

The Sonship of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God

The Incarnate Sonship of Jesus Christ Defended, and the Eternal Sonship of Christ Denied

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”
I John 5:5

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”
Colossians 2:8-9

The Assumptions

- A. God is.
- B. God gave Scripture.
- C. Scripture is absolute truth.
- D. The King James Version is Scripture.
- E. The opinions of any or all men are worthless in a matter of revelation.

The Doctrine According to Scripture

- A. Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God (Mat 16:16; John 9:35-38; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:20; I John 5:4-5).
- B. Jehovah is one God. He is three Persons, yet one God (Gen 1:26; Deut 6:4; Matt 28:19; I John 5:7).
- C. The Word was Jehovah. He was not a Son, a God, or a begotten God at all (John 1:1-3; I John 5:7).
- D. The Word joined flesh, and only then was there a visible, only begotten Son of God (John 1:14,18).
- E. The woman's seed, conceived by God's power, is the Son of God (Ge 3:15; Luke 1:30-35; Gal 4:4).
- F. Mary's Son, JESUS, fulfilled the prophecies of God's Son, God with us (Is 7:14; 9:6; I Tim 3:16).
- G. Jesus is fully Jehovah (Is 9:6; John 3:13; 8:58; Col 2:9). Jesus is fully man (I Tim 2:5; Heb 2:14-16).
- H. This event occurred in time, not eternity, about 4000 years after Adam sinned (Dan 9:25; Gal 4:4-5).
- I. Since ascending, the man Jesus is at God's side, in subjection to Jehovah (Heb 4:14; I Cor 15:27-28).
- J. As a spotless man, He is a sympathetic and perfect Savior and Priest; as Jehovah God, He is the Everlasting Father and the Mighty God!

The Controversy

- A. The Personal Identity of Jesus of Nazareth has been long questioned, debated, attacked, and hated.
 - 1. God foretold the great enmity between Satan and Jesus Christ in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:15).
 - 2. Satan has long known the humiliating and painful truth Jehovah would promote a man over him, Who would shame and destroy him, which happened 2000 years ago (Gen 3:15; Mat 4:1-11; Luke 4:34; John 12:31; Ep 1:20-23; Col 1:15-17; 2:15; Heb 1:4-14; 2:14; I Pet 3:22; I John 3:8).
 - 3. Satan hates the Lord Jesus Christ and wants to destroy His glory and kingdom by doctrinal lies (John 8:44; 14:30; II Cor 2:17; 4:2-4; 11:1-4,13-15; I Tim 4:1-3; I John 4:1-6; Rev 12:4-5,17).
 - 4. Philip thought Jesus was Joseph's son; Nathanael dismissed Him due to Nazareth (John 1:45-46).
 - 5. Opinions ranged from John, Elijah, Jeremiah, or a prophet, to the Son of God (Matt 16:13-17).
 - 6. The Jews hated and tried to kill Him for claiming to be the Son of God (John 5:18; 10:30-36).

7. A theological speculator, Origen (182-251), a member of the state church, used Greek philosophy to define the Trinity in terms agreeable to pagan Greek minds. His imagination saw God generating the Deity of the Son in eternity past, which he understood as an inferior God.
 8. Arius (250-336), rejecting an inferior God, held that eternal generation made the Son a creature.
 9. The Council of Nicea, governed by Constantine, ruled against Arius and for Athanasius (295-373), who kept Origen's pagan language, which has been the idol of Catholic Christendom ever since. See the pagan Nicene Creed and read their double talk about "begotten before all worlds."
 10. Michael Servetus (1511-1553) attacked this heresy, and Calvin burned him at the stake for it.
 11. Roman Catholics, Protestants, most Baptists, and the Jehovah's Witnesses are united in holding a begotten god from the speculative language of Origen about the eternal generation of the Son.
 12. Today, the controversy still rages, with a very few holding to the Bible language and doctrine.
- B. **Eternal Sonship holds the Son of God, as God, was begotten mysteriously in eternity by the Father.**
1. The Divine Nature of Jesus, His Deity, His Godhead, was eternally generated by God the Father.
 2. By means of eternal generation, God the Father begat, fathered, the Second Person of the Trinity.
 3. By means of eternal procession, God the Holy Spirit mystically proceeds from Father and Son.
 4. This wild doctrine is almost universally maintained by all "Christian" religious denominations.
 5. It is expressed plainly in the formal creeds and confessions, which venerate the Council of Nicea.
 6. The obvious and certain conclusion is a begotten god, which reduces Jesus to a begotten god.
 7. The NASV, in agreement with the Jehovah's Witnesses' NWT, affirms this lie in John 1:18.
- C. **Incarnate Sonship holds the Son of God, Who is Jesus of Nazareth, was begotten in Mary's womb.**
1. The human nature of Jesus, or the body tabernacle for His divine nature, was born of the virgin.
 2. God's power came upon Mary in such a way that she conceived God's Son without use of a man.
 3. Jesus is fully Jehovah in His divine nature; He is the Word made flesh, Immanuel, God with us!
 4. Incarnation is a theological term to describe the infinite God taking on a human nature in time.
 5. Sonship is a simple term describing a male child or person in relation to one or both parents.
 6. Held by some faithful Baptists and others through the centuries, it has been despised by most.

The Importance

- A. Most Christians miss the importance of this doctrine and controversy when they first hear of it.
- B. The difference between Jesus being Jehovah or the begotten god of the Nicene Witnesses is great!
- C. Correct doctrine, truth, is absolutely essential to proper worship (John 4:23-24; Galatians 1:8-9).
- D. Scripture is the written record God gave of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 5:39; 20:31; I John 5:10-13).
- E. Jesus as the Son of God is the main message of Scripture (Matt 16:13-17; John 9:35-38; Acts 8:37).
- F. Doctrine that confuses Jesus Christ as the Son of God is manifestly antichrist (I John 2:21-26).
- G. The born of God victory that overcomes the world is believing Jesus is the Son of God (I Jn 5:4-5).
- H. Paul warned of another Jesus based in complexity and philosophy (II Cor 2:17; 11:3-4; Col 2:5-9).
- I. Pastors and teachers are given to increase the true knowledge of the Son of God (Eph 4:11-14).
- J. The truth of Christ causes division and persecution (Luke 6:22; Jn 7:43; 9:16; 10:19; II John 1:9-11).
- K. If you do not prove the Lord Jesus Christ, how can you have eternal life (John 8:24; I Cor 16:22)?

The Issues

- A. We better know Jesus Christ's identity perfectly! He is the Head, Saviour, Lord, and coming Judge.
- B. Jesus claimed to be Jehovah God, and it is our obligation to understand and defend His identity.
- C. Our faith must stand on Holy Scripture alone without any of religion's traditions and philosophy.
- D. We must earnestly contend for the apostolic faith once delivered against the abominations of Rome.

The Trinity Is True

- A. The incarnate Sonship of Jesus Christ does not deny or weaken the Trinity at all. It establishes it.
 - 1. Only the ignorant or malicious will accuse the incarnate Sonship position of denying the Trinity.
 - 2. The Trinity of the Bible is superior to the speculative Trinity of the Nicene Creed and followers.
 - a. The Bible makes all three Persons without any distinction in their nature whatsoever.
 - b. The Bible knows nothing of “God of God” and other philosophical speculations of men.
 - c. The Bible knows nothing of a begotten god, which confuses the Trinity into paganism.
 - 3. Yet, Rome, John Calvin, and others accuse us of the straw man argument of anti-Trinitarianism.
 - 4. They proudly say we must use Origen’s, rather than God’s, words for the Trinity to be orthodox!
- B. Scripture teaches one God. There is only one Supreme Being (De 6:4; Is 43:10; 44:6,8; I Cor 4:8-6).
- C. God is self-subsistent and independent of others; He is eternal in both directions (Ex 3:14; Ps 90:2).
- D. The nature of God is that complete collection of attributes that makes Him distinctly God (Gal 4:8).
- E. Three Persons participate in this single Divine nature without any degree of difference whatsoever.
- F. The three Persons are the Highest, the Word, and the Spirit (Luke 1:32; John 1:1; Isaiah 48:16).
- G. And the three Persons are the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt 3:16-17; 28:19-20; II Cor 13:14).
- H. And they are Spirit, Lord, and God (I Cor 12:4-6), or Ancient of Days and Son of man (Dan 7:13).
- I. The doctrine of a three-in-one God is revealed plainly in Scripture (I John 5:7), though begotten god advocates deny this glorious testimony in their annual Holy Bible sequels.
- J. The Word and Spirit are wholly “I AM THAT I AM.” The Word is not what the Father begat!
- K. The Word, Who became flesh in the Lord Jesus Christ, was fully God (John 1:1 cp Colossians 2:9).

The Incarnation is the Key

- A. The Word, Who is God, joined a human nature in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:1-3,14).
 - 1. This is the great mystery of godliness – God Himself was manifest in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16).
 - 2. Jesus Christ is also known as Emmanuel – God with us (Isaiah 7:14 cp Matthew 1:23).
 - 3. Jesus Christ is the human body and nature indwelt by the fullness of the Godhead (Col 2:8-9).
- B. The Deity of Jesus Christ – He is truly and fully God – Scripture affirms plainly and unequivocally.
 - 1. The Word is God without qualification; the Word became Jesus of Nazareth by joining His flesh.
 - 2. It is another straw man argument of Rome to accuse us of denying the full deity of Jesus Christ, for it is their doctrine of a begotten god that corrupts the Bible message of His full Godhead.
 - 1. We only can say that Jesus Christ’s divine nature is fully Jehovah God without qualification.
 - 2. They must say that His divine nature is begotten and generated, yielding a begotten God.
 - 3. Only the ignorant or malicious accuse us of denying the full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 3. God is a Spirit. Jesus Christ had a body. Jesus Christ is God, but God is not Jesus Christ.
- C. The humanity of Jesus Christ – He is truly and fully man – Scripture also unequivocally teaches.
 - 1. Mary conceived and bore a human child similar to all other mothers (Matt 1:18-20; Luke 2:23).
 - 2. The only mediator between God and man is the man Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:5 cp Job 9:32-33).
 - 3. God assumed flesh and blood to destroy Satan’s work and be our high priest (Hebrews 2:14-17).
 - 4. Jesus was made in the likeness of men after having been in the form of God (Philippians 2:5-11).
- D. The hypostatic union is the combination of God the Word and a human nature in a single Being.
 - 1. God is a Spirit (John 4:24), but a human body was prepared for God to possess (Hebrews 10:5).
 - 2. Neither Christ’s divinity (John 8:58) nor His humanity (Heb 4:15) was changed by their union.
 - 3. But He is not fully Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour without His body (Luke 2:12; 24:39).
- E. Jesus of Nazareth is the complex Person of God and man – He possesses both complete natures.
 - 1. This point is very important to properly understand God’s record of His Son Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The attributes of one nature are often ascribed to a name derived from the other nature.
 - 3. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, so His Person involves divine and human characteristics.
 - 4. Jesus Christ fully experienced all the aspects of human growth, weakness, and temptation.
 - 5. Jesus Christ, referred to as God, a Spirit, purchased the church with His BLOOD (Acts 20:28).

6. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, DIED (Gal 2:20). But only His humanity died (I Tim 1:17; 6:16).
 7. Jesus, the Son of man, was OMNIPRESENT (Jn 3:13). Only His Deity could be so (Jer 23:24).
 8. Jesus, the Son of man, WAS WITH GOD (John 6:62). Only His divinity could be so (John 1:1).
 9. Jesus, the Son, is SUBJECT TO GOD (I Cor 1:28). Only His humanity will be subject to God.
 10. Jesus, the Son, had a MOTHER NAMED MARY (Matt 1:21). Mary is not the mother of God!
 11. Jesus claimed to be BEFORE ABRAHAM (John 8:58). Only His Deity was eternal (Micah 5:2).
 12. Jesus grew in WISDOM AND STATURE (Lu 2:52). Only His humanity was ignorant (Col 2:3).
 13. Jesus slept (Mark 4:38), but only in His humanity; for His Deity could not sleep (Psalm 121:4).
 14. Jesus thirsted, ate, and did all the things a human nature does, but which Deity cannot do.
- F. Consider our use of names or titles regarding actions or relationships prior to that name or title.
1. We may say, "Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees." But it was truly Abram, who left (Gen 12:1,4).
 2. We may say, "The apostle Paul persecuted the church," but he was Saul at the time (Acts 9:1).
 3. We may say of our wives, "My wife began kindergarten when she was only four years old."
 4. We may say of our parents, "My father was born in northwest Pennsylvania in 1930."
 5. We may say, "Joe died and was buried" (Luke 16:22). However, we know his soul still lives.
 6. With a retrospective view, we may Scripturally ascribe actions of the Word to Jesus Christ.

Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God

- A. The doctrine is most easily comprehended by understanding Who Jesus Christ was and is forever.
1. God is not Jesus Christ. God is an unchanging, eternal, self-subsistent Spirit (John 4:24).
 2. Jesus Christ is the man born of the virgin Mary, Who was united with the Word (John 1:14).
 - a. The child that Mary conceived and brought forth is the Son of God (Luke 1:30-35).
 - b. Jesus is the Jewish name of Mary's Son. Christ designates Him as the anointed Messiah.
 - c. Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua (Hebrew) – Jehovah is salvation (Acts 7:45 cp Matt 1:21).
 - d. Christ (Greek) is the Messiah (Hebrews) – the anointed one (John 1:41; Ps 2:2 cp Acts 4:26).
 - e. God has given Him the name, because (wherefore) of His incarnation (Phil 2:5-11).
 - f. There was no Messiah or Christ until Jesus was baptized (Dan 9:24-27 cp John 1:29-34).
 - g. God had prophesied He would create a new thing in the earth (Jeremiah 31:22 cp Col 1:15).
 3. Our reckoning of time assumes that Jesus Christ didn't exist before the beginning of AD.
 4. God said that Jesus was His beloved Son, but He never said this of the Word (Matthew 17:5).
 5. Jesus, Who is the Son of God, is Someone Who can be seen (John 9:35-37 cp 1:18; Col 1:15).
- B. The Word of God is the second person in the eternal trinity of the Godhead (I John 5:7).
1. The Word was in the beginning with God, and the Word was God in the beginning (John 1:1).
 2. The incarnation did not change the nature of the Word; He simply joined flesh (Rev 19:13).
 3. The Word of life was from the beginning, but it was manifest through flesh (I John 1:1-3).
 4. Jesus Christ is the Word – He is the Word made flesh – but the Word is not strictly Jesus Christ.
- C. Jesus Christ is the ONLY BEGOTTEN Son of God. His begetting was unique from all others.
1. **Only.** 1. One, without companions or society; solitary, lonely. 2. One of the kind.
 2. **Begotten.** Past participle of beget. 2. To procreate, to generate: usually said of the father.
 3. Isaac is called an only begotten son, though Abraham begat eight sons (Gen 16:15; 25:1-2).
 4. Adam is called the son of God (Luke 3:38), but only Jesus is so be begetting (Jer 31:22).
 5. God's elect are called His sons (I John 3:1), and so are certain heavenly beings (Job 1:6).
 6. Jesus Christ is the only man God directly begat in a woman (Luke 1:30-35 cp Jeremiah 31:22).
- D. Jesus is the FIRSTBORN (Col 1:15) and the FIRSTBEGOTTEN (Col 1:18; Heb 1:6; Rev 1:5).
1. He is the firstborn of God, since He is preeminent over all creatures (Colossians 1:15-19).
 2. He is the firstborn and firstbegotten from the dead, since others will follow (I Cor 15:20-23).
 3. Is Jesus a creature in His human nature? Of course (Jer 31:22; Luke 1:35; Gal 4:4; Heb 2:9)!

- E. The Old Testament refers to the Fatherhood and Sonship of God in prophecy of Jesus Christ only.
 - 1. Nathan prophesied God's Son would come from David's bowels (II Samuel 7:12-14; Heb 1:5).
 - 2. The psalmist prophesied of a day God would beget a Son (Psalm 2:7 cp Acts 13:33 cp Heb 1:5).
 - 3. The psalmist prophesied of a future time God would have a firstborn Son (Psalm 89:26-27).
 - 4. Agur prophesied of God, His works, His name, and the name of His Son (Prov 30:1,4-6).
 - 5. Isaiah prophesied of a future Son that would be born of God and a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6).
 - 6. Hosea foretold God calling His Son – as He did Israel – out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1; Matt 2:15).
- F. Denying Jesus as Son before incarnation misses the point: Jesus did not exist before the incarnation.
 - 1. Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the complex Person He is, did not exist prior to Mary's firstborn Son.
 - 2. His divine nature – His full deity – did exist, as the Word of God, Who is undivided Jehovah.
 - 3. But Jesus of Nazareth, born of the virgin Mary, is truly and only and precisely the Son of God.
- G. The devils never cried out before that they had encountered the Son of God (Mark 1:34; Luke 4:34)!
- H. There was never a statement made before like that which Jesus uttered at twelve (Luke 2:49)!
- I. The Son will be subordinate to the Father for eternity, clearly in His human nature (I Cor 15:27-28).

Eternal Sonship Is Not Scriptural

- A. There are none of these terms or combinations to be found anywhere in the Bible: eternal generation, eternally begotten, God of God, very God of very God, Light of Light, eternal Father, eternal Son, begotten God, generated God, begotten Word, generated Word, etc., etc.
- B. If it were not for men in love with Greek philosophy and speculating foolishly outside Scripture, no one would ever think such a thing, that God begat another God just like Himself and called Him Son.
- C. The term "everlasting Father" is used once, but it is a name of the Son, not of the Father (Isaiah 9:6)!
 - 1. Let them be confused forever! If they ever read Scripture, the Son is the Everlasting Father!
 - 2. If they were to speculate from this verse, Origen-like, the Son everlastingly generated the Father!
- D. The Son of God, begotten in His Godhead in eternity, requires by its very terms a begotten God.
 - 1. There is not a single reference anywhere in Scripture even approaching such a pagan concept.
 - 2. Origen, who formulated the doctrine, clearly understood this when the controversy began; and he clearly understood that a begotten God was an inferior God to the One doing the begetting.
 - 3. Arius was the most consistent of all that met at Nicea, for he used Origen's words consistently.
 - 4. The Jehovah's Witnesses, who teach a begotten God, use eternal Sonship to teach a lesser God.
 - 5. Men today truly prefer fables to sound doctrine, but even weak believers reject a begotten God!
- E. Admitting the eternal generation of the second person denies the Scriptural doctrine of the Trinity.
 - 1. Why must older creeds, i.e. Nicene and Athanasius, spend so much time saying they believe it?
 - 2. How are the three identically one in nature, if one begat another in nature! If begat means begat?
 - 3. The Word is not inferior, derived, or begotten in any way the Father is not in nature and person.
- F. Since the Son of God was made of a woman (Gal 4:4), who in the heavens is His eternal mother?
 - 1. The Son of God did have a mother, the virgin Mary. But she could not bear until 2000 years ago!
 - 2. There was no Son of God, until Mary gave birth to the supernatural "holy thing" (Luke 1:30-35).
- G. God spoke to the fathers by a variety of means, but He didn't speak by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2).
- H. Unless one agrees the angels were eternally generated, the Son was made like them (Heb 1:4; 2:7).
- I. If the Son was begotten on a particular day, how was He eternally begotten (Ps 2:7; Hebrews 1:5)?
- J. Son of Man is not a title for humanity and Son of God a title for Divinity (John 3:13; Luke 3:38)!

Eternal Sonship Is Impossible

- A. Since the previous point shows eternal Sonship is not taught in the Bible, let us consider it rationally.
- B. An eternally begotten or generated son is simply impossible. The definitions are mutually exclusive.
 - 1. **Father.** One by whom a child is or has been begotten, a male parent.
 - 2. **Generate.** To beget, procreate; engender. To bring into existence, to produce.

3. Father and son are functional terms that describe a relationship of time, not eternity.
4. Eternal generation says either (a) the Son is still being generated or (b) He had a beginning.
5. While Scripture is superior to reason, there is no Scripture teaching eternal generation.

History of the Heresy

- A. Corruption in doctrine did not take long. It was rampant in the First Century (Acts 15:1-2; 20:29-31; II Cor 2:17; 4:2; 11:3-4,13-15; Gal 1:6-7; Col 2:4-9; II Thess 3:1-2; I John 4:1-6; Rev 2:2,15).
- B. After the apostles, the early “fathers” – Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen – speculated regarding a philosophical, manmade definition to explain the persons in the Trinity.
 1. Origen was the first man to formally use the expression “eternal generation” of the Son of God.
 2. Origen carefully defined the generated Son of God as a God, but not as the Almighty God.
 3. Denying the Son was created, he taught that generation made the Son to be inferior to the Father.
 4. He taught God generated the Son directly as a lesser God, then the Son created all other beings.
 5. Origen first distinguished between “a God” and “the God” in defining the Word (John 1:1).
 6. Origen is guilty for perverting John 1:18 to teach a “begotten God” for the NWT and NASV.
 7. Origen, seeing eternal generation required inferiority, provided the heretical basis for Arianism.
- C. Arius insisted that Origen’s doctrine of eternal generation required a finite and created Son of God.
 1. More consistent than Origen, he denied any existence possible between Creator and creature.
 2. The son must be a creature, not divine in any sense, though the highest and first of all creatures.
 3. **Arianism.** The doctrine that Jesus Christ is not of the same essence or substance of God.
 4. Arians would teach that Christ was God and not a creature by subtle use of semantics.
- D. Arianism attracted many followers. The controversy divided the state church of the Roman Empire.
 1. Constantine called the Council of Nicea in AD 325 to settle this and other religious issues.
 2. The Nicene Creed was the first extra-scriptural, formal statement of eternal sonship from Origen.
 3. Any church or bishop represented at such a state council had long before departed from the faith.
 4. The small, persecuted bands of saints that make up the true body of Christ were far from Nicea.
- E. All Catholic and Protestant, and most Baptist, statements of faith follow this mother church creed.
 1. To deny Christ’s eternal sonship is considered a denial of the Trinity or Jesus Christ’s full deity.
 2. John Calvin burned Michael Servetus in 1553 for denying eternal sonship and infant baptism.
 3. The First London Confession (1644) was rewritten in 1646 with the Nicene language removed, in part by the labors of incarnate sonship advocate, Samuel Richardson.
 4. The Strict and Particular Baptists of England were split in two by this heresy about 1860.
 5. The Plymouth Brethren had a serious division about this matter around 1900, with F.E. Raven maintaining the incarnate sonship position against Darby, Mackintosh, and others.
 6. The controversy continues into the 21st Century, as John MacArthur recants his Biblical position.
- F. The doctrine of Christ’s eternal sonship is one of the steps to gross heresy regarding Jesus Christ.
 1. Origen, who invented the terms, knew full well that they required an inferior begotten God.
 2. Arius, more consistent than Origen, applied the language to make the begotten God a creature.
 3. Athanasius, a state church heretic reverencing Origen, chose to use the same language anyway.
 4. The doctrine assumes by definition and teaches a begotten God, the second person in the Trinity.
 - a. The Jehovah’s Witnesses are consistent in teaching this: the Word is a begotten God.
 - b. The NASV translation teaches this same damnable heresy in its perversion of John 1:18.
 - c. To even say the words is blasphemy, for Jehovah is not begotten in any way at all.
 5. The next consistent step after eternal sonship is to deny the full deity of Jesus Christ, for the inventor of the words and concept of “eternal generation” understood this theological necessity.

Objections Against Incarnate Sonship

- A. Let every reader remember that the whole concept of eternal sonship and eternal generation arrived by way of Origen's mystical allegorization and adaptation of Christianity to Greek philosophy. These arguments are the strained efforts of his followers to wrest the plain sense of the Scriptures.
- B. God's Son surely existed before the incarnation, because GOD SENT HIS SON into the world.
 - 1. Reference texts used to "prove" this point are John 3:16-17; 10:36; I John 4:9; and others.
 - 2. However God sent Jesus into the world, He sent His disciples the same way (John 17:18)!
 - 3. However God sent His Son, He sent His servants the same way before Him (Matthew 21:33-39).
 - 4. When was John the Baptist sent from God (John 1:6)? Before or after he was born to Elisabeth?
 - 5. Isaiah illustrates how a man is sent by God – called to service (Isaiah 6:8; Romans 10:15).
 - 6. The Son God sent forth to redeem was made of a woman (Gal 4:4-5). Note the grammar!
 - 7. If such verses prove eternal sonship, they also prove Christ's preexistence (I Timothy 1:15).
 - 8. Christ existed before being delivered (Rom 8:32), since He was delivered at death (Acts 2:23).
 - 9. Whenever a woman gives birth to a son, she brings a man-child into the world (John 16:21).
 - 10. This is one of the best and most popular arguments for eternal and against incarnate sonship!
- C. Proverbs teaches that Christ, as Wisdom, was brought up with God before creation (Prov 8:22-31).
 - 1. Solomon in Proverbs 8 continues to teach godly wisdom. He is not teaching eternal generation!
 - 2. He is continuing a personification of wisdom, Lady Wisdom, from the context (Pr 8:1-21; 9:1-6).
 - 3. Any begotten God from here must be a daughter, for the pronouns throughout are feminine!
 - 4. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ due to His divine nature (Col 2:3), so we Jesus Christ only indirectly taught from this passage of the Old Testament scriptures.
 - 5. This type of false allegorizing to develop theology and doctrine was Origen's favorite method.
- C. If the Holy Ghost brought about the birth of Christ (Luke 1:35), then He is the Father of the Son.
 - 1. The vain attempt with this passage is to try to make it prove something not taught in Scripture.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit regenerates God's elect (John 3:8; Tit 3:5), yet God is their Father (I Pet 1:3).
 - 3. In their divine nature, the Word and Spirit are the Everlasting Father (Is 9:6; I John 5:7).
- D. Luke 1:35 teaches that Jesus was called the Son of God, not that He became the Son of God.
 - 1. There is no other being in all of Scripture addressed as the Son of God but Jesus Christ.
 - 2. God expressly declares the name Son of God is because of (therefore) the virgin birth.
 - 3. Consider further the adverb "also," which indicates the second reason for the explanation.
- E. Claiming to be God's Son was to claim divinity and equality with God (John 5:17-18; 10:30-36).
 - 1. The Jews were well aware that the promised Messiah Son would be God (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6).
 - 2. Jesus taught that the prophesied Son of David would also be David's Lord (Matt 22:41-46).
- F. Nebuchadnezzar saw the Son of God in the fiery furnace before the incarnation (Daniel 3:25).
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar later admits that the fourth person in the furnace was an angel (Daniel 3:28).
 - 2. Since when did a pagan king of a pagan empire determine theology (Daniel 4:8; Matt 16:16).
 - 3. Son is capitalized due to the lack of formal rules of capitalization (Cp Isaiah 7:14; 9:6).
- G. Melchisedec was made like unto the Son of God, so Christ was before him (Hebrews 7:1-3).
 - 1. Paul also teaches, however, the Son was made like Melchisedec (Heb 5:6; 6:20; 7:17,21).
 - 2. Jesus was not a priest until He took a body (Heb 2:14-18; 4:14-16; 5:6-10; 10:4-14; etc.).
 - 3. Christ's intercessory work as High Priest began after His death (Rom 8:34; Heb 9:11-14).
- H. The Son of God must be eternal, since His goings forth had been from everlasting (Micah 5:2).
 - 1. The Word of God has gone forth from of old. Jesus Christ is the Word of God made flesh.
 - 2. The verse does not say that the Son went forth from everlasting. The Son is the Godman.
- I. God appeared at various times in the Old Testament, thus the Son must be eternal (Gen 32:30).
 - 1. Paul teaches that Christ was with Israel in the wilderness (I Cor 10:4,9). Was it His body?
 - 2. Why then did Daniel prophesy that Christ (Messiah) was yet 483 years away (Dan 9:25-26)?
 - 3. Jesus Christ is the human nature in union with the full Godhead. Did this body preexist?
 - 4. Does God also have an eternal, burning bush (Ex 3:1-6) and an eternal dove (Matthew 3:16-17)?

5. Appearances of God apart from Jesus Christ are temporary similitudes (Num 13:8; John 1:18).
6. These were angels. Did Jacob wrestle with God or an angel, or an angel representing God?
- J. Agur the son of Jakeh makes reference to the Son of God in the Old Testament (Proverbs 30:4).
 1. God had already prophesied of His Son coming from David's bowels (II Sam 7:14-16; 23:1-5).
 2. David had prophesied in the Psalms about the Son God would have (Psalm 2:7; 89:26-27).
 3. If this is to be understood literally, he is denigrating man by his lack of knowledge of God.
 4. If this is understood figuratively, he is using a rhetorical question to denigrate their wisdom.
 5. There is no evidence in the text or context that he is teaching anything positive about the Trinity.
- K. Scripture describes Christ as God's firstborn, so He must be before all others (Colossians 1:15).
 1. The psalmist declares God's firstborn had not yet been born in David's time (Psalm 89:26-27).
 2. Jesus Christ is God's preeminent creature, possessing the full Godhead (Col 1:16-18; 2:9).
 - a. Jesus is the firstborn of every creature. Will you make His divinity a creation?
 - b. This relationship is described in context by Christ's person, works, and position.
 - c. Firstborn in time may not be firstborn in right (Gen 48:13-19; Deut 21:15-17; I Chron 5:1).
 - d. Jesus is the firstborn by having the rights, rule, glory, and superiority to all other creatures.
 3. Jesus is the firstborn from the dead (Col 1:18; Rev 1:5). We also will live (I Cor 15:20-23).
- L. Since God chose us in Christ before time, He must be an eternal Son (Ephesians 1:3-4; II Tim 1:9).
 1. Your argument proves too much. God chose you before time. Are you also an eternal son?
 2. God has covenant relationships with men apart from a vital relationship. Consider Adam.
 3. By God's eternal power, He is able to call things that are not as if they were (Rom 4:17).
 4. Remember that the Word was in the covenant of grace also. He agreed to come as Christ.
- M. If "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14) teaches the preexistence of the Word, then "which was made of the seed of David" (Rom 1:3) teaches the preexistence of the Son of God.
 1. God, Who preexisted (John 1:1), was manifest in flesh (I Tim 3:16). He was not made of flesh.
 2. The entirety of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily. His body did not become the entire Godhead.
 3. Romans 1:3 has a subordinate clause ("which") teaching the descent of the Son's fleshly body.
 4. The Son is described in the New Testament as being made of a woman, lower than angels, etc.
 5. The resurrection declared (manifested powerfully) Jesus to be the Son of God (Acts 2:32-36).
- N. The Son of God reveals God's glory, but this can only be true of His divinity (Heb 1:3; John 1:14).
 1. Consider how far you degrade Christ's humanity; His body contained full divinity (Col 2:9).
 2. The first Adam was made in the image or likeness of God (Gen 1:26-27), but was he Divine?
 3. God being a Spirit, there is no problem in accepting a body as His glorious image (John 4:24).
 4. Such reasoning indicates you do not understand the glory of God. See Exodus 33:17 – 34:9!
 5. God was well pleased with the complex Godman, why can't you be pleased with His conduct?
 6. God is an invisible spirit, so He created a visible man to reveal Himself (John 1:14,17; Col 1:15).
 7. When transfigured, Christ revealed His glory as God's Son (Matthew 17:1-9 cp II Peter 1:16-18).
 8. John, who knew Jesus intimately, didn't seem to think He was very inferior (Revelation 1:9-18)!
- O. The Son of God is addressed in Hebrews 1:8 as God, therefore He is the Son of God as God.
 1. How many non-sequiturs can they form? The Son – Jesus of Nazareth – was fully and truly God!
 2. Inspired Paul in this passage is contrasting Christ, Who is God, with created spirits – angels.
 3. Do not forget the distinction between Jesus Christ's two natures. Jesus Christ is fully God.
- P. The sacrifice of a begotten humanity is far cheaper than the sacrifice of a begotten divinity.
 1. Even the staunchest advocates of eternal sonship do not teach the divine nature of the Son died!
 2. Therefore, God Himself manifest in flesh is the most precious gift He could have given to men.
 3. Why didn't Jehovah ever say anything about His precious Divine Son pleasing Him in eternity?
 4. Divinity cannot be sacrificed, since it is dependent on no others for its perpetual perfect pleasure.
- Q. To be before all things (Col 1:17) and to create all things (Col 1:16) requires an eternal Son.
 1. The verses require an eternal Creator God, but they do not in any way require eternal sonship.
 2. The divine nature of Jesus Christ as the Word must be distinguished from the human nature.

3. If these prove eternal sonship, they also prove His human preexistence (John 1:15; Eph 3:9).
 4. Many apparent difficulties can be resolved by considering the properties of His two natures.
- R. Jesus is said to be the beginning of the creation of God, therefore He is an eternal Son (Rev 3:14).
1. This argument proves far more than most will accept. It would prove Jesus Christ is a creature.
 2. Christ's human nature was created in time (Jer 31:22; Gal 4:4; Col 1:15), but not by this verse.
 3. Jesus, as the Word of God in His Deity, began the creation of God. He made all things (Jn 1:3).
 4. Our Lord is appealing to His infinite authority by referencing His role in creation (Col 1:16-17).

Major Defenders of Incarnate Sonship

ALEXANDER, W. Lindsay (late 1800s)
Scottish Congregationalist

Professor of Theology, Congregational Church Hall, Edinburgh, Scotland. See pages 104-111 and 345-349 in his *A System of Biblical Theology*.

BARNES, Albert (1798-1870)
American Presbyterian

Pastor and author. See his comments on Luke 1:35; Romans 1:4; Hebrews 1:3; and Hebrews 1:4 in his *Notes on the Old and New Testament*.

CLARKE, Adam (1762-1832)
British Methodist

One of the greatest Methodist preachers and writers. See his comments at the end of Proverbs 8, on Luke 1:35, on Acts 13:33, and his "Observations on the Divinity of Christ" at the end of Hebrews 1, in his unabridged *Commentary on the Bible*. See also a short personal history at: <http://www.voiceofthenazarene.org/pdfs/M-FOLDER/HDM1019.PDF>

GRAVES, James R. (1820-1893)
Baptist

See pages 35,40,61-62,80-87, and 260 of his *The Word of Christ in the covenant of Redemption; Developed in Seven Dispensations*.

MARTIN, Walter R. (1928-1989)
Baptist

Author, teacher, and debater against modern cults. See pages 100-104 of the 1977 Revised Edition of his *The Kingdom of the Cults*.

RIDGLEY, Thomas (1667-1734)
Puritan Independent

Pastor and teacher in London. See pages 258-291 of volume one of his *Body of Divinity*.

STUART, Moses (1780-1852)
American Congregationalist

Minister, and professor at Andover Theological Seminary. See Excursus I on Romans 1:4 in his commentary on Romans; see Excursus II, III, IV, and V dealing with Hebrews 1:2; 1:3; 1:4; and 1:5, respectively, in his commentary on Hebrews.

WARDLAW, Ralph (1779-1853)
Scottish Congregationalist

Pastor and professor in Glasgow. See pages 32-60 of volume two of the 1857 Edinburgh edition of his *Systematic Theology*. L.S. Chafer in his *Systematic Theology* refers to him as a foremost proponent of the incarnate Sonship position.

Other Defenders of Incarnate Sonship

<u>BEEBE, Gilbert (1800-1881)</u> American Primitive Baptist	Pastor and writer. See his article in his newspaper, "The Signs of the Times," dated February 15, 1860, http://geocities.com/Heartland/Lake/8890/grace/eternal.html
<u>CAMPBELL, Alexander (1788-1866)</u> Church of Christ	See pages 84-85 and 93-96 of <i>A Compend of Alexander Campbell's Theology</i> , edited by Royal Humbert.
CUSTANCE, Arthur (1910-1985) Canadian Anglican	Scientist, engineer, Bible researcher. See his <i>The Door Way Papers</i> , vol five, appendix 1, "Begotten Before All Worlds."
<u>DAKE, Finis Jennings (1902-1987)</u> Assemblies of God	See his comments on Acts 13:33 in the <i>Dake's Annotated Reference Bible</i> .
<u>ELBOURNE, Donald A, Jr.</u> Baptist	Pastor. See his Biblical study of the subject at this site: http://elbourne.org/baptist/ofbl_docs/THOUGHTS%20On%20Christ's%20Generation.doc
FREE WILL BAPTISTS	See chapter two regarding the Being and Attributes of God and chapter five regarding Christ in their Confession. http://www.generalbaptist.net/resources/confessions/treatise.htm
PARTICULAR BAPTISTS (1646)	The First London Confession of the Baptists (1644) was rewritten in 1646 to remove the Nicene language regarding the Godhead and the Person of Jesus Christ.
PLYMOUTH BRETHREN (Some) (1890)	F.E. Raven (1837-1903) led some Plymouth Brethren to reject the eternal sonship doctrine. Of course, he was resisted by Darby, Mackintosh, and others.
REEVES, Bernard A. Kent, England	Excellent article refuting eternal sonship and calling for return to Bible language and doctrine of incarnate sonship. http://www.bibleguidance.co.za/Engarticles/Sonship.htm
<u>RICHARDSON, Samuel (1602-1658)</u> English Particular Baptist	Pastor and author. See his response, dated 1645, to Dr. Featley's <i>The Dipper Dipt</i> . He signed both the 1644 and 1646 Baptist Confessions. http://victorian.fortunecity.com/dadd/464/Featley.html
ROMAINE, William (1714-1795) English Anglican	See his sermon, "The Self-Existence of Jesus Christ," here: http://www.the-highway.com/selfexistence_Romaine.html
STRICT BAPTISTS of England (Many) (1850-1860)	They are referenced critically by S. F. Paul in the <i>Historical Sketch of the Gospel Standard Baptists</i> (the Gospel Standard Baptists sided with J.C. Philpot for eternal sonship).

SWAGGART, Jimmy
Assemblies of God

See the article in the November 1, 1987, issue of “The Bible Evangelist,” edited by Robert L. Sumner.

THOMPSON, Wilson (1788-1866)
American Primitive Baptist

Pastor and author. See his book, dated 1825, entitled, *The Triumphs of Truth*.

http://www.primitivebaptist.org/writers/thompson_w/Triumphs%20Of%20Truth/default.asp

For Further Study:

1. Evidence for I John 5:7 <http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/1john57.htm>
2. Evidence for I John 5:7 <http://www.chick.com/ask/articles/1john57.asp?FROM=biblecenter>
3. Evidence for I John 5:7 <http://www.geocities.com/riversoflife21c/comma.html# Conclusion to Evidence>
4. Origin of “Eternal Generation”: <http://www.bible.ca/trinity/trinity-subordination-arian-development.htm>
5. Nicene Creed (AD 325): <http://www.reformed.org/documents/nicene.html>
6. John Gill’s History of Sonship Theories: <http://www.reformedreader.org/rbs/gill/dissertation.htm>
7. John MacArthur’s Recantation: <http://www.gty.org.nz/articles/sonship2A.htm>
8. Adam Clarke on Luke 1:35 <http://www.godrules.net/commentary.html>
9. Excellent article by Bernard A. Reeves of England: <http://www.bibleguidance.co.za/Engarticles/Sonship.htm>
10. Excellent article: http://elbourne.org/baptist/ofbl_docs/THOUGHTS%20On%20Christ's%20Generation.doc