

'My Son': Exalting the Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ

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David Vallance

I. The Preeminence of the Son of God. Notice in the extended sentence of Cl 1:12-18, the Lord Jesus is “the Son of His Love” [JND], and the Father’s purpose is “that in everything He might be preeminent” [ESV].

Introduction: The affiliation between God the Father and God the Son is transcendent. This relationship is closer than any human relationship, greater than any human friendship, and ultimately beyond human understanding. To communicate this divine truth, the Holy Spirit has chosen the word “Father” and “Son,” because in human terms, the relationship between Father and Son comes closest to an idealized relationship between a human father and his adult son. The one true, archetypical Father-Son relationship exists eternally within the Trinity—human father-son relationships are merely finite, earthly replicas of an infinitely greater heavenly reality.

- **The Greatest Step in Life: Believing on the Son of God**
 - John 20:31 “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
- **The Greatest Pursuit in Life: Knowing the Son of God**
 - Ephesians 4:13 “Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” [ESV].
- **The Greatest Privilege in Life: Sharing the Son of God**
 - 1 Corinthians 1:9 “God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”
 - 1 John 1:3 “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

II. Attacks on the Sonship of Christ. Satan has attacked the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ from the beginning. False teaching about Christ’s sonship has taken many forms. More radical positions have denied His deity and preexistence altogether, teaching that a merely human Christ acquired sonship at His birth, His baptism, or His resurrection. The apostle John confronted this error in his day:

- 1 Jh 2:22-23: “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.”

A subtler error more relevant to us assumes that the fully divine Second Person of the Godhead became the Son at His incarnation. This view arises from misinterpretation of certain texts (e.g. Ps 2:7; Lk 1:32, 35) and the false idea that the term “son” denotes inferiority and submission. According to this view, sonship is merely a role—an inferior and temporary position which Christ deigned to take for the redemption of ruined man. Charismatic teachers have commonly held this view. Among “Plymouth Brethren,” the exclusive teacher F. E. Raven denied the eternal sonship of Christ in 1895, and J. Taylor Sr. also advanced this error. Recently, a disturbing number of conservative Baptists have also adopted this error.

John MacArthur Jr. used to hold this view, but has now graciously retracted what he used to teach:

- “To that end, I want to state publicly that I have abandoned the doctrine of “incarnational sonship.” Careful study and reflection have brought me to understand that Scripture does indeed present the relationship between God the Father and Christ the Son as an *eternal* Father-Son relationship. I no longer regard Christ’s sonship as a role He assumed in His incarnation” [John MacArthur, Jr, <http://www.gty.org.uk/articles/sonship2A.htm>].

This error is fundamental and serious, because it distorts the Trinity and thus misrepresents God. It changes who Christ *is*, and denies the Lord’s true, unique, essential, inherent relationship with the Father. It also denies the eternal fatherhood of God.

- “The eternal Sonship of Christ is one of the most vital and basic doctrines of the word of God. It is denied by many heretical cults, but held and valued by all those who know and love our Lord Jesus Christ... We must be

on guard against those who say that He only became the Son of God at His incarnation and who deny His eternal Sonship” [T. E. Wilson, *The Messianic Psalms*, 1978, Loizeaux, pp. 16-17].

III. OT References to the Son of God

1. In picture:

- Abraham and Isaac: “And he said, ‘Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of’...And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering’: so they went both of them together” (Gn 22:2, 8).

2. In prophecy:

- Isaiah: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Is 9:6).
- David: “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, ‘Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Ps 2:7, quoted in Ac 13:33; Hb 1:5; 5:5).
- Agur: “Surely I *am* more brutish than *any* man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What *is* his name, and what *is* his son’s name, if thou canst tell?” (Pr 30:2-4).

IV. Confessions of Sonship

- The NT is full of exclamations recognizing the sonship of Christ. God desires that men and women “kiss the Son” (Ps 2:12)—acknowledge Him, believe in Him, and worship Him.
- 1. The true basis of relationship and communion with God: • 1 Jh 4:15 “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God” [ESV].
- 2. The disciples’ true response to His divine power: • Mt 14:33 “Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.”
- 3. Simon Peter’s true response to the Father’s revelation: • Mat 16:16 “And Simon Peter answered and said, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”
- 4. The centurion’s true response to the manner of His death: • Mat 27:54 “When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!” [ESV]. • Mr 15:39 “And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.”
- 5. John the Baptist’s true response to the descent of the Spirit upon Him: • Jh 1:34 “And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God” [ESV].
- 6. Nathanael’s true response to His omniscience and omnipresence: • Jh 1:49 “Nathanael answered and saith unto him, ‘Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.’”
- 7. Simon Peter’s true response to the “words of eternal life”: • Jh 6:69 “And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”
- 8. Martha’s true response to “I am the resurrection and the life”: • Jh 11:27 “She saith unto him, ‘Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.’”

V. The Biblical Concept of Sonship

- The kernel meaning of “sonship” in Scripture is *likeness of character, or sameness of nature*. In this Semitic idiom, the “son of the wise” is wise (Is 19:11); “sons of rebellion” are rebels (Nm 17:10, 25); “sons of no name” are disreputable (Jb 30:8); “sons of worthlessness” are worthless (1 Sm 25:17; Dt 13:13, 14); the “son of man” has a human nature (Ez 2:1, 3; and throughout the book); Barnabas, the “son of consolation,” consoles (Ac 4:36); the “sons of thunder” thunder (Mr 3:17); a “son of peace” brings peace (Lk 10:6); “sons of Abraham” have faith like Abraham (Gl 3:17); “sons of disobedience” disobey (Ep 2:2); and the “son of perdition” deserves destruction (Jh 17:12; 2 Th 2:3).
- Origin or generation is not the kernel idea of sonship in the Bible. In the Bible, a dignitary’s adult son was considered equal in stature and privilege with his father. Thus with Christ, “son of God” means equality in rank,

likeness in character, and thus sameness of essence as the Father. We must constantly guard against making the Bible conform to our way of thinking. Human sons *do* derive from human fathers (and mothers!). But divine Fatherhood and Sonship are the *primary* truths; human relationships are inexact, imperfect copies—just as the earthly tabernacle was an imperfect copy of the “true tabernacle” (Hb 8:2), and human marriage is an imperfect representation of Christ and His church (Ep 5:23-32). God defines these terms; we must adapt to His thinking.

- The name “Son of God” carries no hint of derivation, dependence, subservience, or inferiority. From apostolic days, teachers have gone astray over this term “Son.” Taking the term too literally, they have assumed it refers to origin or to generation, rather than to relationship. Origen of Alexandria promoted the concept of “eternal generation” in the 2nd century, and came to believe from this that Christ was inferior to God in essence. This laid the groundwork for the heretical views of Arius, which is still with us today in Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christadelphians, Mormons, and similar false cults.

VI. Meaning of “Son of God”

A. “Son” is a Divine Name, as “Father” and “Holy Spirit” are Divine Names

- “Son of God” is a name, not a title. “Son” is the divine name of Christ from eternity. The name expresses who He is in His essence and nature. A name and a title are not the same: A name is personal; a title is official. A name belongs to a person; a title belongs to an office. A name expresses *who* He is; a title expresses *what* he is. Titles of Christ include: Prince and Savior (Ac 5:31); Head (Ep 1:22); Priest (Hb 5:4); King of kings and Lord of lords (Rv 19:6).
- The Son is a “Person” in the Trinity. The Bible teaches that there is one God (Dt 6:4), yet also that three distinct Persons are God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who are coequal and coeternal centers of self-awareness. Each is “I” in relation to two who are “you.” Together, the three are “us” (Gn 1:26). Each partakes fully of the divine essence. Thus God is not a *simple* unity, but a *complex* unity—there is plurality in His unity. A better word than “Trinity” (L. *trinitas*, “threeness”) would be “Triunity.” He is “holy, holy, holy” (Is 6:3). • Mt 28:19: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” • Jh 3:34: “For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure” [ESV]. (Consider the Shepherd, the Woman, and the Father in the three-fold parable of Luke 15; the Trinitarian blessing in 2 Cr 13:14; and the Lord, the Servant, and the Spirit in Is 42:1-2.)
- The Son has an eternal relationship with the Father: Jh 1:1-2: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” • Jh 16:28: “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.”

B. The Son has the Same Nature and Character as the Father

- The Son is fully God. In Hebrews 1, the Father ascribes deity to His Son: “But unto the Son He saith, ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever’” (1:8). • Hb 1:10: “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.”
- The Son is One in Essence with the Father. In Jh 10:30, Christ state, “I and the Father are one.” This means *one in essence—equal in nature, and identical in deity.* Since He calls God “Father,” He must be speaking as the Son. Thus it is as Son that He is one with the Father.
- The Jews understood the true meaning of the name “Son of God” perfectly well. The Jews understood that absolute deity is inherent in the expression “the Son of God.” John 5:18 states, “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God [*not inferior to God!*]. Then in John 10:33, “The Jews answered him, ‘It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God’” [ESV]. They based their accusation squarely on His own claim to be God’s Son: “Do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?” (v 36 ESV). Later, they said to Pilate, “We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God” (Jh 19:7). Then their taunts ridiculed his claims to be the Son of God—claims that they must have heard and remembered: Mt 27:40: “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” Mt 27:43: “He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

- The Jews understood that Messiah would be the Son of God. Ironically, the Jews seemed to keenly understand not only that the term “Son of God” meant equality with God, but also that the coming Messiah was to be God’s Son: The Lord had stated, “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Mt 26:53). “But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, ‘I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven’” (Mt 26:63-64; parallels in Mr 14:61; Lk 22:70).

C. The Son has a Unique Place in the Father’s Affection

- Eternity: Before the universe’s matter, space, and time existed, the Eternal Father loved His only-begotten Son. Jh 1:1: “The Word was with (prov / pros) God”—face to face. • Jh 1:18: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.” • Jh 17:24: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”
- His Baptism: “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’” (Mt 3:17; compare Mr 1:11: “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”; Lk 3:22: “Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.”).
- His Transfiguration: “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him’” (Mt 17:5; compare Mr 9:7; Lk 9:35; 2 Pt 1:17).
- The terms: monogenhv / *monogenes* “only-begotten” in Jh 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Hb 11:17; 1Jh 4:9) expresses *unique affection*. • Note the words for the Father’s love: 1) “the Father loves the Son” in Jh 3:35 is ajgapaww / *agapao*, “desires to bless the Son”; 2) “the Father loves the Son in Jh 5:20 is filew / *phileo*, “is greatly attracted to the Son.” • “Firstborn” prwtotovko / *prototokos* is used five times of Christ (Rm 8:29; Cl 1:15, 18; Hb 1:6; Rv 1:5), means “first in rank because of relationship.” While the oldest son was in the default position for this place of birthright responsibility and reward, note some exceptions: (1) Jacob replaced Esau (Gn 27); Joseph replaced Reuben (Gn 48:5; 1 Ch 5:1-2); (2) Ephraim replaced Manasseh (Gn 43:13-20); (3) Solomon replaced Adonijah (1 Kn 1:5-53). In the same way, “Israel is my son, even my firstborn” (Ex 4:22).

D. The Son Speaks for the Father

- The Son is the logov / logos (Jh 1:1-18) who reveals the truth of God. • Mt 11:27: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.” (Compare Lk 10:22.) • Jh 1:18: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.” • Hb 1:1-2: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son.” • 1 Jh 5:20-21: “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols” [ESV].

E. The Son Executes the Father’s Will

- The Son is an eternal Priest: The author uses eternal Sonship to stress eternal priesthood: Hb 5:5-6: “So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, ‘Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee,’ as he saith also in another *place*, ‘Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.’” • Hb 7:3: “[Of Melchizedek] ‘He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever’ [ESV].
- The Son carries out the Father’s will: Jh 5:19: “So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise’” [ESV]. • 2 Cr 1:19-20: “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory” [ESV].
- The Son created the universe: Cl 1:16-17: “For by him [“the Son of His love”—v 13 JND] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all

things were created through him and for him, and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” [ESV]. See also Hb 1:2. The Son is the Source of the strong atomic force that holds the universe together.

- The Son gives life: Jh 5:21: “For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will” [ESV]. • 5:25-26: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” See also Jh 6:40.
- The Son executes judgment: Jh 5:22: “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.” See also v 27.
- The Son defeats the powers of darkness: 1 Jh 3:8b: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

F. The Son is Distinct from a Servant; the Son is the Heir

- The Bible constantly distinguishes sons from servants. The adult son has an equal status with the father—he is never seen as inferior to the father. Consider the parable of the householder who planted a vineyard and turned it over the care of husbandmen (Mt 21:33-39). At harvest, the husbandmen abused and killed the servants. The householder then decided to send his son: “‘Surely they will reverence my Son’...’This is the heir; come let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance” (Mt 21:37-38; compare Mr 12:6 (“one son, his well-beloved”) and Lk 20:13 (“my beloved son”). The servants are the OT prophets; the Son is the Lord Jesus Christ. • Lk 15:18-19: “I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.” • Jh 8:35: “The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever” [ESV]. • Gl 4:7 “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” • Hb 12-8 shows that Christ is superior to angels—He is the Son and heir, while the angels are only serving spirits.
- Christ is the Son over God’s Household. Hb 3:6a: “But Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son” [ESV]. The author shows that Christ is superior to Moses—Moses is only a servant in God’s household; Christ is the Son and Heir of God (Hb 3:5-6). Moses was part of the household; Christ is over the household—He rules as the Son for the Father.
- The Son is the Father’s Heir. Jh 3:35: “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” • Hb 1:1-2: “[God] hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things.” • Lk 1:32: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.” (See Rm 8:16-19; Rv 1:7).
- The Son deigned to become the Servant. As Son, Christ is the Heir, not the Servant; any acts of service for Him must be entirely voluntary. A servant cannot elevate himself to become a son, but the Son could stoop to be a servant. By grace, “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Ph 2:6-8, ESV). Though unspeakably rich, He became unspeakably poor (2 Cr 8:9).

G. The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the World

- The Bible constantly affirms that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior. We conclude that the Sender must eternally be the Father and the Sent One must eternally be the Son. Is 9:6: “Unto us a Son is given.” • Jh 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (see also v 17). • Gl 4:4: “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” • 1 Jh 4:9: “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” • 1 Jh 4:14: “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” • Lk 1:35: “And the angel answered and said unto her, ‘The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.’”
- The Son gives eternal life, safety, and true freedom to those who believe in His Name = who believe that He is the Son of God: Jh 3:18: “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” • Jh 8:36: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (See Jh 3:36.) • 1 Jh 5:13: “These things have I written

unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

- To have salvation, we must have the Son; to reject the Son is to refuse eternal life: 1 Jh 5:11-12: “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” • Hb 6:6: “If they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt” [ESV]. • Hb 10:29: “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”
- Faith in the Son is based on historical facts set in inerrant words: 1Jh 5:9-11: “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”
- The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin: 1 Jh 1:7: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” • Gl 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” • Rm 5:10: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” • Rm 8:32: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” • 1 Jh 4:10: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”
- The Good News of the Son of God is preached in the gospel. Mr 1:1: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” • Rm 1:9: “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.” • Gl 1:15-16: “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called *me* by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”

VII. Exalting the Son in the Assembly

- God intends the assembly to be the pillar and ground of truth regarding Christ’s sonship. Assemblies are not immune from false teaching (Ac 20:29-30). Yet God has designed the assembly to be “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tm 3:15), the place where simple believers continue steadfastly in the Apostle’s Doctrine (Ac 2:42). Because “not many wise according to the flesh...are called” (1 Cr 1:26), the world would regard the assembly as unqualified to guard the truth. Yet while church councils and seminaries have a unvarying history of apostasy, simple NT assemblies continue to hold the very same teaching proclaimed by the apostles nearly 2,000 years ago. God has preserved the doctrine of the Person of Christ in assemblies. False views about Christ’s deity, sonship, incarnation, and impeccability are common even among the best teachers in Christendom.
- God designed the assembly to honor and glorify the Son. The assembly honors Christ by gathering in His Name alone (Mt 18:20), by giving no titles to men (Mt 23:8-9), by acknowledging only one Pastor—the Chief Shepherd (1 Pt 5:4), and by displaying headship (1 Cr 11:2-12).
- God intends the assembly to be a group of priests who are gathered together to His Son, and who adoringly rally around His Son. Hb 2:11-13: “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, ‘I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.’ And again, ‘I will put my trust in him.’ And again, ‘Behold I and the children which God hath given me.’” A local assembly teaches and practices the priesthood of all believers—men and women. As a *holy* priesthood, we “offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pt 2:5). We “offer the sacrifice of praise to God...the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Hb 13:15). As a *royal* priesthood, we proclaim “the praises of Him who hath called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pt 2:9). Women and men function as priests in these public exercises, but only brothers serve as public spokesmen for the company, in keeping with headship.
- God intends the assembly to proclaim “the gospel of His Son” and “to wait for His Son from heaven” (1 Th 1:10).

- “The eternal Sonship is a vital truth, or else, we lose the Father sending the Son, and the Son creating, and if we have not the Father then we have no Son. I hold it vital to hold the Sonship before the world. It is the truth” [J. N. Darby].