

# The Eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ

by David Dunlap

---

*David Dunlap's sermon emphasizes the essential doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ and its significance in Christian faith.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 30:4, Isaiah 9:6, Mark 12:6, John 3:17, John 5:18, John 16:28, Galatians 4:7, Colossians 1:13, Hebrews 1:2, Hebrews 7:3

**Topics:** "Christology", "Divine Nature"

---

## Description

David Dunlap addresses the subtle opposition to the nonnegotiable doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ, emphasizing the importance of defending this fundamental and serious doctrine. Despite the denial of the eternal Sonship by some, the majority of Bible teachers throughout history have upheld this vital doctrine, warning against those who claim Christ only became the Son of God at His incarnation. The Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus Christ was the eternal Son of God before His incarnation, with various passages confirming His eternal Sonship and divine nature.

---

## Transcript

The nonnegotiable doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ has come under subtle and disturbing opposition in recent years. Surprisingly, a growing number of Charismatic and Baptist church leaders are leading this charge. Yet this controversy is not new, nor is it merely theological semantics; this error is both fundamental and serious. Nearly 100 years ago F.E. Raven, a teacher among early brethren, declared his denial of the eternal Sonship of Christ when he wrote, "Now, 'Son of God' I understand to be the title of Christ incarnate; I should hardly use 'Son of God' as referring to His eternal person."(1) Nevertheless, the majority of Bible teachers and scholars throughout the history of the church have defended this doctrine and resisted its fiercest opponents. Veteran Bible teacher and missionary T. E. Wilson has warned, "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."(2)

Most of those who espouse this false doctrine today teach that the Lord Jesus Christ became the Son of God at His incarnation. One such Christian leader is Dr. John MacArthur, who though sound in much of his teaching, yet in his writings and in public ministry has set aside this fundamental doctrine. MacArthur, a radio Bible teacher and pastor at Grace Community Church in Panorama City, California writes, "Christ

was not Son until His incarnation. He had not always had the title of Son. That is His incarnational title. He is no 'eternal son' always subservient to God, always less than God, always under God." (3) The late Walter Martin, the author of *The Kingdom of the Cults*, has written, "The scripture nowhere calls Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God, and He is never called the Son at all prior to the incarnation... there cannot be any such thing as eternal Sonship... the word 'Son' definitely suggests inferiority."(4) No subject in the word of God needs to be approached with as much care and reverence as the subject of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor is there any subject that is so important to the heart of every serious Christian. J. G. Bellett unfolding the heart of the matter, explains that Christ's sonship is not linked to time but existed in past eternity. "Matthew and Mark first notice His sonship of God at His baptism, Luke goes farther back, and notices it at His birth. But John goes back farther still, even to the immeasurable, unspeakable distance of eternity, and declares His Sonship 'in the bosom of the Father' (John 1:18). (5)

Despite their doctrinal position, it must be noted that these teachers do not deny the deity of Christ, nor do they deny the eternal existence of Christ, nor the Trinity. However, according to their teaching, only at the birth of Christ did He take on the role, title, and function of Son. Thereby, they deny that Christ is essentially and eternally the Son of God. The error of this unorthodox position is fourfold:

1. The view that the Scriptures do not teach that Jesus is the Eternal Son
2. The view that He became the Son at the incarnation. (Ps. 2:7, Lk. 1:32, 35)
3. The view that Sonship involves merely taking on a new function, title, and role.
4. The view that the title "Son" conveys the idea of submission and inferiority.

What saith the Scriptures? God's word must be the final authority for all we teach and believe. In regard to these errors, do the scriptures teach that the Lord Jesus Christ was the eternal Son of God before the incarnation? The answer must be resounding YES. The Old Testament is full of statements which verify His Sonship. Isaiah states, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given..." (Isa. 9:6). In another place Agur writes, "Who has gathered the wind into his fists? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell" (Prov. 30:4).

The Scriptures teach that it was not at the incarnation that Christ became the Son, but that He was always the Son of God. Scripture provides five strands of truth by which this divine tapestry is woven.

o The Son created the world. Both Colossians 1:13-19 and Hebrews 1:2 state that the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son, before His incarnation, when He created the worlds.

o The Father sent the Son - Time and again the scriptures state that the Father sent the Son. Since the Father sent the Son, it must follow that the Lord Jesus Christ was the eternal Son before He came into the world. (Isa. 9:6; John 3:17)

o The Sonship is revealed in parable form. "Having therefore one Son, his well-beloved, he sent Him last unto them, saying they will reverence Him..." (Mk. 12:6)

o The Son had a relationship with the Father from eternity past. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world ... and go to the Father" (Jn. 16:28).

o Christ is compared to Melchizedek as the Eternal Son- "Neither having beginning of days but made like unto the Son of God" (Heb. 7:3).

Further, the Scriptures teach that "Son" is not a title but a divine name. The term "Son" is the name of Christ from all eternity. The name reflects what Christ is in His essence and nature. A title refers to His offices. Some of His titles He received when he came into the world. The New Testament reveals that He was "called of God...to be a priest" (Heb. 5:4); He "gave Him to be Head over the church" (Eph. 1:22); and "Him hath He exalted ... to be a prince and Saviour" (Acts 5:31). Willem Ouweneel, the Dutch Bible teacher clarifies this, when he writes, "The distinction between a name and a title is this: a name belongs to a person, but a title belongs to an office (King, Priest, Head). A name gives expression of who a person is (Son), but a title expresses what he is. The first is a personal matter and the second is an official one. It is therefore definitely objectionable to refer to the expression 'Son' as a title, as has been done in the past. (6)

Is the Lord Jesus inferior to the Father as the Son of God? The biblical usage of the term "Son" does not indicate inferiority or subservience but equality and oneness of nature. When the Lord Jesus declared Himself to be the Son of God (Jn. 5:18), the Jews did not say, "You are making yourself to be inferior to God." No, they said, "You are making yourself equal to God!" No, even in human terms, a son is not merely a submissive servant but an heir (Gal. 4:7). Subjection and inferiority are characteristics found in a servant. But in a son these qualities are voluntary and not binding. A son may stoop to be a servant but a servant may never elevate himself to become a son. The scriptures are clear-inferiority and subservience are never linked to the biblical doctrine of Sonship. Christ as Son is the Father's heir, not His servant.

Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son from all eternity. The scriptures provide ample proof in support of this fundamental doctrine. All who love the Lord and His word will earnestly teach and defend this important biblical doctrine. May we join our hearts and minds with the charge of John N. Darby, who wrote, "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. (7)

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-dunlap/the-eternal-sonship-of-the-lord-jesus-christ/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**