

## **ETERNAL SONSHIP**

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There is a great deal of controversy over the subject of Jesus Christ being the Eternal Son.

By saying that Lord Jesus is the Eternal Son means that He has always been the Eternal Son, that He was the Son before creation and throughout all and every dispensation of the Old Testament and that the baby born in Bethlehem was and remains to this day the Eternal Son of God. In other words there was never a time when the Lord Jesus was not the Eternal Son.

The Lord Jesus spoke of God as His Father (John 5.17)

The Lord also said, Before Abraham was, I am (John 8.58)

We read that the Father sent the Son (John 5. 37; 20, 21)

All this strongly supports the view that before the Son came to Bethlehem he was the Eternal Son with His Father in Heaven and this certainly gives credence to the Eternal Sonship doctrine.

In the prayer of John 17, the Lord said, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John 17.5). In verse 24 of John 17, the Lord refers to the love His Father had for Him before the foundation of the world.

This further emphasises the Eternal Sonship.

It has been said that God is three persons namely Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but we must be careful since God is One. There are not three gods.

It has also been said that God is in three persons but that is an error since that more than indicates tritheism, the belief in three gods. There are not three gods.

Over the centuries of the history of Christianity, there have been continual disagreements over the subject of the Trinity and, in particular, the use of the words person and persons. If God is three persons or in three persons there must be three gods and with the correct use of the words person and persons that argument makes complete sense. If God is three persons then there are three gods. It stands to reason.

It will be said that the use of the word persons does not mean that people who use the word persons believe in three gods and that the word persons is merely a convenient way to describe the Trinity.

There are those who are very particular about the correct use of words. The word person means someone with a human body or it means the character of an actor in a play in which the actor is portraying someone other than himself, but these correct meanings does not necessarily exclude using the word to refer to the three members of the Trinity.

The problem is made more difficult because both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are spirit beings. A spirit does not have a human body and God the Father is invisible (John 1.18) and the Holy Spirit is invisible (John 3.8). However, the Eternal Word took a human body and thus became a person.

John’s gospel represents us with the Eternal Word (John 1.1). He goes on to say that the word became flesh (verse 14). In other words the Eternal Word became a person of flesh and blood which

indicates that He did not have a human body previously. Hebrews 10. 5 records that a body was prepared for him.

Why does it not say, In the beginning was the Eternal Son? Why does 1 John 5. 7 say, For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit and these three are one? Why does Revelation 19. 13 refer to the Lord as the Word of God?

Let us clarify a few matters.

That the word trinity does not appear in the Bible does not mean it does not exist. Matthew 28, 19 refers as does John 14.26. God is One and not three gods.

We must beware of Modalism and Sabellianism which states that God can only be one mode at a time. In other words, if He is being the Father, He cannot be either the Son or the Holy Spirit at the same time. That is absolutely wrong.

When the Lord Jesus prayed to the Father to send the Holy Spirit He was identifying the three members of the Trinity (John 14.16).

Many years ago an edit was circulated to brethren assemblies that any member of any assembly who did not hold the doctrine of Eternal Sonship was in grave error and must be excommunicated. It was said that Darby held the view that the Eternal Sonship was a vital doctrine.

C H Brown and many other Christian writers wrote about the appearances of God in the Old Testament and such appearances refer to Jehovah. As the Father and the Holy Spirit are invisible then Jehovah must have been pre-incarnation appearances of the Lord Jesus. Moses asked for the name of God and the reply was I am or I am that I am. Throughout John's Gospel the Lord referred to Himself as I am.

I am is the designation of Jehovah (Exodus 3. 14 -15, Deuteronomy 32. 39, Isaiah 41.4, 43.10, 46.4, 52.6)

Jehovah was promised to come to earth in the flesh (Isaiah 40.3, Zephaniah 3. 14 -15, Zechariah 9.9, Malachi 3. 1).

It is therefore to be said that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Christ of the New Testament.

Many refer to the Christophanies which are the physical or non-physical appearances of Christ before His incarnation. The word means the Anointed Christ made manifest. For example, He spoke to Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden.

But this belief is faulty since there were appearances of Christ after His Ascension such as His appearance to Saul on the road to Damascus ( Acts 9. 3ff ) and to John on the Isle of Patmos ( revelation 1. 12 -18

To sum up so far

All the members of the Trinity are eternal and Divine.

God is One. There are not three gods. Tritheism is a heresy as in Modalism and Sabellianism.

Both God the Father and the Holy Spirit are spirit beings and not persons. The only person in the Trinity is the Eternal Word who became flesh that is to say became a person with a human body which had been prepared for Him.

God the Father and God the Holy Spirit have no bodily form. However, there is a verse in Revelation 5 verses 1 to 7 which talks about the hand of God the Father.

To continue with our main discourse, it must also be remembered that God the Father referred to the Lord Jesus as His begotten Son. The word begotten is the word to procreate, to be born, to beget a child. Hebrews 1. 5 records the Father saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; this day have I begotten thee." There was a day when the Eternal Word became flesh, that is to say became a person and this was when He took on humanity yet remaining Divine.

The question has been asked, How did members of the Godhead speak to each other? Take, as an example, in the days of Abraham, did God the Father speak to His Son using the name of Jesus or Christ? Did He call Him His Son? In other words was He known as Son at that time?

Is it not be right to say that the Eternal Word, who was with the Father in the beginning, was sent to earth for our salvation and, as we read, was given the name of Jesus

(Matthew 1. 21). Was the Eternal Word sent? The opening of John's Gospel confirms this.

Is it that God sent His Son, and the word Son is used because we know Him as the Son of God, and which He is, but before He came was He known in the Courts of Heaven as the Eternal Word?

But it must be stressed that the Lord Jesus did not begin His existence in Bethlehem. He is the Eternal Word of God and it is that which has to be stressed. He is eternal and Divine. It must also be stressed that in God's plan and purpose the Eternal Word was to be sent to seek and save those that are lost and He is the Christ and to be named Jesus for He would save people from their sins. After His ascension, He entered into Heaven where he ever lives to make intercession for us ( Hebrews 7.25) and He is described as the Word of God in Heaven ( 1 John 5. 7 ) and that is how He will be called when He comes again ( Revelation 19.13)

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