

Heidelberg Catechism 33 – What does “Son of God” mean?

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord: We use the word “angel” with different meanings.
We call the angels in heaven “angels.”
We call beautiful women “angels.”
We call sweet and kind people “angels.”

So, when you read your Bible and you see the word “angel,” do you think of a beautiful woman? No! You don’t take the modern use of “angel” and implant it back on the Bible! You have to know what “angel” means in its context!

So now consider the word “son” and how it is used in the Bible.

“Son” is used to refer to a biological offspring.

“Son” is used to refer to a spiritual offspring. (Apostle Paul called Timothy “son.”)

“Son” could mean a product of the nation. (David was a son of Israel.)

And as you will see today, “Son” refers to the “Son of God.”

If you don’t get this right, you will fall into the trap of cults (like Jehovah’s Witnesses) or false religions (Mormonism/Islam) who have developed an erroneous view of the “Son of God.”

Our headings are:

Jesus Christ is the Eternal Natural Son

You are the Adopted sons of God

Our goals are: **That you will grasp Christ’s true nature as the Son of God and how that nature was critical for you to become an adopted son of God.**

33 Q. WHY IS HE CALLED GOD’S “ONLY BEGOTTEN SON” WHEN WE ALSO ARE GOD’S CHILDREN?

A. Because Christ alone is the **eternal, natural Son of God**. We, however, are **adopted children** of God– adopted by grace through Christ.

Jesus Christ is The Eternal Natural Son

1. Your Messiah, your Christ, is the eternal natural Son of God.

In what way is Jesus the eternal natural Son of God? Is it in the same way you are a child of your parents? No. **Jesus is not the Son of God in the same way.** At one time you did not exist, then you were conceived, and then you were born.

2. What does it mean that Messiah – Jesus- was the eternal natural Son of God?

a. Jesus is the Son of God from eternity. There was never a time when Jesus was not the Son of God. Jesus Christ **did not become** the **Son of God** after he was born on the earth. Jesus Christ the Son of God **became the Son of Man – the son of Adam – at his birth.**

b. Jesus, the Son of God, always had the same nature of his Father. He was not the product of the Father and someone else – like a mother. This is why he said: **I and the Father are one.**

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the **only begotten of the Father**, full of grace and truth.

c. Man met the Son of God when he became Son of Man – Adam. This same Son of God was there in the beginning with God the Father and was the Creator of heaven and earth.

John 1:1 In the **beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God**, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.

3. Some falsely claimed Jesus became the Son of God at his incarnation and they quote 2 passages.

Psalm 2:7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, **Today I have begotten You.**

Here, the Father was teaching that **man was to view Jesus from that day forward as properly the eternal Son of God.** (It simply appeared so to man!) The word "begotten" refers to a simple "**declaration of Sonship, not the beginning of it.**"

So Psalm 2 was written for your benefit, not Jesus'. So you could read it this way: **You are my Son, and today I declare I have begotten you! It was not intended to teach the origin of Jesus.**

Look now at Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:1 God... 2 has in these last days **spoken to us by His Son...**⁵ For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall **be to Me a Son**"? 6 But when **He again brings the firstborn into the world**, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." 7 And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire." 8 **But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;** A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and

hated lawlessness; Therefore God, **Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness** more than Your companions." 13 But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?

Jesus, the Son of God, is the Creator of heaven and earth and perfectly reflects God's nature (V2). He is greater than man, the prophets, and the angels. He has an eternal throne and will bring the world to full submission to him by **conquering their hearts** in peace or by **conquering their heads** in punishment. **He was anointed "Son" and given all authority before he was born.**

And remember, "firstborn" doesn't mean the one born first. **Firstborn means "priority" or "preeminence."**

Does that sound like your son? **Most sons would starve if their mother didn't cook for them!**

4. Another seriously false teaching concerning the Son of God comes from Joyce Meyer who teaches Jesus ceased to be the Son of God when he bore your sins on the cross.

So, she argued, Jesus had to be born again. That is heresy. It is unworthy of reply. Just note this.

5. Look at another passage showing the Son of God existed long before his birth in a manger 2000 years ago.
The Son of God appeared with the Hebrew youths in Nebuchadnezzar's fire.

Daniel 3:25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the **Son of God.**"

6. Later, the disciples recognized that "Son of God" was not a generic "son of God" but a title of Divinity.

Notice how they worshiped the Son of God.

Matthew 14:33 Then those who were in the boat came and **worshiped** Him, saying, "**Truly You are the Son of God.**"

Even the corrupted Jewish leaders recognized the uniqueness of the Son of God. They accused Jesus of **blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God**, for that, in their belief, made him equal to God. And for this reason, they executed him.

Matthew 26:63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, **the Son of God!**"

Even demons confirmed Jesus was the Son of God and they knew this before he was born as a man.

Mark 3:11 And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the **Son of God.**"

You are the Adopted sons of God

1. Galatians 3 and 4 highlight, by illustration, the difference between the Son of God – who was not adopted - and sons of God - who were adopted.

Jews in Galatia tried to **force Gentile Christians to follow the Old Testament ceremonies**- ceremonies that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ and were no longer required, **in order to be adopted as true believers.**

These Jews believed they were natural sons of God – even genetically, but the Gentiles were not.

However, Apostle Paul argued that only Jesus is the natural and eternal Son of God, (not the Jews) so all Jews and Gentiles believers were adopted children of Christ through Abraham.

Galatians 3: 26 For **you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.** 28 There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Galatians 4:6 And because **you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"** 7 Therefore **you are no longer a slave but a son**, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

2. All who come through the Son of God and are restored with Christly offices (prophet, priest, and king) that were lost through Adam, are adopted and become the children of God by re-creation.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him (the Son), to them **He gave the right to become children of God**, to those who believe in His name:

The one who is baptized with Christ has put on Christ...like you would put on clothes on an orphan you adopt. He covers you with righteousness and gives you a new name.

Revelation 2:17... To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a **new name written** which no one knows except him who receives it."

And the newly adopted children are **given confidence**. They can approach the Lord confidently.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, **these are sons of God**. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the **Spirit of adoption** by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs...

3. It was important for you to be adopted as God's sons but it would have been terrible if Jesus were adopted as God's Son! Why?

Someone who became the "son of God" would not be fit to be a substitute for you! He would not be great enough to die for the sins of the world!

And if someone were to become a son of God, it implies that at one time he was not. Therefore, **he wouldn't be great enough to die for the sins of the world.** All sons of God are sinful! You would still be orphans heading to hell.

4. You were under the law as a slave, but Christ came, paid the price for you, and adopted you.

You are now heirs of the riches of Christ's grace.

Conclusion:

The eternal natural Son of God is the Creator and Sustainer of the world. The eternal natural Son of God was also **the perfect Son of Man** (Son of Adam). This Son of God and Son of Man came into this sin-cursed world to save you with his blood so **you could be re-created and adopted as a son of God.**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Since the Lord Jesus, Son of God, is your Creator and Re-Creator, you can fully put your trust in him for everything in life. You can trust him with your future, with your

job, with your children, with your country, and with your relationships, knowing that he will always do what is best for you.

2. Since the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is your Creator and Re-Creator, you can worship him with your whole heart and mouth. So sing the song: Beautiful Savior, King of Creation, Son of God and Son of Man! Truly I'd love Thee, truly I'd serve Thee, Light of my soul, my Joy, my Crown. When you sing it, mean it! **You were the slave being trained by a slave (the law) and kept in slavery (sin), but Jesus Christ,** the eternal natural Son of God came and redeemed you from slavery and adopted you as his child. So sing it like you mean it.

3. And work for him...in your home, church, community, and country. When you get lax in your work, remind yourself what he did for you.

Finally, if you are a child of God only by creation, then you are God's enemy. Rebellion is in your heart. But Jesus died that sinners like you can be adopted. Would you accept his offer of help today? Would you say: Yes, I want your death to be my death, yes, I want to be adopted into the family of God, and yes, and I want to be in God's household today, not tomorrow? He will adopt you if you ask.