16:28)

“And now glorify me, thou **Father, along with thyself, with the glory which I [the Son] had along with thee before the world was [i.e., in eternity past, before the beginning of time/creation]**.” (John 17:5)

“**Father**, as to those whom thou hast given me **[the Son]**, I desire that where I am they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, **for thou [the Father] lovedst me [the Son] before the foundation of the world [i.e., in eternity past, before the beginning of time/creation, in the eternal communion and intimacy of the Godhead the Father's love ever dwelt in complacent affection upon ‘the Son of His love.’ J.]**” (John 17:24)

“**Grace** shall be with you, **mercy, peace from** God the Father, **and from** the Lord Jesus Christ, **the Son of the Father**, in truth and love.” (2 John 3)

“**That which was from the beginning**, that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes; that which we contemplated, and our hands handled, concerning **the Word of life**; (and the life has been manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and report to you **the eternal life [the eternal Son], which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us**). . . . And we know that **the Son of God** has come, and has given us an understanding that we should know him that is true; and **we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life**. Children, **keep yourselves from idols.**” (1 John 1:1-2, 5:20-21)

“**God [God as such, the (now fully revealed) Triune God]** having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to us **in the person of the Son [the Son become flesh, the Son in manhood]**, whom he [the personal God as such] has established heir of all things, **by whom [by the Creator-Son] also he made the worlds [Gr. aiones, lit. “ages,” meaning the Son made ‘the whole created universe of time and space’; and since the Son created the ages of time, the Son is therefore timeless, the eternal Son]; who being [inherently being in His Divine Person in manhood; the God-Man being] the effulgence of his glory [the radiance of God’s intrinsic splendor and perfections, the outshining of Divine excellence in display] and the expression of his substance [the exact expression and representation of the essential nature or being of God], and upholding all things by the word of his power [i.e., upholding ‘ALL things’ by the Son’s own word of power, and thus His own Omnipotent, Almighty utterance of power!]**, having made by himself the purification of sins, set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high.” (Heb. 1:1-3)

“But as to **the Son [the Father says in Ps. 45:6], Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever**, and a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. . . . And **[as to the Son, the Father says in Ps. 102:25-27], Thou in the beginning, Lord [Jehovah, the Self-Existent, Uncreated, Ever Existing, Eternal One, who caused the ‘beginning’ of all things to begin]**, hast founded the earth, and works of **thy hands** are the heavens. They shall perish, but thou continuest still; and they all shall grow old as a garment, and as a covering shalt thou roll them up, and they shall be changed; but **thou art the Same [another Divine title of the only true God, Jehovah, meaning ‘the self-existent one who does not change,’ in contrast to all creatures who are such as are indeed changeable]**, and thy years shall not fail.” (Heb. 1:8, 10-12)

“**Though he were Son [i.e., ‘notwithstanding the fact that he was the Son,’ and thus not in a place of obedience or subjection, but co-equal in every way in the eternal relations of the Triune Godhead]**, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered [on earth as the God-Man].“ (Heb. 5:8)

“For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most high God [recorded in Genesis 14], who met Abraham returning from smiting the kings, and blessed him; whom Abraham gave also the tenth portion of all; first [‘Melchisedec’] being interpreted is King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of peace; [who is further ‘interpreted’ as being] **without father, without mother, without genealogy; having neither beginning of days nor end of life**, but [that is, the Holy Spirit designed the inspired historical record of Gen.14 to omit any such references, so that Melchisedec’s person and priesthood would serve as a type and thus be] **assimilated to the Son of God, abides a priest continually [our Lord, in regard to His Manhood, did have ‘mother,’ ‘genealogy,’ ‘beginning of days’ and ‘end of life,’ but absolutely not so in regard to His deity as the eternal Son of God, who as such has neither beginning nor end, being Himself the Eternal Life in His Person, who in this sense was thus ‘without father’ too, i.e.,**

in the sense of being without any derivation or source of origin/life/existence, but is Eternal, Timeless and Self-Existent].” (Heb. 7:1-3)

“Herein as to us has been manifested the love of God, that **God has sent his only-begotten [monogenes, meaning only, unique, one-of-a-kind and most-deeply-loved] Son into the world**, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son a propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:9-10)

“No one has seen God at any time; the only-begotten [monogenes, meaning only, unique, one-of-a-kind and most-deeply-loved] Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John 1:18)

The eternal Sonship of Christ is not dependent on the notion of the “eternal generation” of the Son, which latter I reject. But the truth of His eternal Sonship itself is absolutely vital!

“While I hold to eternal relationships in the Godhead, I reject the metaphysical speculations about 'the eternal generation of the Son,' 'begotten before all worlds,' eternal procession' of either the Son or the Spirit, or *any thought of subordination within the Godhead*. The notion that when one rejects 'eternal generation of the Son,' therefore he must also reject the eternal Sonship, is absurd. The eternal Sonship is not dependent on metaphysical speculations based on misunderstanding of certain scriptures and confusion about 'only begotten Son.' ” (R.A. Huebner [RAH])

Note on “only-begotten” (Gr. *monogenes*): *Monogenes* occurs a total of nine times in the NT, five of which are used in reference to Christ (and only in the writings of John: John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). It means *only, unique, one-of-a-kind and most-deeply-loved*, and as such speaks of God the Son's *underived, unacquired, unique, eternal relationship* with the Father. ***Monogenes carries no inherent notions of being “generated” or “begotten” (which are entirely different words in the original Hebrew and Greek, and never used of Christ as to His eternal Sonship in the Godhead, but only in relation to the manhood taken into His Person as, e.g., in Psalm 2:7 and Luke 1:35).*** This is evident from the fact that our Saviour is and always remains the *Monogenes* Son even with the *myriad* of believers who have indeed been “*begotten*” as children of God through the new birth and given the place of sonship as “*sons of God*.” Moreover, compare the use and meaning of *monogenes* in **Heb. 11:17—along with the Hebrew equivalent in Gen. 22:2** (on which Heb. 11:17 is based)—in regard to Isaac in relationship to Abraham: “By faith Abraham, when tried, offered up Isaac, and he who had received to himself the promises offered up his ***only-begotten {monogenes}***” (Heb. 11:17). “And he [God] said [to Abraham], ***Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, Isaac,*** and get thee into the land of Moriah, and there offer him up for a burnt-offering on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (Gen. 22:2). But Abraham clearly had *more than one* son; in fact, Ishmael was his *first* son, born 13 years earlier! Isaac was thus Abraham's “only-begotten” in the sense of being the *unique, one-of-a-kind and most-deeply-loved son in relationship* with his father Abraham!

Christ is “the Son in the highest possible character, the only-begotten Son, distinguishing Him thus from any other who might, in a subordinate sense, be son of God. ‘The only-begotten Son, *which is* in the bosom of the Father.’ Observe: not which *was* [nor ‘*which came to be*’], but ‘*which is*’ [‘*the one being*’]. He is viewed as retaining the same perfect intimacy with the Father, entirely unimpaired by local or any other circumstances He had entered. Nothing in the slightest degree detracted from His own personal glory, and from the infinitely near relationship which He had had with the Father from all eternity.... Under all changes, outwardly, he abode as from eternity the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father.” (William Kelly [WK])