SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

INTRODUCTION

A summary of any book in the Bible should answer the following questions:

A. Who is the writer, when and where was the book written and what is the purpose of the book?

B. How may the book be divided and what are good titles for the book and each chapter?

C. What are the most important doctrinal conclusions from the book?

D. What are the most important practical lessons from the book?

E. What is the relevance of the book for our time and country?

A. THE WRITER, DATE, PLACE AND PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

1. The writer, date and place of writing.

The writer calls himself 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'. This was the apostle John. He wrote as a disciple of Jesus who testified to what he had seen and heard. According to the church father Irenaeus, who lived in A.D. 170, the Gospel of John was written while John lived in the city of Ephesus, which is in modern Turkey. The Gospel of John was written between A.D. 70 and 98, but we do not know if it was written before or after his banishment to Patmos or whether it was written before or after the book of Revelation.

2. The purpose of writing.

The purpose of the Gospel of John is stated in John 20:30-31. John says that he wrote this Gospel so that his readers may believe (future tense) or continue to believe (present tense) that Jesus is "the long expected Messiah"[1] and that he is "the Son of God" and that by believing people may have life through Jesus Christ as the Mediator between God and man.

Jesus Christ is the visible revelation of the invisible God[2]. The fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form in Jesus Christ[3]. Jesus Christ is the visible radiance of God's glory (divine

[1] Greek (G): Christ
[2] Colossians 1:15
[3] Colossians 2:9

characteristics) and the exact representation[4] of God's substantial nature, essence, actual being, reality[5] [6]. Jesus Christ not only has the very nature of the eternal and living God and is completely equal with him, but he also took on the human nature and entered the world that he created and its history, and in his human nature became the servant of people and finally died for sinners[7]. That is why he was exalted to the highest place in the universe (God's throne), received the name above every name (the name "Jesus Christ is Lord") and the assurance that every knee in history will bow before him and every tongue in the universe will confess that he is the Lord[8], that is, that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him"[9]. That is why John says that Jesus Christ is God (1:1) and that he took on the human nature and *dwelt in our created world and in our human history* (1:14), in order to reveal and explain the supernatural, invisible and unfathomable God to people (1:18). That is why Jesus Christ says that he and God the Father are one (10:30), that he who has seen Jesus Christ has seen God the Father (14:9-10) and that he who receives Jesus Christ receives God (13:20)[10].

B. THE TITLE AND DIVISION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

1. The title of the Gospel of John.

A possible title to the whole Gospel of John:

"Jesus, the Christ (Messiah),

the Word of God, the Son of God."

2. The division of the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John may be divided into two parts, namely the public and the private ministry of Jesus.

The public ministry of Jesus. It consists of John 1-12. This takes place during more than three years of Jesus on earth. It may be subdivided into three sections by two festivals at Jerusalem.

- John 1-6 describe the events before the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2).
- John 7-10 describe the events after the Feast of Tabernacles.

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[4] G: charaktér
[5] G: hupostasis
[6] Hebrews 1:3
[7] Philippians 2:5-8
[8] Philippians 2:9-11
[9] Matthew 28:18
[10] Matthew 10:40

- John 10:40 to 12:50 describes the events after the Feast of Dedication (10:22).

The private ministry of Jesus. It consists of John 13-21. This takes place during the last seven weeks of Jesus on earth. It may be subdivided into four sections:

- John 13 describes the Last Supper.
- John 14-17 relate the discourses and prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper.
- John 18-19 describe the sufferings of Jesus during his arrest, trials and crucifixion.
- John 20-21 describe the resurrection and appearances of Jesus after his resurrection.

C. THE DOCTRINAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

There are several important Christian doctrines in the Gospel of John, such as:

God the Father sent Jesus Christ (3:17,34-35; 4:34; 5:23-24; 6:29,38,39,44; 10:36; 12:44-45; 13:20; 17:3,21,23).

God the Father *initiates* salvation.

Jesus Christ is God (1:1,18; 3:31,34-35; 5:17-23; 6:46; 8:19,23,24,58; 10:30; 12:44-45; 13:3,20; 14:7,9,10; 15:23; 17:2,24; 20:28).

God the Son *merits* salvation.

The Holy Spirit is the Representative (Advocate) of Jesus Christ (7:37-39; 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:13-15).

God the Spirit *applies* salvation.

Regeneration is God's prerogative and man's prerequisite for salvation (1:13; 3:3-8; 6:44,65; 12:32).

Faith is man's responsibility and i a prerequisite for salvation (1:12; 3:16,18,36; 5:24; 6:28-29,35,40; 7:38-39; 8:24; 12:36,44; 14:1; 20:29,31).

Salvation is expressed in a new life of faith (3:16), love (13:34-35) and hope (14:1-3).

Regenerate Christians have assurance of their salvation (10:28)[11].

Miracles are called 'signs', because they point to the spiritual realities of salvation.

The miracle of the multiplication of bread (6:1-15) is a sign that Jesus Christ is "the bread of life" (6:35).

[11] 1 John 5:11-13

The resurrection of Lazarus from the dead (11:38-47) is a sign that Jesus Christ is "the resurrection and the life" (11:25-26). The purpose of the miraculous signs was to evoke faith in Jesus Christ (12:37; 20:30-31).

In this summary we will limit ourselves to one doctrinal conclusion: *"The teaching about Jesus Christ as God"*.

The apostle John stresses the fact that Jesus Christ is divine and existed forever with God the Father, that he actually assumed the human nature at his incarnation and that he never laid it aside again. Jesus Christ has now a divine and a human nature forever!

1. Jesus Christ is 'the Word of God'.

In speech, 'a word' gives expression to a thought and reveals this thought to others. Likewise, in John 1:1, Jesus Christ is called 'the Word'[12], because he "is the expression of" the inner thought or mind or soul of God and because he reveals God to man. Jesus Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God[13] and thus reveals the almighty and all glorious God to us humans in our limited human words and in our limited human existence. Only Jesus Christ was present with God (1:1) to see what God the Father does (5:19), to hear what God the Father says (7:16; 8:28; 12:49-50; 14:10,24) to read his thoughts and to know him and his plan (7:29; 8:14,54-55; 10:15; 17:25), to receive from God the Father everything that he gave to his disciples (17:7) and to speak what God the Father taught him to speak (8:38). Jesus Christ revealed to man everything what he needs to know about God and God's plan. Jesus Christ is the only Word of God and the final Word of God. He is the only expression of the nature, words and actions of God (1:18). And he is God's final Word to mankind[14]! After Jesus Christ there is no more a prophet who reveals God and his will!

2. Jesus Christ is 'the life' and 'the light'.

In John 1:4-9, Jesus Christ is called 'the life' because he *possesses God's attributes*, and he is called 'the light' because he *manifests, reveals or visibly expresses God's attributes*. The term 'life' refers to the fullness of God's essence, to God's glorious attributes, like his truth, which is his knowledge, wisdom and truthfulness, and also his almighty power, his presence everywhere, his holiness, his love, his sovereignty in every matter, etc.

When this life is manifested, then it is called 'the light'! Thus, Jesus Christ is the visible expression, revelation or manifestation of the invisible God and his glorious attributes.

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[12] G: logos
[13] Colossians 1:15
[14] Hebrews 1:1-2

For example, we can only know and experience the invisible God, his life and his love through Jesus Christ (5:21; 14:6)[15].

3. Jesus Christ is one with God the Father.

In John 5:17-23, Jesus made certain claims about himself. The Jews did not misunderstand Jesus, but rejected his claims.

Jesus Christ claimed that he is *equal in essence* with God the Father (5:17-18). Jesus called God "*his Father*". The Jews immediately understood that Jesus Christ claimed for himself *deity in the highest sense of that term.* They understood that Jesus Christ claimed that he was equal in essence with God the Father. This claim of Jesus Christ was either the most wicked blasphemy, which should be punished with death, or it was the most glorious truth, which should be accepted by faith. God the Father and God the Son have the same nature.

Moreover, Jesus Christ claimed that he was equal in work with God the Father. Just like God the Father, Jesus Christ is always at work, preserving the created universe[16] and saving people from sin (10:9)[17]. This claim of Jesus Christ was the real reason why the Jews wanted to kill him (10:28-31).

Jesus Christ claimed that he is *equal in works* with God the Father (5:19-22). He says, "The Son can do nothing by himself. He can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does". *The activity that originates with God the Father is manifested in God the Son*. The Son sees what the Father shows him, and then by his word and action reveals the Father's mind. The Son perceives the will of the Father and then puts it into effect. Especially two activities are emphasised:

- to give life to the dead.
- to execute judgement.

Jesus Christ claims to have the same authority as God the Father has to impart eternal spiritual life to spiritually dead people now, and to impart immortal physical life to the physical dead people at the resurrection in the future. Jesus Christ also claims that God the Father has given the whole final judgement to God the Son so that God the Son may receive the same honour as is given to God the Father!

Jesus Christ claimed that he is *equal in honour* with God the Father (5:23). He says, "That all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour

[15] cf. Matthew 11:27
[16] Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17
[17] Isaiah 43:10-11; Luke 19:10

the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him". As a reward for his obedience unto death, God the Father has given to Jesus Christ the name above every name. The name of Jesus Christ is above the name of every created human being, above the name of every political leader and above the name of every religious prophet! At the name of Jesus Christ every knee in every country should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord[18]. This same honour belongs only to God[19]! Therefore, when Jesus Christ receives these honours, the glory of God is not diminished or given to "another" than God. The glory of God is rather enhanced, because Jesus Christ receives these honours "to the glory of God the Father"[20]. Whenever God the Son is exalted, God the Father is glorified. There is no other name under heaven given to people by which they must be saved[21]!

Jesus Christ claimed that he is *one with* God the Father (10:30-33). He says, "I and the Father are one." Jesus Christ does not simply refer to the fact that God the Father and God the Son are outwardly one, that is, one in the goals that they have or one in the works that they do. He definitely refers to the fact that they are one in their inner essence and nature. When he says "we are", he is speaking of *two persons*, two inner distinctions within the divine being. And when he says "one", he is speaking of *one substance*, one divine being. Jesus Christ teaches that God the Father and God the Son form one substance that is revealed in two persons. Although the Bible does not use the word 'Trinity', it very clearly teaches the doctrine of the Trinity, namely that the God of the Bible revealed himself as *one God in substance*, distinguishable as *one God in three persons*.

From the point of view in heaven, the one eternal and living God of the Bible revealed himself as one divine being that has three inner distinctions:

- As God the Father he is God in heaven above us[22].
- As God the Son he is God who took on the human nature and entered our world and history[23].
- And as God the Holy Spirit he now lives within the bodies of believers and within the Christian Church[24].

[18] Philippians 2:9-11
[19] Isaiah 45:21-23
[20] Philippians 2:11
[21] Acts 4:12
[22] 1 Timothy 6:15-16
[23] Philippians 2:5-11
[24] 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:22

From the point of view on earth, Christians worship one divine being that has three inner distinctions:

Christians pray to God as God the Father[25] and live their lives to the glory of God the Father[26].

Christians know and approach God through God the Son[27]. They are justified, reconciled and saved through the sacrificial atonement of God the Son[28]. And Christians are strengthened with power[29] and sanctified or transformed into the likeness of God through God the Holy Spirit[30].

John 10:30 is very important, because it maintains both the unity in essence of God and the diversity of three persons in God. It rejects the false doctrine of the followers of Sabellius (a Libyan, third century) who maintained the unity of God, but denied the *diversity of three persons* in God. Sabellius described the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as *only three manifestations* of God, just as the sun, its light and warmth are three manifestations of the same reality.

John 10:30 also rejects the false doctrine of the followers of Arius (a Libyan, fourth century) who maintained the subordination of God the Son to God the Father, but denied the *unity of essence* of God. In John 10:31-33, the Jews understood very well that Jesus Christ affirmed his absolute equality with God, because they again regarded his statement as blasphemy.

Therefore, in John 8:24, Jesus Christ warns the Jews, “If you do not believe that ‘I AM’, you will indeed die in your sins!” The word “I am” is exactly the same as in Exodus 3:14-15 where God reveals his name as “I am that I am”. It is not enough for people to believe that Jesus Christ was just a prophet or just a good man. No, unless people believe that Jesus Christ is everything he claimed to be, they will certainly die in their sins! That is, they will certainly not go to heaven (Paradise), but will certainly go to hell! It is absolutely essential to believe that Jesus Christ is absolutely equal to God the Father.

[25] Matthew 6:9; Ephesians 3:14-15
[26] Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 10:31
[27] 1 Timothy 2:5
[28] 1 Timothy 2:6; Romans 3:24-25; 5:9-10
[29] Ephesians 3:16
[30] 2 Corinthians 3:18

4. Jesus Christ “has life-in-himself”.

In John 5:26, Jesus says, “As the Father has life-in-himself, so he has granted the Son to have life-in-himself. This also describes Christ’s Trinitarian Sonship. Human beings and all other created beings do not possess this “life-in-themselves”, because they are *created* and derive their life from their Creator. But God the Father and Jesus Christ possess this “life-in-himself”.

None but God the Father possesses this “life-in-himself” inherently, because only he is “unbegotten and uncreated”. He is in his very being “the living God” and completely self-sufficient. But God the Father has from all eternity imparted his prerogative to have “life-in-himself” to God the Son. This is the meaning of “only-begotten” with respect to the Son. Jesus Christ is “begotten, but not created”. ‘Begotten’ means that God the Father has bestowed this “life-in-himself” to God the Son in eternity before the creation of the universe and time. This bestowal did not happen at the incarnation or at the baptism of Jesus. This is an eternal act and a part of the unique ‘God the Father - God the Son’ relationship, which already existed in the beginning (1:1). *In the eternal order*, God the Father imparts this ‘life-in himself’ to God the Son, and *in the temporal order*, God the Son reveals this ‘life’ to people on earth. In 1 John 1:2, God the Son is depicted as ‘the embodiment of that eternal life’, which “was with God the Father and was made manifest to us”.

5. Jesus Christ has two natures: he is truly God and truly man.

In John 14:28-29, Jesus Christ says, “If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for *the Father is greater than I*. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe”. Only when this verse is interpreted apart from the rest of the Bible, some people conclude that Jesus is not God or not one with the Almighty God. That conclusion is wrong, because when this verse is interpreted in the context of the Gospel of John, it is clear that Jesus is *here not referring to his divine nature, but to his human nature*.

In what way is God the Father greater than Jesus? According to John 10:30, as the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus is fully equal to God the Father with respect to his essence. That is also the teaching in Philippians 2:6, Colossians 2:9 and Hebrews 1:3. But according to John 14:28, *as the Mediator between God and man, he is himself a man and therefore in his manifestation as a man inferior to God the Father*. The divine nature of God is far greater than the human nature of Jesus Christ. That is also the teaching in John 10:29, 1 Corinthians 15:28 and Philippians 2:7-8.

Jesus Christ has two natures: as God he is fully equal to God the Father and as man he is inferior to God the Father. But because the two natures of Jesus Christ are never separated and because he is never separated from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, therefore Christians must view Jesus Christ as "the visible manifestation of the invisible Almighty God".

That Jesus Christ is "the visible manifestation of the invisible Almighty God" is the clear teaching in the Old Testament and the New Testament. In Isaiah 10:20-23, the LORD (JaHWeH), the Holy One of Israel, is called "the mighty God"[31] as well as "the Lord LORD Almighty"[32]. In Isaiah 9:6, Jesus Christ is called "the mighty God"[33] and in Revelation 1:8 he is called "the Almighty"[34]!

In Revelation 1:8 is written, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, says *the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty*." Revelation 1:7,12 proves that in Revelation 1:8 Jesus Christ himself is speaking. By comparing Revelation 1:4 with Revelation 1:8, we can see that Jesus Christ claims that he and God the Father are One (10:30) and that he is the complete, perfect and eternal revelation of God to people[35].

Therefore, let no one dishonour Jesus Christ by making him less than God the Father. John 5:23 teaches that all people should honour God the Son just as they honour God the Father. Whoever does not honour God the Son does not honour God the Father"!

6. Jesus Christ is not the physical Son of God.

The expression 'Son of God' as used in the Bible, should not be misunderstood!

The Bible speaks of three kinds of 'sons' and these must be clearly distinguished:

- physical sonship
- symbolic or spiritual sonship
- metaphysical or ontological sonship

The word 'son' with respect to Christians. The expression 'son' in the Bible sometimes refers to *physical* descent: a physical son. John 3:6 says, "Flesh gives birth to flesh." With people a physical child is born from a physical father and a physical mother. *The physical sonship (existence) of a human being has a beginning* in history when he is conceived.

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[31] Hebrew (H): El Gibor

[32] H: Adonai Jahweh Tsibaoth, "the Lord God of the heavenly armies of angels".

[33] H: El Gibor

[34] G: pantokratór, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew El Tsibaoth and El Shaddai in the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

[35] Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3

The word 'son' with respect to Christ. But with Jesus Christ that is not the case. Jesus Christ has never been procreated (produced). *His existence has no beginning! Jesus Christ is not the physical Son of God!* The expression 'Son of God' does not refer to Jesus as 'the physical son of God' as some other religions falsely claim that Christians teach.

According to his divine nature Jesus Christ existed from all eternity (1:1). But according to his human nature he was born in time (in human history) from his physical mother, the virgin Mary (1:14). But his human nature was not derived from his legal father, Joseph, but was the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit[36]. Unlike all other people on earth, Jesus had no physical father! And unlike all other people in history Jesus was completely sinless[37]!

We do not call the physical body of Jesus 'the physical body of God', because God is Spirit (4:24) and has no physical body. Also God has no physical relationship as a man with a woman[38]. The Holy Spirit created the physical body of Jesus within the virgin Mary[39]. But the Bible does not call Mary 'the mother of God', because she was only the mother of the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ[40].

From all eternity Jesus Christ is God. But in time he also took on a human body through which he entered the creation and human history. From all eternity the 'Son of God' possesses the divine nature. But in human history he also took on the human nature. It was only in his human nature that he died on the cross in order to make atonement for the sins of his people. And it was only in his human nature that he rose from death in order to guarantee to believers a transformed life *before* they die physically and a resurrected body *after* they die physically.

Jesus Christ did *not become* the Son of God at his birth, but as the eternal Son of God he took on the human nature (a human body) in human history in the virgin Mary[41]. He is still the Son of God *after* he took on the human nature, because at his baptism with water God said," You <u>are</u> my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased"[42]. Also Jesus himself says that he <u>is</u> the Son of God[43]. The apostle John says that he <u>is</u> the Son of God (3:35-36; 5:19-30). And the apostle Paul says that he <u>is</u> the Son of God[44].

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[36] Luke 1:35
[37] 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15
[38] Cp. Matthew 22:30. "At the resurrection, people will not marry … but will be like the angels in heaven."
[39] Luke 1:35
[40] Luke 1:43
[41] Luke 1:26-37
[42] Mark 1:11
[43] Matthew 11:27; 21:37-39 and 27:43
[44] Romans 1:3-4,9; 5:10; 8:3

Nevertheless, *the relationship between the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ cannot be fathomed by the human mind. It is revealed by God!*

7. Jesus Christ is not the spiritual Son of God.

The word 'son' with respect to Christians. The expression 'son' in the Bible sometimes refers to *spiritual* descent: a spiritual son. John 3:6 also says, "The Spirit gives birth to spirit." The Bible clearly distinguishes between a physical son and a spiritual son. A person *before* regeneration is the physical child of his physical parents on earth. But *after* his rebirth by the Holy Spirit he also becomes the spiritual child of God in heaven (1:12-13). Then his former dead spirit[45] is made alive[46]. He is born again by the Holy Spirit (3:3-8) when he believes in Jesus Christ! Through rebirth he becomes a spiritual child of God (1:12-13).

A believer has been predestined by God before the creation of the world to be adopted as God's spiritual son. He is actually adopted (i.e. accepted) by God as his spiritual son[47] when he is born again by the Spirit of God[48]. And he will only enter into the full enjoyment of his adoption as God's spiritual son when he is released from his mortal earthly body[49].

While his physical nature comes from his physical parents, his spiritual nature comes from God the Holy Spirit. While he does not receive and possess the divine nature, he receives and possesses a spiritual nature that shares certain divine characteristics like knowledge, godliness and love[50]. His spiritual nature is no longer a slave to the guilt, shame, power and destruction of sin, but has been set free to grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ.
And his spiritual nature is no longer a slave to the devil; he is no longer coerced to do the devil's will[51]. He has become a child of God who does what is right in God's eyes and loves God and loves his Christian brothers on earth[52]. *Thus, the spiritual sonship of a Christian has a beginning* in history when he is born again.

The word 'son' with respect to Christ. But with Jesus Christ that is not the case. Jesus Christ has never been born again! *His Sonship has no beginning! Jesus Christ is not the spiritual Son of God*. He is not the religious Son of God. From all eternity he is the Son of

[45] Ephesians 2:1-3
[46] Ephesians 2:4-5
[47] Ephesians 1:5
[48] Romans 8:15
[49] Romans 8:23
[50] 2 Peter 1:3-9
[51] 2 Timothy 2:26
[52] 1 John 3:10

God in his nature or essence. From all eternity he possesses the divine nature! He did not receive a new born again (spiritual) nature in time as Christians do, but possesses the divine (spiritual) nature from eternity to eternity. From all eternity he is the Son of God, because he possesses the same essential divine nature as God does. He is the Son of God *before* he took on the human nature[53].

8. Jesus Christ is not the symbolic Son of God.

The word 'son' with respect to Christians. The expression 'son' in the Bible sometimes has a *symbolical* meaning: a symbolic son. *The word 'son' together with the Genitive of a thing denotes a person who has come to stand in a close relationship to this thing and has come to possess the unique characteristic of this thing*. For example, the expression "son *of light*"[54] refers to a Christian who stands in a close relation to the Light, Jesus Christ and possesses the unique characteristic of Christ as the Light, namely, his holiness, righteousness, mercy, love, wisdom, purity, etc.

Nevertheless, his symbolic sonship (existence) as 'light' in this world has a beginning in history when he is born again and grows to live out the characteristic of light[55].

The word 'son' with respect to Christ. But with Jesus Christ that is not the case. *The Sonship of Jesus Christ as the Son of God is never simply symbolic!* He does not simply stand in a close relationship to God or simply possess the spiritual characteristics of God. He is God! He is not a symbol of the light, but he is the Light itself (1:4-9; 8:12)! He is not merely a symbol that resembles God, but is the reality itself: he is God himself[56]! Moreover, nowhere in the past history does Jesus Christ *become* 'the reality'. He *is* the reality from all eternity (1:1)! *His divine Sonship (reality) has no beginning and also has no end*[57]!

Expressions using the Genitive 'of God' are not intended to be literal, but symbolic. Expressions like "the arm *of God*" and "the ear *of God*"[58] do not suggest that God has *physical* arms and ears, but rather that God really hears prayers and really saves people. The expression "the eyes *of God*"[59] does not suggest that God has physical eyes, but rather that God really sees everyone and everything, even the realities invisible for man.

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[53] Psalm 2:6-7; John 3:16
[54] Luke 16:8
[55] Matthew 5:14
[56] Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:3; 2:8-9; 1 John 5:20
[57] Revelation 1:8; 2:8; 22:12-13
[58] Isaiah 59:1-2
[59] 2 Chronicles 16:9

The expression ‘Son of God’ does not suggest that Jesus Christ is the symbolic son of God, but rather that he really is the metaphysical and ontological ‘Son of God’.

9. Jesus Christ is the Son of God in metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal sense.

The word ‘father’ with respect to Christ. The God of the Bible is the Father of Jesus Christ in ontological sense. ‘Ontology’ means ‘the doctrine of the existence of things’. God the Father and God the Son have the same divine being and divine nature from all eternity. The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is never a physical relationship as some religions falsely say that Christians teach. It is always an inner relationship in metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal sense.

The God of the Bible is “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”[60]. Whoever does not confess this does not know the only Living God! The religion that does not confess this is not the true religion!

Jesus Christ is ‘God’s Son, the Beloved, with whom God is well pleased’[61]. He is ‘the only-begotten Son of God’ (1:18; 3:16). He is ‘God’s own Son’[62]. He is ‘God’s eternal Son’ (17:5,24). All the other ‘gods’ of all the other religions in the world are not ‘the Father of Jesus Christ’ in metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal sense and therefore are not God at all! They have nothing in common with the God of the Bible, even if they have copied some truths from the Bible! The Old Testament calls Jesus Christ ‘the mighty God’ and ‘the everlasting Father’[63]. And in the New Testament Jesus teaches that ‘God the Father’ and ‘God the Son’ are one (10:30).

The Christian Church believes and confesses one God, who has one divine being and nature and who has revealed himself in his creation and in human history as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit[64].

Jesus Christ is from eternity to eternity the Son of God in metaphysical, ontological and eternal sense, but in time *reveals* his divine nature to man. He is the *visible* radiance[65] of God’s glory (essential divine attributes) and the *visible* print (impression, representation)[66] of God’s invisible divine being[67]. That is also the meaning of the words:

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[60] 1 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3
[61] Matthew 3:17; 17:5
[62] Romans 8:32
[63] Isaiah 9:6; cf. 10:20-21
[64] Matthew 28:19
[65] G: apaugasma
[66] G: charaktér
[67] G: hupostasis. Hebrews 1:3; cf. Colossians 1:15,19; 2:9

"The only-begotten[68] God (Son), who is at the Father's side, has *made him (God) known* (has expressed and explained God)"[69].

- Note what other Scriptures say about Jesus Christ as *the Spirit of God*. Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God that spoke through the prophets during the Old Testament period before he took on the human nature[70]. Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God that took on a human body in the virgin Mary at the incarnation[71]. Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God that saved, healed and delivered people[72]. Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God that takes away the veil that covers the eyes, minds and hearts of Old Testament believers (Jews) before they can understand the New Testament. He also takes away the veil that covers the eyes, minds and hearts of unbelievers when they try to understand the Bible[73]. Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God that lives in believers after Pentecost[74].
- Note what other Scriptures say about Jesus Christ as *the Word of God*. Jesus Christ is the Word of God who is God from all eternity (1:1). He is the Word of God that took on the human nature in human history (1:14,18).
  He is the Word of God that spoke God's final Word after all the prophets had spoken[75]. And he will have the last word in human history on the final judgement day[76].

The word 'father' with respect to Christians. The God of the Bible is the Father of Christians, not in an ontological sense, but only in a spiritual sense. Christians are never 'God' and never become 'God', but always remain creatures of God. Before they believed in God, Christians were enemies of the God of the Bible[77]. But after they began to believe in Jesus Christ they became 'the (spiritual) sons and daughters of God'[78] or 'the (spiritual) children of God' (1:12-13). As spiritual children of God, Christians receive more and more the spiritual characteristics of the God of the Bible[79].

The God of the Bible exercises his reign from heaven *over* all Christians, executes his plan of salvation for all Christians *through* Jesus Christ, and dwells *in* all Christians

[68] G: monogenés
[69] G: exegeó. John 1:18; cf. Matthew 11:27
[70] 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21
[71] Luke 1:26-37
[72] Luke 4:18-19
[73] 2 Corinthians 3:14-18
[74] Romans 8:9-10; Galatians 4:6-7
[75] Hebrews 1:1-2
[76] Revelation 19:13-16
[77] Romans 5:10; cf. Psalm 5:4-5; 11:5
[78] Ephesians 1:5
[79] Ephesians 4:24; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:1-3

through the Holy Spirit. The unity among Christians can only be derived from the unity of the God of the Bible and from the unity between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit within the divine nature (17:21). The unity of the Christian Church is demonstrated by Christians worshipping the same God of the Bible, by having the same Saviour of their sins, by having the same Holy Spirit dwelling in them and by the same faith, the same hope and the same love[80]!

10. Jesus Christ is appointed (decreed) and acknowledged to be the Son of God after his death and resurrection.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God before his first coming. Through the Old Testament prophets God said about Jesus Christ, "*I will be his Father, and he will be my Son*"[81]. While the author of 2 Samuel 7:12-16 spoke about David's son, the author of 1 Chronicles 17:11-14 said that these words would be fulfilled in 'one of David's sons', the only One in whom these words could be fulfilled! "His throne will be established forever"[82].

The words of the angel Gabriel to Mary confirmed that this prophecy would be fulfilled in Jesus Christ: "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end"[83].

Jesus Christ is the Son of God at the announcement of his birth. At the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ the angel Gabriel said to Mary: "He will be great and will be called *the Son of the Most High*"[84]. He would receive this title at his enthronement in heaven[85]. It was only at his enthronement that it became clear in human history that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, clothed with absolute divine power.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God at his baptism with water. When Jesus was baptised with water by John the Baptist, the voice of God from heaven said, "You <u>are</u> *my Son, whom I love*; with you I am well pleased"[86].

Jesus Christ is the Son of God before and after his resurrection from the dead. Paul speaks of "the gospel ... regarding God's Son"[87]. He speaks of the human nature of the Son of God and differentiates between Jesus "as to the flesh" and Jesus "as to the

[80] Ephesians 4:3-6
[81] 2 Samuel 7:14; Hebrews 1:5b
[82] 1 Chronicles 17:14
[83] Luke 1:32b-33
[84] Luke 1:32a
[85] Luke 1:32b-33
[86] Mark 1:11
[87] Romans 1:1-3a

Spirit"[88]. The 'flesh' or human nature of Jesus after his birth from the lineage of David was characterised by 'weakness': he became tired, hungry and thirsty; and he experienced anxiety and temptation; he was truly mortal. But he was perfectly sinless[89]. The human nature of Jesus after his resurrection from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit was characterised by 'power': his resurrected body was no longer subject to the laws of nature, but was completely controlled by the Holy Spirit. He passed through his grave clothes, the rock tomb and closed doors. He could appear and disappear. Finally he ascended into heaven and sat at the right hand of God.

The words: "Through the Spirit of holiness Jesus Christ was appointed and declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead"[90] does not mean that he only *became* the Son of God when he was resurrected. Because Jesus Christ is God from all eternity, the emphasis falls on the words: "in power", meaning: "clothed with power". After his birth his power in all its glory was hidden so that we could not see it. But after his resurrection from the dead Jesus Christ was declared (appointed, decreed) to be the Son of God clothed with all power in heaven and on earth[91], something that surpassed his human state before his resurrection. *Although Jesus Christ is from all eternity the Son of God (in metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal sense), he begins to exercise his absolute sovereign power on earth and in human history at his resurrection, ascension and enthronement.* Only after he had proved his absolute obedience in his death and resurrection, the Christian Church began to spread over the whole world (12:31-32)[92].

11. Jesus Christ is the Son of God at his enthronement in heaven.

Note what the Bible says about Jesus Christ as *the Son of God*. In the letter to the Hebrews God says: "You are my Son; *today I have become* your Father" (literally: "today I have begotten you")[93]. Although angels may collectively be called 'sons of God'[94], no angel is ever called 'the Son of God' – an expression that gives him a separate and chosen status. Psalm 2:7b-9 apparently originated from the liturgy used during the enthronement of the king of Judah, but on the whole Psalm 2 is a prophecy about the Messiah-King, who would come from the lineage of David[95]. The New Testament regards

[88] Romans 1:3b-4
[89] Hebrews 4:15
[90] Romans 1:4
[91] cf. Matthew 28:18; John 13:3; Ephesians 1:20-22
[92] Romans 1:5; 16:25-26
[93] Psalm 2:7; Hebrews 1:5a
[94] H: bene ha-Elohim. Genesis 6:2,4; Job 1:6; 2:1
[95] Jeremiah 23:5-6; Ezekiel 37:24-28

Psalm 2 as a Messianic Psalm[96]. In Psalm 2 the Messiah (God's Anointed) quotes these words as the ground of his trust when the kings of the earth and the powers in the world gather against him[97].

God's words: "Today I have begotten you" do not mean that Jesus Christ became the Son of God at his birth! The context in Hebrews 1 shows that the word 'today' refers, not to his birth, but to the exaltation and enthronement of Jesus Christ[98]. Thus, at his resurrection, ascension and enthronement Jesus Christ was visibly clothed with royal dignity and publicly received the title *'Son of God'*. He is the Son of God from all eternity, but is universally manifested as the Son of God at his resurrection, ascension and enthronement! This is a position above all people on earth[99] and above all angels in heaven[100]. The title 'Son of God' refers to what he really is and to what he is acknowledged and confessed to be since his resurrection, ascension and enthronement, namely, the Son of God in metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal sense.

12. Jesus Christ is the physical son of Mary and the only-begotten Son of God at the same time.

The genealogies of Jesus Christ prove that Jesus was the physical son of Mary. Jesus Christ was not the physical son of Joseph, but the legal son of Joseph, and he was the physical son of Mary. Jesus Christ is the physical 'son of Abraham'[101], the physical 'son (descendant) of David'[102] and the physical 'son of Mary'[103]. *According to his physical human nature he descended from* Abraham, David and Mary[104]. This is how the invisible and eternal God entered the visible creation and time in the history of this world.

Matthew wrote his Gospel especially for Jews and was therefore very interested in legal matters. He gives the legal genealogy of Jesus in descending line from Abraham to Jesus. In Matthew 1:1-12 the genealogy goes from Abraham, David, via Solomon (not Nathan) to Zerubbabel (538 B.C. at the time of the return of the Jews from Babylonia)[105]. In Matthew 1:13-16 the genealogy goes from Zerubbabel via Abiud (not Rhesa) to Jacob (not Heli), "the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was

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[96] Acts 4:25-26; 13:33
[97] Psalm 2:2
[98] Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 1:13
[99] Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:9-11
[100] Hebrews 1:3-5
[101] Genesis 22:18; Matthew 1:1; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:8,16
[102] 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Luke 1:32; Revelation 22:16
[103] Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:31
[104] Matthew 1:1,16
[105] Ezra 1:11 - 2:2

born Jesus, who is called Christ"[106]. Jacob was the *physical* father of Joseph and Joseph was the *legal* husband of Mary and thus the *legal* father of Jesus. Thus Matthew concludes: Jesus is very important for Jews!

Luke wrote his Gospel especially to Gentiles and was therefore very interested in the historical facts[107].

He gives the physical genealogy of Jesus in ascending line from Jesus to Adam and God. In Luke 23 Luke wrote: "Jesus was the son, so it was thought (by the Jews), of Joseph, the son of Heli". As proved below, this probably means: "Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli" and Heli was the father of Mary and the grandfather of Jesus according to his human nature! In Luke 3:23-27 the genealogy goes from Joseph via Heli (not Jacob) and Rhesa (not Abiud) to Zerubbabel. And in Luke 27-31 the genealogy goes from Zerubbabel via Nathan (not Solomon) to David and in Luke 3:28-37 via all the most important generations via Abraham right up to Adam. Thus Luke concludes: Jesus is very important for all the people in the world!

The genealogy in Luke is most probably the genealogy of Mary and not of Joseph for the following reasons:

Luke carefully researched the facts concerning the announcement of the birth of Jesus, the birth of Jesus and the genealogy of Jesus[108]. The angel Gabriel announced to Mary that Jesus would not be the physical son of Joseph, but he would be the physical son of Mary, a miracle of virgin birth by the power of the Holy Spirit[109]. Gabriel also said that Jesus would be the heir of the throne of David, but with this difference, he would be the last and final king and his Kingdom would never end (Luke 3:32). Jesus would be the promised Saviour coming from the house of David[110]. Because women in Israel could also become the legal heir[111], Mary has an extremely important place in the genealogy of king David!

The genealogies in the Bible only mention the most important names within the lineage and skip over other members of the same lineage. For example, Matthew skips over the kings Ahaziah, (Athaliah,) Joash and Amaziah between king Jehoram and king Uzziah and he calls Jehoram "the father of" Uzziah, while in reality he is "the great great grandfather of" Uzziah[112]! Thus the words "the father of" could also mean "the

[106] Matthew 1:13-16
[107] Luke 1:1-4
[108] Luke chapters 1-3
[109] Luke 1:26-37
[110] Luke 1:69
[111] Numbers 27:8
[112] Matthew 1:8-9

grandfather or the great grandfather or the great great grandfather of" someone, because the names of unimportant generations were skipped over. Matthew mentions 17 names between David and Zerubbabel, while Luke mentions 23. Even Luke skips over many generations. He mentions only 34 names between David and Adam, that is a period of about 850 years, a number far too few for the period of time covered!

Moreover, Adam "the son of God" cannot be understood literally[113]. Likewise "Jesus was, *so it was thought*, the son of Joseph, *the son of Heli*"[114] is not a literal statement and could also have skipped a generation. Therefore, *Joseph was most probably "the son-in-law of" Heli*, which means that Mary was the daughter of Heli. Thus, while Matthew presents *the legal genealogy* of Jesus via his legal father Joseph, Luke presents *the physical genealogy* of Jesus via his physical mother Mary.

The Jewish Talmud calls Mary "the daughter of Heli". This can only be true when the genealogy of Luke is the genealogy of Mary. A Sinaitic-Syrian manuscript translated Luke 2:4 as follows: "Because *they* (Joseph and Mary) belonged to the house and line of David". Thus, both Scripture[115] and other historical documents outside the Bible regard Mary as belonging to the lineage of king David. While Matthew 1:16 says that Joseph was *the physical son* of Jacob, Luke 3:23 must be regarded as: "Joseph was *the physical son-in law* of Heli".

But Jesus Christ was not the physical Son of God. He is 'the only-begotten Son of God' (John 1:14,18). We will explain the various meanings of the Greek word 'gennaó'; to become a father (to beget/procreate), to become a mother (to give birth) and to produce (cause)'; and the meaning of the Greek word 'monogenés': only-begotten; and the word 'Trinity'.

13. The Greek word 'gennaó': to beget or to give birth.

1. The Greek word 'gennaó' means to become a father (to beget, to procreate).

- *The physical meaning of gennaó':* 'to beget' or 'to become a father' in a physical sense. To physically procreate is said of a man. See the genealogies: A procreated B[116]. Passive: "what is procreated (conceived) in her"[117]; "procreated (conceived) by one man"[118]; "not procreated (conceived) by adultery" (i.e. outside the marriage relationship) (8:41); "procreated (conceived) in sin" (9:34).

[113] Luke 3:38
[114] Luke 3:23
[115] Luke 1:31-33
[116] Genesis 4:18 etc.
[117] Matthew 1:20
[118] Hebrews 11:12

To physically procreate – said of the influence of the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:35 says: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one that is procreated/conceived will be called the Son of God." The Holy Spirit exercised a divine influence on the virgin Mary and created only the physical body of Jesus in her. He did not create the divine nature of Jesus, because his divine nature is eternal! The eternal God took on a physical human being within creation and within human history and received the name 'Jesus'. He received his human nature from his mother, but not from any father! In no way was Jesus physically procreated as with other human beings, because God has no physical body!

- *The spiritual (figurative) meaning of gennaó:* 'to beget spiritually', 'to become a *spiritual* father'. To spiritually procreate – said of the influence of a man. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "In Christ Jesus I became your father (literally: I procreated you) through the gospel"[119]. This means that Paul became their spiritual father by preaching the gospel to them.

  To spiritually procreate – said of the influence of God's Spirit. When people believe in Jesus Christ, they are 'born of God'[120] (1:13; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18); or 'born from above'[121]; or 'born of the Spirit'[122] (3:5). God the Holy Spirit is the Origin and Cause of their spiritual rebirth.

  "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is *procreated from God*" (is given spiritual life as a new creation by God[123]. "And everyone who loves *the Procreator* (of spiritual life as a new creation)[124], loves *the one procreated from him*"[125]. This could refer to Jesus Christ, but most probably refers to the Christian brother[126].

- *The unique metaphysical or ontological meaning of gennaó:* 'to become (acknowledged and confessed) the *metaphysical or ontological eternal Father*' of the Son of God. Through the influence of God the Holy Spirit at the resurrection, ascension and enthronement of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God began to exercise* his absolute sovereign power on earth and he *began to be acknowledged and confessed as the Son of God* who has all power in heaven and on earth[127]. Of this event God said, "You are my Son;

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[119] 1 Corinthians 4:15
[120] G: ek theou egennéthésan
[121] G: gennéthé anóthen
[122] G: gennéthé ek pneumatos
[123] G: ek tou theou gegennétai (virp) translated: "is born of God". 1 John 5:1a
[124] G: ton gennésanta (vpaa) translated: "the Father"
[125] G: ton gegennémenon eks autou (vprp) translated: "his child as well". 1 John 5:1b
[126] cf. 1 John 2:9-10
[127] cf. Matthew 28:18; Romans 1:4; Revelation 1:5-6

today *I have become your Father*"[128]. Jesus Christ has been the Son of God from all eternity (17:1-5) and before his first coming (3:16)[129], but begins to exercise his full authority as the Son of God after he made atonement for sins.

2. The Greek word 'gennaó' means 'to become a mother' (to give birth). The *physical* meaning of gennaó: 'to give birth', 'to become a *physical* mother'. "She gave birth to a son"[130]. "A woman giving birth to a child" (16:21). "For this reason I was born" (18:37). "In his own language in which he was born"[131]. "I was born a (Roman) citizen"[132].

The *spiritual (figurative)* meaning of gennaó: 'to become a *spiritual* mother'. The covenant from Mount Sinai (Hagar) "bears children who are to be slaves", slaves of sin and slaves of the law[133].

3. The Greek word 'gennaó' means to produce (to cause).

"Foolish and stupid arguments give birth to (produce) quarrels"[134].

14. The Greek word 'monogenés': only-begotten.

Only-begotten cannot refer to the beginning of the human nature of Jesus. The word 'only-begotten' cannot refer to Jesus being the physical begotten Son of God, because he was already the only-begotten Son *before* he took on the human nature[135]! *The word 'only-begotten' therefore has no connection to this created world!*

Only-begotten cannot refer to the beginning of the office of Jesus as Messiah. The word 'only-begotten' is *not* derived from the words: 'only'[136] and 'generation'[137] as if Jesus is unique among the people born in the human race. Jesus is 'God' (1:1) and he is 'the only-begotten God' (1:18 in the best Greek manuscripts). And because God is eternal, *the word 'only-begotten' cannot refer to any beginning*! The task of Jesus as the Messiah (anointed mediator) in human history had a beginning at his birth and an end at his second coming. Therefore the word 'only-begotten' cannot refer to the office of Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

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[128] G: gegennéka)(vira)(Hebrews 1:5a; cf. Psalm 2:7
[129] Hebrews 1:6
[130] Luke 1:57
[131] Acts 2:8
[132] Acts 22:28
[133] Galatians 4:24-25; cf. Galatians 3:21-23
[134] 2 Timothy 2:23
[135] John 3:16
[136] G: monos
[137] G: genos, which is derived from G: ginomai, 'to be born'

Only-begotten can only refer to the trinitarian Sonship of Jesus.

Because the word 'only-begotten' refers to Someone above creation and above time, it must have the meaning: '*unique in his kind*', or '*the one and only in his category*'! That is why the NIV translates the word 'only-begotten' with 'the One and Only' Son of God. *The word 'only-begotten' must therefore refer to the trinitarian Sonship of Jesus Christ*. Jesus Christ is the Son of God in metaphysical and ontological sense – he possesses the divine nature; he is God (cf. 1:1)[138]; he is God for all eternity.

There is only *one God* [139] with *one name*[140]. And yet this One God reveals himself in the Bible as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit[141]. He himself reveals to us that there is *an inner distinction within the unity of his divine nature*. This surpasses our ability to understand/fathom, but requires our obedient submission to God's revelation in the Bible. From all eternity God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit exists in this unique relationship to one another.

Any religion that tries to define the God of the Bible with mathematical or philosophical definitions set themselves above God, because anyone who makes a definition comprehends the limits of what he defines and thus arrogantly assumes that he is greater than God! It is rather God who defines the limits of man[142]!

There is not a single human being or any religion who knows God the Father than only God the Son and the people to whom God the Son chooses to reveal him[143]! Therefore, every human being stands or falls with respect to his relationship to Jesus Christ, the Son of God[144]!

15. The word 'Trinity'.

The word 'Trinity' is not a biblical word, but a theological word which expresses that Christians believe in one God, one divine being, who revealed himself in three modes of being. In the Latin language the term 'person' was used to express 'a mode'. However in the modern languages the word 'person' has come to mean 'an individual being' and that was not what the original Latin word meant.

In the original Greek language the term 'hupostasis' was used to express 'a mode'. It never expresses the idea of *an individual person*, but expresses only the idea of *an inner*

[138] Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:8
[139] Mark 12:29
[140] Matthew 28:19
[141] Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:3-6
[142] cf. Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 55:8-9
[143] Matthew 11:27; John 10:15; 17:25-26
[144] Matthew 10:40; Luke 10:16; Luke 2:34; 1 Peter 2:6-8

distinction that exists within the unity of the divine nature!
It expresses the fact that the One God has revealed himself within creation and within human history as the Father in heaven, as the Son on earth and as the Spirit dwelling in his people on earth.

The Bible never speaks of God and Jesus as two separate Gods, but rather of *One God* who revealed and expressed himself as the "God in heaven" and at the same time as the same "God with us on earth". The Triune God is omnipresent!

Christians are baptised into "the one name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"[145]. The words 'the name' is singular, not plural! *The one Name of God* reveals that he is *a unique* God, *a unique* divine being[146]. The words, "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" reveal that there is *an inner distinction within the unity of the divine nature*. The one God or one divine being reveals himself as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have *one and the same divine nature*.

But they reveal that they have different functions:

As 'God the Father' the God of the Bible is the eternal God, the Creator and Origin of everything and everyone and the One who determines the destiny of everything and everyone[147]. He is the Author or Originator of creation, revelation and recreation. As the Father, this One God is the Head of his family in heaven and on earth[148], the One with whom each of his spiritual children has a personal and close spiritual relationship[149].

As 'God the Son' the God of the Bible took on the human nature without laying aside his divine nature and entered his creation and human history through the virgin Mary[150]. He is 'God with us'[151]. He is 'the Word of God' that was expressed in creation and human history (1:1,14,18). According to the fourth ecumenical synod of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ are 'unmixed, unchanged, undivided and inseparably united'. God the Son is equal to God the Father in sovereign rule and knowledge[152], in honour (5:23), in power (1:3; 5:21,27), in possessing life in himself (5:26), in work (10:30), in possessions (16:15), etc. On the ground of his divine Sonship, Jesus Christ was condemned to death by the Jewish court (10:30,33)[153].

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[145] Matthew 28:19
[146] Deuteronomy 6:4
[147] Romans 11:36
[148] Ephesians 3:14-15
[149] Matthew 6:9-13
[150] Philippians 2:6-7; Colossians 2:9
[151] Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23
[152] Matthew 11:27
[153] Matthew 26:63-66

And as 'God the Holy Spirit' the God of the Bible dwells on earth in the hearts and lives of Christians[154] and in the midst of the Christian Church[155].

Because God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have one and the same divine nature, Jesus Christ is called "God with us"[156], "the Son of God"[157] and even "God"[158]. And therefore the Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of God", "the Spirit of Christ", "Christ in you"[159] and even "God"[160].

Conclusion. The expression 'Son of God' can only refer to *the Sonship of Jesus Christ that has no beginning*. Jesus Christ is the Son of God in metaphysical sense, in ontological sense, in trinitarian sense and in eternal sense. The eternal invisible God revealed himself in the visible God by taking on a human body in the virgin Mary and thus entering his creation and our history on earth.

16. Jesus Christ calls himself 'the Son of Man'.

The word 'son' with respect to people. In the Old Testament the term 'son of man' simply means 'man'[161]. It is a reference to man in all his weakness and dependence, as with the prophet Ezekiel[162]. Similarly the expression 'sons of wickedness'[163] means 'wicked people'; 'son of a foreigner'[164] means 'a foreigner'; 'sons of thunder'[165] means 'men characterised by fiery zeal' and 'sons of light'[166] mean Christians who stand in a close relation to the Light, Jesus Christ and possess the unique characteristic of Christ as the Light, namely, his holiness, righteousness, mercy, love, wisdom, purity, etc. Likewise 'the daughters of music'[167] indicate 'musical notes'.

The word 'son' with respect to Christ. But the expression 'Son of Man' does not simply mean 'man'. It would be unreasonable to suggest that Jesus meant that a mere man or

[154] Romans 8:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
[155] Ephesians 2:19-22
[156] Matthew 1:23
[157] Matthew 26:63-64
[158] Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; Romans 9:5; 10:30; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8-9; 1 John 5:20
[159] Romans 8:9-10
[160] Acts 5:3,5
[161] Psalm 8:4
[162] Ezekiel 2:1,3,6,8; 3:1,3,4,10,17,25, etc.
[163] 2 Samuel 3:34
[164] Exodus 12:43
[165] Mark 3:17
[166] Luke 16:8
[167] Ecclesiastes 12:4

even an ideal man is “the Lord of the Sabbath”[168], “gives his life as a ransom for many”[169] or will rise again from the dead[170].

The *description* of “a son of man” in Daniel 7:9-14 becomes *the title of the Messiah in the Gospels*. In every case in the Gospels (except John 12:34) this title is applied by Jesus to himself. Compare Matthew 26:64 with Daniel 7:13. Only Stephen says that he sees the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God[171]. Nowhere else is it found in an address to him or in a saying or narrative about him. Also Revelation 1:13 and 14:14 applies the title ‘son of man’ to Jesus Christ in his function as Messiah, the Mediator of salvation and judgement.

In some passages the title ‘Son of man’ *predicts Christ’s humiliation*: he has no permanent home[172], is going to be subjected to bitter suffering[173], shall be betrayed and put to death[174] and shall be buried[175].

In other passages the title *predicts his exaltation*: he shall rise from the dead again[176], having left the earth he shall return in the glory of his Father, accompanied by angels[177] and shall sit on the throne of his glory as Judge[178].

None of the references to the Son of Man refers to a mere man, but to God who took on the human nature: the Son of Man is the Lord of the Law (the Sabbath)[179]; the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins[180]; the Son of Man came into this world with the purpose to give his life as a ransom for sins in exchange for many people[181]; and the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost[182].

By using this title in speaking to the Jews, Jesus was able to reveal himself gradually, not all at once. If he had immediately called himself ‘the Messiah’, they would not have accepted him. But now the Jews began to wonder, “Who is this Son of Man?” (12:34).

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[168] Mark 2:28
[169] Mark 10:45
[170] Mark 10:33-34
[171] Acts 7:56
[172] Matthew 8:2
[173] Matthew 12:12
[174] Matthew 26:24
[175] Matthew 12:40
[176] Matthew 17:9
[177] Matthew 16:27; 24:27,30,44
[178] Matthew 25:31; 26:64
[179] Matthew 12:8
[180] Matthew 9:6
[181] Matthew 20:28
[182] Luke 19:10

So Jesus challenges them and us: “What do YOU think about the Christ? Whose son is he?”[183].

D. THE PRACTICAL LESSONS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

There are many practical lessons to learn from the Gospel of John. In this lesson we will list only the practical lessons concerning the message of the gospel, evangelism and the only way to God. The message of the gospel consists of five truths: the truth about God, the truth about man, the truth about Jesus Christ, the truth about salvation and the truth about the new life in Christ.

1. The truth about God.

John 1:1,14,18 teaches that God the Father reveals himself in God the Son. 1 John 1:5 teaches that God is light and John 3:19 teaches that Light has come into the world. John 4:23-24 teaches that God is Spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and truth. John 3:16 and 1 John 4:8-9 teach that God is love and that God showed his love among us by sending his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. John 6:35-46 teaches that God the Father gives people *in a sovereign way* to Jesus Christ and *irresistibly* draws them to Jesus Christ.

2. The truth about man.

John 1:10-11 teaches that the world did not acknowledge or welcome Jesus Christ. John 3:3-8 teaches that *natural man* is lost and cannot enter the Kingdom of God. A man must be born again in order to be saved. John 3:16-18,36 teaches that *all unbelievers* are lost. They already stand condemned and remain under the wrath of God. A man must believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved. John 8:21-24 teaches that whoever does not believe, will only see death. John 9:39-41 teaches that whoever refuses to acknowledge his sin, is spiritually blind and lost.

3. The truth about Jesus Christ.

John 1:29 teaches that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John 3:14-15 and John 12:23-24 teach that Jesus Christ must die on the cross. Without his sacrificial atonement of sins, no man can be saved. John 14:6 teaches that Jesus Christ is the only Way to God the Father, the only Revelation (Truth) of who God the Father is and the only Giver of eternal life. John 10:7-10 teaches that Jesus Christ is the only door and whoever enters through him will be saved.

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[183] Matthew 22:42

4. The truth about salvation.

John 1:12 teaches that Jesus Christ will give the right to be and become more and more the children of God to all people who believe in Jesus Christ and proves that by receiving him[184]. John 3:16-18 teaches that whoever believes in Jesus Christ is no longer condemned, but has eternal life and will thus be saved from beginning to end. John 6:40 teaches that everyone who looks to Jesus Christ and believes in him shall have eternal life. John 8:51 teaches that whoever keeps the words of Jesus Christ will never see eternal death, that is, hell. John 12:37-46 teaches that God holds every man responsible for his faith or his unbelief.

5. The truth about the new life in Christ.

John 5:24 teaches that whoever hears and believes the message of the Bible has eternal life, will never be condemned in the Last Judgement and has already crossed over from the state of eternal death to the state of eternal life. John
10:26-29 teaches that whoever believes in Jesus Christ, will never perish and the Almighty God will hold him fast in his hand. John 10:27-28 teaches assurance of salvation for the followers of Jesus Christ. John 15:1-17 teaches that the new life in Jesus Christ is expressed in a continuing personal relationship with Jesus Christ, in bearing much and lasting fruit for Jesus Christ and thus bringing much glory to God. John 11:25-26 teaches assurance of the resurrection from the dead for the believers in Jesus Christ at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

6. Evangelism.

John 1:39,43,46 teaches that you should invite people to “come and see” who Jesus Christ is among Christians and to “follow” Jesus Christ. John 4 teaches that you should never force, but win people to Jesus Christ. And John
4:35-38 teaches that God needs many different kinds of evangelists: those who sow the seed of the gospel and those who reap the harvest. John 9 teaches that you should be concerned with the whole man, with his body and his spirit.

7. The only way to God.

The Bible clearly teaches that JESUS CHRIST is the only way to GOD. He who receives Jesus Christ receives God[185]. He who rejects Jesus Christ rejects God[186]. He who honours Jesus Christ honours God (John 5:23a). He who does not honour Jesus Christ does not honour God (5:23b). Only he whom God gives to Jesus Christ, comes to Jesus Christ and

[184] cf. Revelation 3:20
[185] Matthew 10:40
[186] Luke 10:16

will never be driven away (6:37,44). He who knows Jesus Christ knows God (8:19). He who loves Jesus Christ loves God (8:42).
He who believes in Jesus Christ believes in God (12:44). He who listens to the words of Jesus Christ listens to the words of God (12:47-50). He who accepts Jesus Christ accepts God (13:20). He who sees Jesus Christ has seen God (14:9-10). He who obeys the commands and teachings of Jesus Christ will be loved by God and God will come and make his home with him (14:21,23). Jesus Christ gives eternal life, reveals God and prays for the people that God gives Him (17:2,6,9). He who acknowledges Jesus Christ acknowledges God[187]. He who denies Jesus Christ denies God[188]. He who acknowledges Jesus Christ, God lives in him and he in God[189]. He who loves Jesus Christ loves God[190]. He who does not continue in the teaching of Jesus Christ does not have God[191].

E. THE RELEVANCE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

The Gospel of John is very important and relevant for people living today. It especially explains who Jesus Christ is, what he has done and how people can come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It teaches the work of the Holy Spirit and how a Christian should live. It also teaches many good principles for evangelism.

[187] 1 John 2:23a
[188] 1 John 2:23b
[189] 1 John 4:15
[190] 1 John 5:1
[191] 2 John 9