

# The Son of God

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**F**rom the first chapter of Genesis it is clear that God had a companion beside Him in creation. *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”*<sup>1</sup> These two verses provide proof that a second Person was involved in creation, and that He shared in God’s “divinity” (He was of the same “kind,”<sup>2</sup> sharing all the same qualities that are unique to divinity). This is the only logical conclusion possible for the following reasons:

- The plural pronouns require a second Person
- Both Persons were to create man together
- Both Persons were to be the exemplar for man (made in their image)

Man was not created in the image of angels, as the next verse goes on to prove – *“in the image of God He created him.”* That is, man was created in the image of the Father. Yet, the plurality of persons who did the creating and who served as exemplars for this “image of God” must have been of the same ‘kind,’ otherwise man would have been created in a blended image, of God plus whatever ‘kind’ the second Person present was.

The switch from the plural in verse 26 to the singular in verse 27 shows that ultimately it was God Himself who was the exemplar for this image. *“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”* How can we account for the plural in verse 26 and the singular in verse 27?

## Who created Man?

The second Person implied by the plural pronouns was the agent of the first. That is, man was created by the first Person through employing the second Person, used as His agent. Thus the action originated with God, as well as the authority, power, and plan. If a contractor builds a house and uses subcontractors he is still said to have built the house since it is built under his direction, supervision, and according to His specifications.

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<sup>1</sup> Gen 1:26-27 NKJ

<sup>2</sup> The term “kind” originated in the creation account, where all living things reproduced “according to their kind” (κατὰ γένος αὐτῶν, Gen 1:11-12,21,24-25; Gen. 6:20; Gen. 7:17; etc. LXX). The word translated “kind” is γένος which refers to reproduction, as the root of the term “begat.” That God is called “Father” in relation to His “only-begotten Son,” shows that the same concept of “kind” applies to God.

## In Whose Image was Man Created?

Since the second Person present also participated as exemplar (*"in our image and after our likeness"*), man was created in the image<sup>3</sup> of both persons. If, as some claim, God was speaking to angels, then man would be created in a blended image of God/angels. But since verse 27 twice says man was created in "the image of God," such blending of 'kinds' is ruled out. Whatever qualities that God wished to mirror in man were God's alone. The only way to reconcile the plural terms in verse 26 with the singular terms in verse 27 is if the second Person was of the same 'kind' as God Himself. Thus, creating man in the image of God is identical with creating man in the image of both God and the second Person who was of the same "kind" as God. Thus, both or one can serve the same function as exemplar reflected by the "image" of God. The logical conclusions from these verses are:

- There was a second Person besides God who was of the same "kind" as God.
- This second Person was instrumental in the creation of man.

These conclusions can be deduced from the text itself, and are necessary inferences. Any other explanation creates significant problems with the passage. The term "God" here does not refer to two or three Persons, but one Person. This one Person spoke to a second Person who shared in the divine nature<sup>4</sup> but is not called "God" in this passage.

John clarifies all this in the prologue to His Gospel. He began His Gospel with the very same words found in Genesis 1, *"In the beginning."* The one who was "with God" in the beginning was His helper, His agent, through whom all things were created, and without whom nothing was made that was made. John used the preposition "through" (διὰ) when speaking of the role of the second Person in creation, a term which indicates agency. He was called "Logos" (which means "word" or "message"). That "Logos" was His proper name is made clear by the same Apostle in Revelation 19:13, referring to Jesus – *"His name is called the Logos of God."* The name "Logos" also defined His role, since from the beginning His assignment has been to interact directly and personally with humanity on God's behalf, God's ultimate "Messenger." John wrote that "Logos was God." That is, since Logos was the only authority who interacted with Adam, He was "God" to Adam.

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<sup>3</sup> The term "image" means a representation, having some shared characteristics but not necessarily identical with the exemplar.

<sup>4</sup> This passage is used as a proof text for Trinitarians, to show that God is a plurality of Persons. Yet, a careful look at the plural and singular pronouns does not confirm that the term "God" is itself inclusive of multiple Persons. Rather, "God" is a reference to the same concept in the Shema. There is indeed a second Person present. But He is not called "God" in this context. Yet He necessarily shares in the same "kind" as God (the Father) so that man could be created in the image of both, yet this remain the image of God Himself. This passage is also extremely problematic for Unitarians, since they have no adequate explanation for how a second Person could be involved in both the creation of man, and be the exemplar for the image of God. The usual explanation is that it refers to angels. But this runs smack up against the problem that man would then be created as a blended image of God and angels, since man was made according to "Our image." Verse 27 will not allow this interpretation.

Contrary to popular belief, John did not coin the name “Logos” for the Son of God. Paul knew it decades earlier<sup>5</sup> as a proper name for the Son of God.

*Hebrews 4:12-14 LGV*

*12 For God’s **Logos** is alive and effective, and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating until the distribution of both life and breath, of both joints and sinews, and is the Judge of inner sentiments and thoughts of the heart. 13 And nothing created is imperceptible in **His** sight, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of **Him**, the One unto whom we report. 14 Having then **a great High Priest** who has passed through the heavens – **Jesus the Son of God** – we should cling to the Profession.*

The context proves that God’s “Logos” has “eyes” and sees everything, just as John elaborated upon in Rev. 5:6. Verse 14 identifies God’s Logos as Jesus, the Son of God.

John, in proving the divinity of the preincarnate Son, quoted Jesus Himself as saying, “For I issued forth out of God” (ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον).<sup>6</sup> This cannot refer to the incarnation, since humanity is not “begotten” by divinity. It must refer to a point in time when the Son actually “issued forth out of God,” before which there was no “Son” as a distinct conscious Person from the Father. Psalm 2 describes this in the words of the Son Himself, “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’”<sup>7</sup> John repeatedly used the clause, “only-begotten Son” to show Jesus’ unique relationship to the Father, having been literally “begotten” out of the Father, thus of the same “kind” (γένος) as the Father – divinity, of the divine nature.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the divinity of the Son flows from the Father to His divine offspring, rather than the Son’s divinity being independently His own. Just as Adam’s sons were “human” (of the same “kind” {γένος} of Adam via “begetting”) so also the “only-begotten Son of God” had to be of the same “kind” (γένος) as God Himself when He was “begotten” by the Father.

According to both Paul and Jesus Himself, the “begetting” of the Son of God marks the beginning of measured time, day one of creation week.

*Col. 1:15- LGV*

*15 He is the image of the God who is unseen, **first-begotten of all creation**, 16 because through Him everything was created, what is in the heavens and what is on the land, the*

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<sup>5</sup> John’s Gospel and letters were written decades after Paul’s death in AD 66. John took over the care of the assemblies of Asia Minor which were the product of Paul’s missionary journeys. John’s works were clearly intended to add a second witness to Paul’s testimony by an Apostle who was an eyewitness to what Jesus said and did.

<sup>6</sup> John 8:42

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 2:7

<sup>8</sup> The term “divine nature” is found in Paul’s sermon at Athens (Acts 17:29). The Greek word is τὸ θεῖον, a neuter adjectival derivative of the word “God.” Its neuter gender indicates that it is non-personal, and refers to the “what” of God as opposed to the “who.”

*seen and the unseen (including thrones, dominions, principalities, and authorities). Everything has been created through Him and for Him. 17 And **He is before everyone**,<sup>14</sup> and everything has stood together in Him. 18 And He is the head of the Body (the assembly), **who is The Beginning**,<sup>16</sup> first-begotten out from among the dead, so that in everything He should become the prototype.*

Jesus confirmed that He was God's first act in time.

*Revelation 3:14 LGV*

*14 "And to the messenger for the assembly in Laodicea write, 'The Amen, The Faithful and True Witness, **The Beginning of the creation of God**, says this:*

Therefore the Son Himself was "the Beginning" of God's acts, although He was not created, but rather "begotten," being the "only-begotten Son" of the Father.<sup>9</sup>

As both John and Paul stated clearly, God created everything that exists through the agency of His Son, including the angels.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the Son of God was truly "from the beginning." He did not begin to exist in the incarnation.<sup>11</sup>

All face to face encounters with God (YHVH) were encounters with the Son (the agent of YHVH), never directly with the Father who is invisible and has never been seen by anyone.<sup>12</sup> The Son, both as God's "only-begotten" and God's personal agent (the Messenger {Angel} of YHVH), had the right to use the divine name and to speak as YHVH in the first person.<sup>13</sup>

At the time of the incarnation, the Son willingly "*emptied Himself*" of His divine attributes,<sup>14</sup> to "*come down from heaven*,"<sup>15</sup> becoming flesh through the incarnation,<sup>16</sup> becoming fully human (ἄνθρωπος). The same "Son of God," the "*Messenger of YHVH*" who appeared to Abraham and Moses, became "Son of Man" (fully human).<sup>17</sup> As Man, Jesus had no super-powers (of divinity) inherent to His person,<sup>18</sup> but was as human as you or I, having been

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<sup>9</sup> See also: Psalm 110:3 LXX; Prov. 8:22-26; Prov. 30:4

<sup>10</sup> Prov. 8:22-31; John 1:1-2 cf. Rev. 19:13; John 1:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9 MT,TR; Col. 1:16-17; Col. 3:10; Heb. 1:2,8-10; Heb. 2:10.

<sup>11</sup> Micah 5:2 see esp. the LXX

<sup>12</sup> Dan. 3:25,28; John 1:18; John 6:46; John 8:56-59; Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:16; Heb. 11:27; 1 John 4:12 cf. v. 20

<sup>13</sup> Gen. 22:11-18; Ex. 2:1-22; Ex. 23:20-31; Ex. 32:34; Ex. 33:2; Num. 20:16; Isa. 9:6LXX; Isa. 63:9 {cf. Heb. 1:3 Gk. & 1 Cor. 10:4}; Mal. 3:1

<sup>14</sup> Phil. 2:5-8

<sup>15</sup> John 3:13; John 6:38

<sup>16</sup> John 1:14

<sup>17</sup> Isa. 9:6LXX; Mal. 3:1

<sup>18</sup> John 5:19,30

made *"in all things like His brothers."*<sup>19</sup> His miracles and His supernatural knowledge were all from the Father's working through Him, doing the miracles.<sup>20</sup>

As Man, the Son was *"tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin."*<sup>21</sup> Since we have the potential to sin, so also did He. However, Jesus was taught by His Father from infancy to *"refuse the evil and choose the good."*<sup>22</sup> He became the atoning sacrifice for us after He had *"learned obedience by the things which He suffered"* through His agonizing in the Garden of Gethsemane, and thus was *"perfected"* Man<sup>23</sup> by subduing His human weaknesses and fears – *"He suppressed Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even death of a cross."*<sup>24</sup>

The Son remains fully human (glorified and immortal) at the Father's right hand,<sup>25</sup> being the tangible prototype of what all faithful men and women will be in the resurrection.<sup>26</sup> At the appointed time, "the Son of Man" will come again in the flesh with power and glory to reign from Jerusalem on the Throne of David.<sup>27</sup> The Father will hand full sovereignty and dominion of the creation over to the Son.<sup>28</sup> He will reign over the nations in justice<sup>29</sup> for a thousand years.<sup>30</sup>

After He has destroyed all opposition to God, at the end of the thousand years He will deliver the Kingdom – in perfect order and justice – to the Father. From that time on, the Son will again be subject to the Father who will reign supreme.<sup>31</sup>

The Son of God, having become Son of Man, is the divine substitute for man's failures, to fulfill all of God's covenants. He is **the second Adam**, the Man who will fulfill the original purpose for mankind for which Adam failed – to take dominion over the whole earth, animals, fish, birds, etc..<sup>32</sup> The Son of God having become Son of Man is **the second Jacob**, the promised "Seed" of Abraham to inherit the Land that God promised to Abraham's Seed, since Israel failed to keep His Law.<sup>33</sup> The Son of God having become Son of Man is **the second Solomon**, the son of David who will sit upon the Throne of David and reign because Solomon failed to keep God's commandments. In each of these covenants, God's

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<sup>19</sup> Heb. 2:17

<sup>20</sup> John 14:10; Acts 2:22; Acts 10:38

<sup>21</sup> Heb. 4:15

<sup>22</sup> Isa. 7:14-16a LXX

<sup>23</sup> Heb. 5:7-9

<sup>24</sup> Phil 2:8 LGV

<sup>25</sup> 1 John 4:2-3 Gk.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Cor. 15:47-49; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2

<sup>27</sup> Acts 2:30; 2 John 1:7

<sup>28</sup> Dan. 7:13-14

<sup>29</sup> Isaiah 11

<sup>30</sup> Rev. 20:1-6

<sup>31</sup> 1 Cor. 15:28

<sup>32</sup> Gen. 1:26-28; Psalm 8:3-9; Heb. 2:5-10

<sup>33</sup> Gal. 3:16

grace is displayed by God's providing His own substitute – His only-begotten Son – when man failed, just as He provided a substitute ram for Isaac.

Both Trinitarianism and Unitarianism minimize the sacrifice that God Himself made by offering up His “only-begotten Son” whom He loved just as Abraham loved Isaac. God tested Abraham, giving him just a glimpse of what God felt. *“For this is how God loved the world, inasmuch as He gave His Only-Begotten Son ...”*<sup>34</sup> – that is His Son whom He fathered from His own person.<sup>35</sup> For Trinitarians, the Son was a co-equal divine Person from all eternity, not literally procreated from the Father's own person. For Unitarians, the Son was nothing more than a created human being, not literally God's only-begotten Son. Both of these views greatly diminish the Father's own sacrifice. Likewise, both views diminish the Son's sacrifice, which was two-fold according to Paul in Phil. 2:5-8. First, as Son of God, being “equal with God,” the same “kind” (γένος), He contemplated His exalted place, but then willingly chose to “empty Himself” of the divine nature (τὸ θεῖον) in order to “become in the likeness of men.” This itself was a sacrifice impossible for us to fathom.<sup>36</sup> Then, having been found in fashion as man, He “humbled Himself” a second time in order to become “obedient unto death” on our behalf.

The true understanding of who God is and who His Son is:

- brings harmony to all of the Scriptures, eliminating a plethora of problems and contradictions of both Trinitarianism and Unitarianism
- treats all of the Scriptures with the respect they deserve, and does not need to force any of them
- highly exalts both the Father and the Son
- fosters a greater and deeper love for God by understanding the much greater sacrifice on the part of the Father by sacrificing His “only-begotten Son”
- fosters a greater and deeper love for the Son of God who willingly gave up His divine nature in order to fully embrace humanity, to embrace death for us so that we could have life
- defines true “monotheism” in contrast to the perverted form of monotheism prominent in both Islam and rabbinic Judaism

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<sup>34</sup> John 3:16

<sup>35</sup> Heb. 11:17

<sup>36</sup> In Trinitarianism, the Son lost nothing in the incarnation, but only ADDED humanity to His divinity. Hence there was no real sacrifice or permanent loss in His assuming flesh. In Unitarianism, the Son was never divinity, but just a man. He sacrificed nothing in this regard. Since in this passage (Phil. 2) Paul's point was *“let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus,”* both of these erroneous views of Christ provide a bad example to follow (or at least not nearly the kind of self-sacrifice that the Son actually made). Thus in imitating the “mind of Christ” as Paul instructs, our own behavior is greatly affected by our theology concerning the Son of God emptying Himself.