

# The Son of God

(The late) Ernest Stallworthy

**D**OWN THE AGES God has spoken through many people and in many different ways. The apostle reminds us in the opening verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews that at the last He spoke by a Son. The apostle tells us later that God has “many sons” whom He will bring “unto glory” (2:10), but the point being made here in chapter 1 is that, although God had spoken through many men, in this case His Word was made man. His Word became flesh by the operation of the Spirit upon Mary in the manner described by the angel who was sent to her. As a consequence this man Jesus was different from all others. He was even “the brightness of His [God’s] glory, and the express image of His person”, and was therefore “heir of all things” (1:3,2).

“God . . . spake”, says the apostle, but consider the difference here. The angels were but instruments to manifest His power; the prophets were but His messengers; Moses was only a servant; but Jesus the Christ was “a son” (3:6). We are, of course, familiar with the relationship between fathers and sons, God has ordained this to teach us; but what we see in our relationship, at best, is a feeble echo of the relationship between the Son of God and his Father. The consequence of sonship, in the Divine sense, is here stated: “this man [Jesus] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house” (3:3). But who built this house? God (v. 4).

Jesus the Christ was, then, “God . . . manifest in the flesh”, as Paul teaches Timothy (1 Tim. 3:16), even Immanuel, or “God with us”, as proclaimed by Isaiah (7:14; Mt. 1:23).

Do not take away from the power and import of these statements. The apostle, in the opening verses of Hebrews 2, makes this great difference that lay between even the angels, mighty in word and deed, and the Christ, the basis for a powerful exhortation to give very close attention to all that the Lord has spoken. “Therefore”, he says, “we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast [he is speaking of the Law given to Moses], and every transgression and

disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord . . . ?” (vv. 1-3). That is the point; this message was spoken by the Lord.

He makes the same point later in this letter, saying: “if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him That speaketh from heaven” (12:25). Jesus said himself: “I proceeded forth and came from God” (Jno. 8:42); “I came down from heaven” (6:38). The ‘I’ here that came down is the Word, so that, as John says earlier in his Gospel record, “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth” (1:14).

He supports this declaration with the testimony of John the Baptist: “John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me” (v. 15). “He was before me”! This is put forward by John as proof of the fact that the Word was made flesh. “He was before me”. How was Jesus “before” John, seeing that John was born before him, as Luke is careful to demonstrate, and appeared in Israel first?

The answer is seen when we read the message of God given through His servant Malachi, looking forward to the appearance of Jesus in Israel. God declares through the prophet: “Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me”. Yes “before Me”! (3:1). This is God speaking. John Baptist was that messenger; he was the voice crying in the wilderness of whom Isaiah speaks (40:3). He himself gave this answer when they asked him: “Who art thou?” (Jno. 1:22). He said: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias” (v. 23).

The Word through Isaiah actually is: “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD [Yahweh], make straight in the desert a highway for our God [our mighty ones]”. John was sent to proclaim Yahweh and to prepare the way for ‘mighty ones’. Yahweh is ‘He Who will be’—He will be Saviour, and that through Jesus. So now we have two ‘mighty ones’, the Father and the Son, where

there was one before; and John prepared the way for them. So, as we read the Gospel of John, we find him telling us that Jesus said: "I am not alone, but I and the Father That sent me" (8:16); and again: "I and my Father are one" (10:30). In what way? Jesus himself tells us what he wants us to believe: "... that the Father is in me, and I in Him" (v. 38).

This is the full expression of sonship, of which the human relationship that we experience as children of our parents is but a figure, and this is why John Baptist, though not exceeded in greatness by any prophet born of woman, yet proclaimed one "whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose" (1:27), affirming of him both that "He that cometh from above is above all" (3:31), and that "he was before me" (1:15). Who was before him? Why, Yahweh, the power and the purpose that spoke through the prophets, now manifest in and through the Son, so that he could say himself: "Before Abraham was, I am" (8:58). Why do you think that John tells us all these difficult sayings? Why does he dwell on the message of John Baptist? He tells us himself: "these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ [Anointed], the Son of God" (20:31).

Jesus is the Son of God, dwelling by the Spirit in the Father, and the Father in him, so that, whilst the prophets could only say, "Thus saith the LORD", he never said that. He was no messenger; he was 'God manifest'.

A fuller realisation of the greatness and the majesty that belong to Jesus, which should come to us as we meditate upon these passages of Scripture, helps us the more to appreciate all that he did for us in the obedience that he gave to his Father's will. This obedience is brought before us by the emblems. When a servant does what he is told there is no great merit in that, that is what he is there for. But Jesus, "being in the form of God [God manifest], thought it not robbery [a thing to be grasped at] to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8).

He submitted to having nowhere to lay his head, though heir to all things. He refused the honours of a king, though they were truly his. He condescended to the company and friendship of men who were but babes, for he was

"greater than Solomon" in wisdom. He submitted to the derision of those who were usurpers of his powers. He washed the feet of his companions. He surrendered to the rabble, though he could have slain them with a word. He gave to us this great example of patient obedience as the Father Himself, veiled in the Son of David, who said to Philip: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Jno. 14:9). Would he say just the same to us?

So we contemplate Jesus the Christ: "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels [messengers], preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16). We see him, despite all this, as one of us, because he humbled himself. We see him as "the captain of [our] salvation" (Heb. 2:10), "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3), and because of these things he is one, not only with the Father, but also with us. Paul puts it beautifully in Hebrews 2, saying: "both he [Jesus] that sanctifieth and they [the saints] who are sanctified are all of one"—one Father, one hope, one common stock, one common experience—"for which cause", the apostle goes on, "he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (v. 11). Thus we are led to consider ourselves as being brethren of Christ, Christadelphians. Now we see this as a position of honour and privilege, the highest available in the earth today, associated with this name that we put to one another.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jno. 3:1,2). Jesus, though a Son, learned obedience by the things that he suffered, and so all his brethren must. This is our present portion, and we suffer with him, as Paul did, that we may be glorified together with him and experience the filling out of that prayer of Jesus for his friends, "that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (Jno. 17:22,23).

Then God will be manifest to the world, not only in His Son, but through all His sons, so that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters do the sea. This, by His

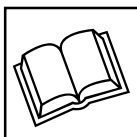
grace, is ours: “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 1:4).

What can we say of this experience that lies in the future for us, when the Divine nature will be part of us? The sons of God are in heaviness for a season, but, when their warfare is accomplished, they will receive a garment of praise, and in the vigour of an immortal nature rejoice evermore in the great joy that is their appointed portion.

Today we sit down with one another; then we shall sit down, not only with our friends, but with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets. It will be our privilege to enjoy many joyous assemblies of the saints, to sup and commune with the Lord himself. He said: “Verily, verily, I

say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me” (Jno. 6:53-57).

What is true of him must be true of us also. If we are like him now, we shall be like him then. Therefore, says John, “every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 Jno. 3:3).



## Exposition

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# The Exodus

## A commentary on Exodus 1–15

### C. The birth and early life of Moses—Exodus 2 (Part 1)

Mark Vincent

#### The format of the commentary

The narrative has been broken down into several **major sections**, of a chapter or two each; some of these will be covered in one month, others will take longer. An **Introduction** is provided for each of these major sections, which sets out the major events and themes dealt with in those chapters.

Each major section is broken into **sub-sections** or **episodes** (these are typically between five and twenty verses each). For each the **AV text** is followed by a **Comment**, which draws out the major lessons and items of interest from the text. The AV text also contains **Footnotes**, in which additional ‘one-off’ points are made for those wanting to work through Exodus more slowly.

#### Introduction

**E**XODUS 2 deals with four topics: the birth of Moses; his murder of an Egyptian; his experiences and marriage in Midian; and the cry of the suffering Israelites when Pharaoh dies. The first two of these, describing the birth and early life of Moses, will be examined this month.

Chapter 1 had portrayed in graphic detail the suffering which Pharaoh had inflicted upon the Israelites. What would God do about it? Would He have mercy on the Hebrews and deliver them from their shame? And if so, how?

Chapter 2 begins to answer these questions, but apparently in a tangential manner. For God's solution consists not in some phenomenal miracle or in the promotion of a mighty Israelite leader who was already alive (either of which we might have expected, had we not already known the