

Sunday Morning Sermon

November 22, 2020

“The Gospel of God” (Part III)

Romans 1:1-7

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¹ Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ² which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴ and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. ⁵ Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, ⁶ among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

***⁷ To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

The title of our sermon again this morning is “The Gospel of God, Part 3,” and we are in Romans chapter 1, verses 1 through 7. So, we come this morning again to the book of Romans. We’ve set out on our journey to scale this towering peak together, the towering peak that is Paul’s epistle to the Romans. Our first step in what will certainly be a blessed adventure together is to take our time now in consideration of Paul’s introduction in Romans chapter 1, verses 1 through 7, where in the introduction we’re introduced to our servant and his subject. The servant of course is the Apostle Paul in verse 1. Paul is a slave of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, separated to the Gospel of God. Paul’s subject is the Gospel. And notice its divine origin in verse 1. It is the gospel of God, the good news. That good news from God concerns a promise in verse 2 and a Person, verses 3 and 4. The promise is that which God has announced long before and through the means of His prophets in the Holy Scriptures. And what Paul is referring to there is our Old Testament Scriptures. He’s been announced in the Old Testament Scriptures. And that Person who has been promised is none other than God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now in other words, Jesus Christ then is the goal or the aim, the direction, the intention of the Scriptures. And Paul roots and grounds that foundational truth in the Word of God revealed in our Old Testament. Luther called the Old Testament Scriptures “*the swaddling clothes in which Jesus Christ was born.*” I like that. Thinking of that, in one sense, 1) Paul establishes the great unity and continuity between the Testaments of our Bible. There’s a continuity to the Bible. We have a single, unified, continuous, progressive, redemptive revelation. One people of God, one Savior of God’s people, one glorious plan to save sinners.

2) In this, Paul establishes the fact that if you don’t have Jesus Christ as the focus, as the intention of all the Scripture, then you have nothing. It’s just words on a page. The Old Testament is rendered irrelevant, the New Testament hangs upon air, and your faith, brothers and sisters, is in vain. All the promises of God find their fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus Christ our Lord. He is where our faith, and our trust, and our hope, and our joy, and our devotion, where all of that belongs.

Buddhism can do without Buddha. Islam can do without Muhammad. But Christianity cannot do without Christ. The very opening of this letter then – what Paul is doing is he’s drawing a hard and fast line. That line stretches into eternity, and it runs right through the very heart of the Bible cover to cover. Many Jews in Paul’s day – many Jews in our day – refuse to believe it. That same line that Paul is drawing here divides all of humanity at this very moment in time. That line, that great divide is Jesus Christ our Lord, the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. What will you do about Jesus Christ? What will you do with Him? What will you decide? What will you think? Who is He? Whose Son is He? What has He done? That line is clear. That line is sharp. That line is hard. That line is uncompromising, unyielding, unbending.

On the one side of that line, on the one side of that divide, Jews and Gentiles alike are ignorant of God’s righteousness in Jesus Christ. They’re seeking to establish their own right standing before God, if they even desire to do so. They will not submit themselves to the righteousness of God found in Jesus Christ alone and they reject Him. They refuse to believe that Jesus Christ is the aim, the goal, the intention, the direction of all of human history; the fulfillment of Israel’s Scriptures. And Jesus Christ in that is either a lunatic or a liar, but He certainly isn’t Lord.

And on the other side of that divide, on the other side of the line, is the Lord’s church, the Lord’s people, the people of God; those people who read their Old Testament. And when you read the Old Testament, we see Jesus Christ, His person and His work, foreshadowed, promised, prophesied, predicted, prefigured everywhere in the Old Testament. They see the promises of God as finding their ‘Yes!’ and ‘Amen!’ in Him and in Him alone, in the Word of God. ***Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!***

The Jewish leaders on one side of that great divide in Paul’s day thought that they had decisively proved their case by killing this great pretender they would say – by killing this usurper, this so-called “King of the Jews.” And they crucified Him. They murdered Him. And they killed His disciples. They crushed the opposition, they thought. And thought that Christianity was now buried in the tomb outside Jerusalem. What they believed was a decisive act in their favor turned out to be the decisive act in a stunning proclamation against them, when the King was raised from the dead in victory over His enemies. He is the Son of God with power. Crucified on the claim that He is the fulfillment of the Scriptures, and confirmed as that very fulfillment by the resurrection from the dead.

So, what Paul does then, as he opens his letter is introduce his subject as the good news of God. It is only good news in so far as Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of that which has been promised before, long ago by God, through His prophets in Holy Scriptures.

Now with respect to that promised Person, Jesus Christ our Lord, Paul refers to His incarnation in verse 3; His state of humiliation, His weakness, His state of suffering. Paul says He ***was born of the seed of David according to the flesh***, – And then Paul refers to His exaltation in verse 4. Jesus Christ was ***declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.***

So then, having considered most recently together His incarnation in verse 3, the tremendous significance of the Lord’s descent from David according to the flesh, we now, brothers and sisters, turn our attention this morning to His exaltation in verse 4. Consider with me the exaltation of the Son of God in verse 4 under three headings. 1) An Exalted Status, 2) An Exalted State, and 3) An Exalted Means. An exalted status, an exalted state, and an exalted means.

1) An Exalted Status

And let's begin with a consideration of His exalted status. Verse 4, God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, is **declared to be the Son of God with power** – Now notice with me in the flow of Paul's thought here in verse 4. The Gospel of God concerns His Son, the Son of God (verse 3). That Son of God, God the Son, is the One that is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. The One whom John says in the beginning of his gospel was in the beginning with God and the One who was God, the One who tabernacle among us, became flesh. He is the eternal Son who "became" (verse 3) or "came into being" as the Seed of David, as the descendant of David according to the flesh. It's **concerning His Son** (verse 3). And that same eternal Son of God, the One who has always been the Son of God, is (verse 4) **declared to be the Son of God with power** (He is appointed to that exalted status) **according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead**. We see all that in verse 4.

Arriving at that exalted status through the resurrection from the dead would also mean – think with me – that the road that He took to get there involved His own death. He's raised from the dead. That means this One died. So, listen. although it would be certainly true to say, that verse 4 – He's declared to be the Son of God with power – although that would be certainly true to say, that verse 4 is an assertion or a declaration of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is more to it than that. There's far more to it than that. And that is not merely or only what Paul means. Paul, even in verse 4, referencing the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, is still emphasizing the Lord's humanity. It is the God-Man who died. It is the God-Man who is raised from the dead. It is the God-Man who is declared to be the Son of God with power. There's a lot there in that simple statement. Every one of these statements in the introduction is crying out to be preached, screaming at us to take time on each one. So that's what we're going to do. There's a lot here in this simple statement we need to understand.

What is the nature of this exalted status? He is **declared to be the Son of God with power** – First, the exalted status of the "Son of God" being referred to here by Paul is an appointed status. It is an appointed status. The word "declared" there at the beginning of verse 4, is the Greek word ὀρίζω (horízō). The word means "to appoint" or "to designate." Nowhere in the New Testament is this word used to refer simply to a declaration about something. It's used to communicate a determination that has been made. Let me give you a couple of examples.

Acts chapter 10, verse 42: Jesus Christ **was "ordained"** (same word, ὀρίζω – horízō) **by God to be Judge of the living and the dead**.

Acts chapter 17, verse 31: **He (God) has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has "ordained"** (same word, ὀρίζω – horízō) – by the Man whom He has determined to judge the world.

Acts chapter 2, verse 23: Jesus was **delivered by the "determined" purpose** (ὀρίζω – horízō) **and foreknowledge of God**, – It was literally in the Greek "a determination of His will." God determined to deliver up Jesus Christ, (ὀρίζω – horízō).

So then, Romans chapter 1, verse 4: Jesus Christ was "appointed" – Jesus Christ was "determined" – Jesus Christ was "ordained" by God **to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead**.

"Well I thought that He was already the Son of God?" Yes! And He was appointed, determined, and ordained by God **to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead** – through the means of the resurrection from the dead.

Now that obviously makes translators a little nervous. It makes it sound like Jesus Christ first came into existence at His incarnation (verse 3), He “became” ***of the seed of David according to the flesh***, as though He didn’t exist before His incarnation. We know that’s not what the Bible teaches. And then it makes it sound like He only became the Son of God after His resurrection (verse 4), as though He was not the Son of God before His resurrection. What exactly is Paul saying here? The answer to that question is glorious. It has to do with appointment, or determination, or God’s will; God’s ordination.

The Lord Jesus Christ, His exalted status as the Son of God is an appointed status. As much as Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, as much as He is God the Son, co-eternal, co-equal with the Father, Jesus Christ is given this title “Son of God” and all that that title implies. And that designation is given by His resurrection from the dead. Now that title “Son of God” is closely connected to His incarnation mentioned in verse 3, His descent from David according to the flesh. This title has everything to do with the accomplishment of His work. Not only as “God the Son” but specifically as “the God-Man,” the One who took on flesh, the One who died to redeem His people, and the One who was raised from the dead. To suggest that the title, this title “Son of God” merely refers to the Lord’s deity, or for that matter that other titles for Jesus Christ like “Son of man” merely refers to His humanity, is far too simplistic. And I want to prove that to you from Scripture. Follow along with me. Okay?

The title or description “son” or “sons of God” is used in various ways and in various circumstances throughout the Bible. Sometimes that phrase “the sons of God” or “son of God” is used more generically of angels for example. But more specifically, the title “son of God” or “sons of God” is used for man made in the image of God. The first person that we’re introduced to in the Bible considered to be “the son of God” is Adam at creation. Now, think with me. What we find initiated with Adam is a theology or a theme of sonship. Adam and Eve were made in the image and in the likeness of God. In other words, there is a dignity to Adam, isn’t there? There’s a dignity given to man at creation in the sense that man is made in the image and likeness of God. That’s not a dignity that’s given to anything else in creation. It’s not a dignity that’s given to animals. Adam, created in the image of God is to exercise dominion over all creation. He’s created in the created order as vice regent over all of God’s creation.

And what God is essentially doing in Genesis is setting up His kingdom. It’s God’s people, Adam and Eve; in God’s place, the earth (specifically in the Garden of Eden); under God’s ultimate rule, dominion then given to Adam. Adam, above all the creation, enjoys a special relationship to God, a special status. He is a “son of God.” His presence is near to Adam and Eve in the garden. God is said to walk among the trees of the garden.

Where do we see this? We see this one place, in Luke chapter 3, in Luke’s genealogy of Jesus. Luke traces the lineage of Jesus Christ back to Adam in verse 38, where Luke refers to Adam and the “son of God.” Now initially, sonship refers to a position or a status rather than referring to a gender. Since Adam and Eve – male and female – both Adam and Eve are included in that status of sonship. Genesis chapter 1, verse 27, eludes to this. ***So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*** It’s not really with respect to gender as much as it is with respect to status. We’ll talk about that more as we go.

Paul would later say in Galatians chapter 3 that we are all sons of God. Who’s the “all?” Brothers and sisters in Christ. He says we ***are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus*** (and then he goes on to say) ***there is neither male nor female – slave nor free – (We) are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ.***

Now, Adam's called the son of God. The first one that we are introduced to in Scripture, to bear that title, so to speak. And we know the record. Adam, the first son of God tragically, horrifically fails and the sonship of humanity is devastated by sin and death. Adam and Eve are exiled from the garden. They are cast out and human wickedness begins to spread on the earth. Human wickedness begins to dominate God's creation. Even the creation (Romans chapter 8, verse 20), even the creation itself is subjected to futility. Creation is in bondage to corruption.

Now, it's at this point – at the point of the Fall – that God would proclaim a promise in Genesis chapter 3, verse 15, and it's the promise of a Son. It would be the Seed of the woman to redeem and to preserve an elect race of what the New Testament would later call "sons of glory;" a promised Son of the woman would triumph over Satan and his seed – over the sons of Satan. From that point forward, sonship would dominate redemptive history – would dominate the revelation of God on the pages of Scripture. It is that promise of a Son that would come to the forefront in the redemptive plans and purposed of God over and over and over again. Even the creation is said to be eagerly awaiting the revealing of the sons of glory. Even we ourselves groan within ourselves eagerly waiting for the fullness of our adoption which is the redemption of our body. And what is that fullness realized through? It's through our resurrection from the dead.

So, we see the importance of sonship. We see the importance of sonship from Adam to Seth, the importance of sonship from Noah to Shem, from Abraham to the promised son Isaac, and from Jacob to Jacob's twelve sons.

Well the next time that we see a reference to sonship or this title "Son of God," we see it in the opening chapters of Exodus. Turn with me to Exodus chapter 4. This is the next place that we see a reference to the title "Son of God." In Exodus chapter 4, the covenant people of God are far from the garden paradise in Eden. They're living in exile. They're living in captivity under hard bondage in Egypt. Moses at this point has been appointed a prophet of God and sent back to Egypt and confront Pharaoh. What Moses is supposed to do is to confront Pharaoh and to secure the release of His people Israel. Specifically now, by the hand of Moses, God intends to deliver His people from bondage, from their exile and establish them in a land that sounds an awful lot like Eden. There are Edenic overtones that describe the Promise Land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey.

Look at Exodus chapter 4, verse 21: ***And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord: "Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn."'"***

So now, the "Son of God," that title, takes on a new understanding, doesn't it? It takes on a corporate understanding. The Son of God, God's Son is collectively, corporately now, the nation of Israel. They are to be a redeemed people, chosen, set apart. They are meant to enjoy the blessings of a new life in a promised land; a new Eden blessed by God, fruitful. They're to enjoy a new creation, so to speak. They themselves as the people of God are a new creation. God chose them, Abraham their father. He has knit them together, so to speak, in the womb of Egypt; and now they are to enjoy a fruitful new creation.

It's interesting to think about the whole instance of Israel in Egypt. You see the plagues of God poured out on Egypt. It looks like, doesn't it, de-creation? It's judgment upon Egypt, judgment upon the nations. The plagues are being poured out. Not unlike plagues that will be poured out at the end when the wickedness

of this world will be destroyed. And then what happens? God's people come out in glory. A new creation, a new heaven and a new earth; a new Eden, so to speak. You see the pattern's repeated in the Bible.

It's interesting too – these thoughts come to mind – just as in the beginning in Genesis chapter 1, God divided the waters from among the waters and dry land appeared. What do you see with Israel coming out of Egypt? God dividing the waters and Israel going across on dry land. Interesting to think about, those pictures, those illustrations that God is pointing us to in His Word.

The prophet Hosea would record the words of God years later, looking back on this Exodus in Hosea chapter 11, verse 1, where the Lord says: ***“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt (what?) I called My son...”*** Now, God would lead His son Israel then into the wilderness. You can see the connection between Israel now and Adam, can't you? Adam, the son of God – Adam falls. Adam fails. God raises up His son Israel. Do you see? There's a connection between the two. God would lead His son Israel into the wilderness and just like Adam before him, God would enter into a covenant of works with Israel His son.

The Son of God now delivered, so to speak. A new beginning has come with the Exodus. Out of bondage comes restoration, comes rebirth, comes – the word in Greek refers to regeneration, a rebirth, so to speak, a new creation. As with Adam before them, God now sets before them, Israel His son, a covenant. Blessings for obedience, cursings for disobedience. In a land that God had prepared for them, reminiscent of Eden, and God would once again, walk among them.

Look over at Leviticus chapter 26. God would once again walk among them. Leviticus chapter 26 and look there beginning at verse 3: ***‘If you walk in My statutes (the Lord says) and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.*** (Just like Adam should have continued to enjoy in Eden if he had obeyed the Lord, right? Verse 5) ***Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. I will give peace in the land,*** (verse 6) ***and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land.*** This sounds like conditions before in Eden, doesn't it?

Verse 7: ***You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. ‘For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new. I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.***

Brothers and sisters, listen, that's where we are headed in redemptive history. This is what God is taking us to. He's taking us to the place where we as God's people would enjoy full and unfettered fellowship with God himself in God's land, under God's rule, with God's people, in His Kingdom. Do you see? The Lord is saying to them, Israel His son, obey Me. If you obey Me, this is what will happen. ***I will walk among you and be your God and you shall be My people.***

Just as the Lord had walked among the trees of the garden in the days of Adam and Eve, He would deliver them out of their bondage and walk amongst them once more. The trees would yield their fruit. The tabernacle that God sets among them, would be adorned with images of Eden. Trees and plants and flowering shrubs, all over the tabernacle. And God's presence would be manifested among them at the

Tent of Meeting. God would come to them – He was seen in the Shekinah glory – if only the nation of Israel would be the Son that God intended for them to be. The image and likeness of God. A holy nation, a royal priesthood, vice regent over all creation, such that the glory of God would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The holy nation that Adam and his progeny had failed to be. Do you see?

Verse 14: ***‘But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, (Can you see, this is a covenant of works?) and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.***

Like Adam, that went before them, we know the record of Israel’s history from reading the Bible, don’t we? Israel is tested in the wilderness and found to be faithless, disobedient, unbelieving. And God swore in His wrath they would not enter His rest. As Adam before them, the nation would forsake the covenant and forsake the Lord. They wouldn’t be the Son that God had promised way back in Genesis chapter 3. Merely a faint and darkened shadow now of that perfect Son who is to come.

The next time that we see this title “Son of God” is in God’s promise to David of a future King in an everlasting Kingdom. Turn with me to 2 Samuel chapter 7. In 2 Samuel chapter 7 we see this title “the Son of God,” in His promise to David of a future King. We saw recently, God gives a promise to David, the Davidic Covenant, in the context of David’s desire to build a house or build a temple for God. The temple is the dwelling place of God in the Spirit. That’s what David wanted to build for the Ark of God. We see the beginning of this in verse 12, the substance of God’s promise. It’s an extension of the promise that God began all the way back in Genesis chapter 3. A son of David would build the temple. David wouldn’t build it, but a son of David would build a temple, a dwelling place for God in the Spirit. And that son of David will be the Son the God.

Look at verse 12: ***“When your days are fulfilled (David) and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. (We looked at this text in considering that Jesus Christ was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. Do you remember? Verse 13) He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (Listen. Verse 14) I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. (Now, you’ve got to remember Jesus Christ has always been the Son of God, co-equal, co-eternal with the Father. But here, this is a promise to David. These covenants become so important, so critical to understanding redemptive history. God is saying, I will be a Father to Him, this One who is to come, this Promised Son, and He shall be My son.) If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. (Verse 15) But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”***

Now, the promise of God is clear here in 2 Samuel chapter 7. The national covenant that God made with Israel began with a covenant with Adam; and a covenant that Adam could not keep, did not keep. The national covenant then, that God made with Israel, a covenant that Israel cannot keep, will now be centered upon, will now be focused upon a singular and particular Son of David. And rather than Adam and rather than Israel, that Seed, that Son of David will be the Son of God. Do you see?

David's son Solomon might have thought – just like Eve may have thought – when she gave birth to Cain and gave birth to Abel – may have thought, 'This is the Son that was promised.' Just like Isaac may have thought that all of the promises of God would be fulfilled – or Abraham – all of the promises of God would be fulfilled in Isaac. Just like they may have thought that this son of David would be the one to fulfill all of the promises, Solomon was not. Solomon was just a brief foreshadowing of this future Son of God. And upon the building of the temple that Solomon built, there was great restoration, a great new birth, so to speak, a regeneration. There was a restoration. And Solomon reigns for a brief, momentary time over the greatest expression of the Kingdom of God on earth since the garden. There was great prosperity. There was great blessing in the Promised Land, the land that God had promised to give them. The ministries of prophet, priest, and king mediated the rule and reign of God Himself over the earth. The presence of God Himself was said to dwell between the cherubim in the temple of God that Solomon had built.

But even during the very reign of Solomon himself, there was a great decline. Solomon would not be the promised Son of God. The nation would fall into sin and into idolatry. And just like Adam before them, Israel would now be cast out of the land. Exiled. Sent into exile. Back into Egypt, so to speak. Out of Eden, back into Egypt. In 722 BC, the northern kingdom would fall to Assyria. In 586 BC, the southern kingdom of Judah would fall to Babylon.

After the fall of the nation, this crumbling, deterioration, God's prophets – His prosecuting attorneys – would begin to prophesy the judgment of God. Through the prophet Hosea, in Hosea chapter 1, verse 9, Hosea was to call his son Lo-ammi, "not my people." It's a prophecy of judgment. For God says to Hosea, to the nation of Israel, "***You are not My people and I will not be your God.***"

Hosea has a daughter Lo-Ruhamah, who is to be called "no mercy." Two kids (three kids total), Lo-Ruhamah "no mercy," and Lo-ammi "not my people."

But in the very next verse, Hosea chapter 1, verse 10, the Lord proclaims the ultimate fulfillment of His promise that He hasn't forgotten, God is faithful to His Word. He had made a promise and He proclaims the ultimate fulfillment of that promise, that promise that began in Genesis chapter 3, repeated to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, He now repeats it again through the prophet Hosea, chapter 1, verse 10:

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there it shall be said to them, 'You are (what?) sons of the living God.'

That's our heritage. That's our destiny. Sons of the living God. God would restore His covenant people. It's interesting to think about these prophets who prophesied a restoration of the people. When the people at the end of our Old Testament, in Ezra and Nehemiah, begin to come back into the land, one of the things that we find in the record of those that return to the land is that they have been greatly diminished. They've been greatly diminished under the judgment of God. They come back small in number, few in number. When they lay the foundation of the temple, the temple pales in comparison to the temple that Solomon had built. And that first generation who had seen the former temple wept.

Few in number, not as grand, not as glorious. In other words, this is not the fulfillment that has been promised to us. Hosea chapter 1, verse 10: ***the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea***, (a vast, innumerable multitude of every tribe, tongue, nation, and people. They) ***cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there it shall be said to them***, (in the place where God dwells, God's people, in God's land, in God's kingdom, under God's rule) ***'You are sons of the living God.'*** God would restore His covenant

people. They would be born again, as it were, in the new creation, sons of the living God! This would all take place through thee Son of God. Do you see?

In the context of their judgments against a wayward people, the prophets of God proclaimed an ultimate fulfillment of God's promise through His Son. And what came to be associated then with this coming Son of David who would be the Son of God, was a restoration of the covenant people of God. Associated with His coming was the establishment of the Kingdom of God. God's people, God's place, God's rule. God's Kingdom established on the earth forever. The rule and reign of this Messianic King, the Son of God, would be established forever. The presence of God dwelling among His people in an Eden, garden-like paradise. In other words, the title "Son of God" is inseparable from all that God's Kingdom and rule entails. He would be Prophet, Priest and King. He would be God's Son.

Now, texts about all of this abound in the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms and in the Prophets. The Lord references this coming Son of God in Psalm 2, speaking of His exaltation. Psalm 2, verse 6, listen. God says: ***"Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.*** (I thought Jesus Christ was eternal? Yes, He is.) – ***today*** (God says) ***I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance,*** (I thought Jesus Christ owned everything, created everything? – all things were from Him, through Him, and to Him? Yes! The reward of His work as the God-Man is that the nations are given to Him as His inheritance) ***and the ends of the earth for Your possession.***

In Psalm 72, He is the Royal Son.

In Psalm 89, He is the ***firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.***

In Psalm 110, He is David's Son yet David's Lord. We see that frequently in the New Testament.

Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6: ***For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; –***

Isaiah chapter 10, verse 20, in the coming of that Son, a remnant of the people will return to God – ***the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God***

In Isaiah chapter 11, verse 1, that wasn't a return to Jerusalem from Babylon, that was just merely a foreshadowing of what would come. In Isaiah chapter 11, verse 1, that rule, that return would sound like this: 'A rod shall come forth from the stump of Jesse, a righteous Branch shall grow out of his roots.' A garden paradise will be restored! God's people, in God's land, under God's rule! Listen. ***The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.*** (It sounds like Eden, doesn't it? Like what Eden was supposed to be.) ***The lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole.*** (In other words, there's a restoration of all things; a new creation, a new beginning, a regeneration, so to speak.) ***And in that day,*** (verse 10, the Promised Son, God says) ***shall stand as a banner to the people, for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.***

Turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 23. Listen, we're only looking at just a couple of examples. These texts are all over the Psalms and the Prophets. Jeremiah chapter 23, look there beginning at verse 5:

"Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, (Amen!) and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. (Verse 6) In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name

by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Who is that? Jesus Christ! These are His days. The days in which He reigns. He is the Lord our Righteousness.

(Verse 7) ***Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, (verse 8) 'As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' and they shall dwell in their own land."***

You see this is a restoration. Egypt and the Exodus is just a picture of what's coming. It's a foreshadowing of what's coming, what's happening. This is at the coming of the Lord of Righteousness, this Branch. The people of God being gathered together from the far country. In other words, the Exodus out of Egypt is the type, is the shadow. This great Exodus being prophesied in Jeremiah 23 is the antitype, is the fulfillment, is the reality. God's deliverance of the people out of their bondage in Egypt becomes the symbol, so to speak, of God's ultimate deliverance of His people; a symbol of restoration, a symbol of redemption, a symbol of regeneration, a symbol of new creation, a symbol of resurrection from the dead under the reign and rule of the Son of God, the Lord our Righteousness!

And texts abound! You get to Ezekiel for example. I think of Ezekiel 36, a promise of the New Covenant and then immediately on the heels of God giving the New Covenant in Ezekiel 36 is regeneration in Ezekiel 37. And listen, the dead bones – ***"...can these bones live?" "O, Lord God You know."*** – by the Spirit of God, those bones rattled together and flesh came upon them, and they stood and rose a great army. That's speaking of regeneration, but listen, not regeneration of individuals only, but a regeneration of the corporate people of God; a new creation, so to speak.

Notice the pattern that the Lord has established. The sonship of Adam at creation – the sonship of Israel delivered through the Exodus out of Egypt – to the sonship of Solomon, the representative king of Israel, the one who stands for the many – and the title of "Son of God" appointed to the lineage of David and over his throne forever.

So, ***born of the seed of David according to the flesh***, (Romans chapter 1, verse 3) forever connected with the appointed status of ***the Son of God...according to the Spirit of holiness*** (Romans chapter 1, verse 4). Do you see the connection between the two? and how that title "the Son of God" is not merely or only a reference to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ? He certainly is God the Son. But more than that, He is the God-Man, the Son of God.

The Old Testament ends with a modest return of the exiles to the land, but quickly they fall into sin yet again. Nothing! Nothing in the Old Testament even comes close to resembling the fulfillment of the promises given by God to the prophets! And then we enter – at the end of Ezra and Nehemiah – we enter the 400 years of silence known as the intertestamental period. No prophets were given to the people until Matthew. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 2. Hang in there with me.

In Matthew chapter 1, Mary ***will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*** (In verse 21) ***So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: (verse 23) "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."***

All over the place in Matthew, Matthew takes prophecies from the Old Testament pertaining to Israel and applies them to this promised Son. Look at Matthew chapter 2, look there beginning at verse 13: ***Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise,***

take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." You know that's exactly what Herod did. Herod sent forces to Bethlehem to kill all the children under the age of 2, attempting to destroy Jesus Christ.

So, verse 14: **When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."** (Amazing! Do you recognize that quote? That's Hosea chapter 11, verse 1. And that's a reference to the Exodus in Israel's history in Exodus chapter 4. It's a reference to Exodus chapter 4 and the term that God used for the nation) **"Israel is My son, My firstborn – let my son go (Pharaoh) that he may serve Me."**

That's how Hosea saw those words in Exodus chapter 4. How does Matthew then view the words of Hosea here in Matthew chapter 2? Hosea made specific reference to the Exodus out of Egypt to remind the people of God's promise to restore them. He wanted to remind God's people of God's promise to restore them from their exile in Assyria and to bring them back. Well how does Matthew see that prophecy of Hosea? Hosea said, **"Out of Egypt I called My Son."** referencing the Exodus, and pointing them to a return out of exile from Assyria. But more was intended by the words of Hosea there, in Hosea chapter 11, than what Hosea himself even understood at the time. Matthew then takes these words of Hosea and says that they are ultimately fulfilled in Matthew chapter 2, when Joseph and Mary bring Jesus back from Egypt after the death of Herod who sought to take His life. **"Out of Egypt I called My Son."**

Who's the Son of God coming out of Egypt now? It's Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Do you see? Matthew isn't speculating here. Matthew isn't thinking to himself, "Ah! I see a coincidence." Matthew isn't merely seeing a relationship between these two events. Matthew, a Holy Spirit inspired interpreter of the Old Testament, is saying that Jesus Christ is the true Israel, the one appointed to be the Son of God. Do you see? Foreshadowed by Israel in her Exodus out of Egypt, Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's redemptive plans and purposes that began with Adam, and then came through Israel, and now are fulfilled in Jesus Christ!

Flip the page, look at Matthew chapter 3, and look at verse 13: **Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"**

But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." (What was Adam to have done under the covenant? He was to have fulfilled all righteousness. He was to have obeyed God. What was Israel, God's Son Israel, the people to do under the covenant? They were to fulfill all righteousness. They were to obey the Law of God. Jesus answers John the Baptist, "Permit it to be so. I need to be baptized. Why? To fulfill all righteousness.) **Then he allowed Him.** Where Adam failed, where Israel failed, Jesus Christ would triumph.

Verse 16: **When he had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.** (What we're going to find as we work through Romans chapter 1, verses 3, 4, and 5, is the importance of the Spirit of God in this work. We're going to talk about that soon.) **And suddenly (verse 17) a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."**

Could not have said that of Adam. Could not have said that of the nation of Israel. Now, in fulfillment of His promise, God says that of Jesus Christ. **"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."**

What happens immediately after this? The Lord Jesus Christ is taken out into the wilderness for 40 days of testing. What does that sound like? Resembles the 40 years that Israel spent wandering in the wilderness. Look at chapter 4, verse 1:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, (How does the tempter then tempt Jesus Christ? Listen.) “If you are the Son of God, (if that’s true of You), command that these stones become bread.” But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

Then the devil (verse 5) took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. In other words, through these accounts – and really through the whole of Matthew’s gospel, and Mark and Luke – Matthew is acknowledging that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the role of Adam as God’s Son, and the fulfillment of, specifically, the role of Israel as the Son of God. He is the true, the last, the great Adam. He is the true Israel. Do you see? Matthew frequently takes Old Testament quotes referring to Israel and applies them to Jesus Christ.

Look at Matthew chapter 16 – multiple places in between – but Matthew chapter 16, there beginning at verse 13: ***When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (That’s a title that goes back to Daniel chapter 7. We don’t have time to talk about that today but that’s another beautiful picture. Verse 14) So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”***

Simon Peter answered (verse 16) and said, “You are the Christ, (That word means “Messiah”. It means “Anointed One.” Those anointed to be prophet, priest, and king were anointed ones. He is the Christ. How is Jesus Christ anointed? He was anointed by the Spirit – anointed by the Spirit to be Prophet, Priest, and King for His people.) “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Now it’s debatable, and I think doubtful, that Peter had a full orbed understanding at this point that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh, God the Son. “Christ” meaning the “Anointed One,” the Son of the living God, in Peter’s understanding meant that He was the Promised Son. The Messiah was the Son that was promised to David – that would be the Son of David, but would be the Son of God. He was appointed that title, “the Son of God.” Peter saw Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all God’s promises through the prophets of a promised Son – the fulfillment of Genesis chapter 3 or the promise given to Abraham. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all of that and Peter sees it.

Verse 17: Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

By the time we come to John writing his gospel, John does have a full orbed understanding. He was in the beginning with God and was God. God who became flesh and tabernacled among us. ‘I write these things so that you may believe in the Son of God and have life in His name.’

Let me ask you: When exactly was this particular role of God’s Son fulfilled? – the role that Adam almost immediately forfeited in the garden? – the role that Israel as a nation almost immediately forfeited as they entered the promised land? (We saw that in the book of Judges.) When was it exactly that it shown that Jesus Christ had done all and accomplished all that this role required? It was shown at His

resurrection from the dead. The resurrection is the evidence, the proof, the consummation, if you will, that all is accomplished and the Son is exalted!

Look with me at Acts chapter 13. We're getting there. Stay with me. Acts chapter 13 and look there at verse 32. Paul is preaching at Antioch and Pisidia. In his preaching of the gospel, he says: ***And we declare to you glad tidings*** (good news – the good news is this, verse 32)—***that promise which was made to the fathers.*** (What promise is that? The promise of a Son? Genesis chapter 3, verse 15: the Seed of a woman that would destroy, crush the head of the serpent. The promised Son. The promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The promise reiterated to David. That promise which was made to the fathers, the promise of a Son, verse 33) ***God has fulfilled this for us their children,*** (You can say that too. Amen!) ***in that He has raised up Jesus.*** In other words, the promise is fulfilled in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Literally, in Romans chapter 1, verse 4, it's "from among the dead ones."

As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' In other words, when does this Psalm 2 'begetting of the Son' take place? When is it? When is He appointed to this exalted status as the Son of God? When is "today"? It's the day of His resurrection. The day that He raised up Jesus from the dead. Verse 34) ***And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'***

Do you see the connection, the constant connection, to the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant? We see that in Romans chapter 1, verse 3 and Romans chapter 1, verse 4.

Isaiah chapter 55, verse 3: ***the sure mercies of David*** – in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. Jesus Christ is the promised Son of David who is the promised Son of God!

Therefore (verse 35) ***He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow your Holy One to see corruption.'*** (That's Psalm 16, verse 10. In other words, He's going to be raised from the dead! Verse 36) ***"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but*** (verse 37) ***He whom God raised up saw no corruption.***

Therefore (verse 38, because He is this fulfillment of this promise of God – because He is the Son of God in power by the resurrection from the dead) ***let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.***

He is the promised Son of God! So, Jesus Christ is raised to an exalted status. He is the Son of God with power. That exalted status is an appointed status. Do you see how all of this is the determination of God? Fulfills the purposes of God. He is appointed, ordained by God to be the ***Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead.*** Not simply declared to be so. Do you see? It certainly proves it to be so. It certainly declares that it is so. But not merely or only a declaration, it is the determined purpose of God.

Not only "God the Son" in Romans chapter 1, verse 4, the second Person of the Trinity, co-equal, co-eternal with the Father; He has the title "Son of God." That certainly includes the fact that He is God the Son, but also Romans chapter 1, verse 4 points to Jesus Christ as the incarnate manifestation of that promised Son! He is the true Adam, the true and faithful Israel, the promised Son of David. Not only God, but the God-Man.

Why is it important to understand Paul's use of the title "Son of God" in this way? Not merely a reference to the deity of Jesus Christ, but more than that; this title "Son of God." We talk about that on a regular

basis, the critical importance of connecting theology and our knowledge of Jesus Christ to how we live, and how we think, and how we move, and how we have our being. We connect theology to life. Why is it so important to know Him?! – to know who He is and what He has done? – to understand how God has revealed these things to us in His Word? Why is that so important?! Because it impacts how we are to think, how we are to live. It impacts our worship. It impacts our joy. It impacts our devotion. It impacts everything about us.

Why is it important to understand Paul's use of the title "Son of God" in this way? Because we are sons of God in Him! If we are left as sons of Adam, we share the fate of those who are sons of the serpent, sons of the devil, sons of disobedience, by nature children of wrath. But in Jesus Christ the Son of God, we are sons of God in Him. We don't become deity in Him. We don't become little gods – contra charismania. We do become sons of God in Him. Those who entrust themselves to Jesus Christ in faith are united to Jesus Christ by the Spirit.

Paul says this in Galatians chapter 3, verse 26: ***For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one (you are all sons) in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*** Do you see the close, intimate connection that we have with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who is the Son of God?

Paul says in Romans chapter 6, ***if we die to sin and self in Him...then we shall also be raised in Him.***

Romans 6:5: ***If we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.*** We are sons of God with Him because we are sons of the resurrection. We are sons of the resurrection.

Galatians chapter 4, verse 4: ***But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive (what?) the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.***

Notice, we aren't sons of God by nature. We are redeemed sinner. We are sons by grace. We are sons by mercy. We are sons by adoption. And then God seals that wondrous, glorious, gift of adoption by sending the Spirit of His Son into our hearts so that we can respond as true sons respond, "Abba, Father!" – to God.

The Bible describes Jesus Christ as the first fruits of the general resurrection. Jesus Christ is the first fruits. Listen to this from 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 20: ***But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits (the firstborn so to speak) of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.***

Listen, with respect to that law of the first fruits – that's an Old Testament law foreshadowing this – it wasn't that they would plant a crop of first fruits, they would harvest that crop and they would give that to the Lord; and then they would plant another crop and harvest that for themselves. No. No. First fruits – one crop. They would take the first of that crop and devote it to the Lord. The rest of the crop would come after. One crop. Listen brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is the first fruits of one crop. He's the firstborn, the first fruits of a general resurrection. The resurrection has already begun. And Jesus Christ is there, the

God-Man before the throne of God in heaven. He has been raised from the dead. And if you are in Christ through faith, then you are part of that resurrection. You're the crop that's waiting, so to speak. But as surely as He is the first fruits, that crop will be harvested. He is the first fruits of a general resurrection. We will be raised in Him.

How then shall we live? How then shall we think? How should we live our lives? Listen to this – one of many, so many, that we could pull from – listen to Colossians chapter 3, beginning in verse 1: ***If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above,*** – This is not our home. This is not our place. We, brothers and sisters, are in exile, awaiting our Promised Land, awaiting what the Bible refers to as the “regeneration,” the παλιγγενεσία (palingenesía), the regeneration. A personal regeneration has taken place if you're in Christ. You're born again. But we are awaiting the rebirth, the new creation, the re-creation of all things in Christ. God's people, God's land, God's rule, God's way, all the time. Amen!

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. (If you've been raised in Him, you've been seated together with Him in heavenly places. It's as if we're there right now.) ***Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*** Then the resurrection will come.

Therefore (verse 5) ***put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience*** – You are one type of son or another type of son. Whose son are you?

We have, brothers and sisters, a glorious heritage. And often times, to our shame, we walk around the dust of this earth like wayward Israel in Judges chapter 1 and Judges chapter 2. We walk around grumbling and complaining like Israel in the wilderness, in the desert, when we will inherit as sons. It's a glorious heritage. Meditate on that with me, will you? It changes how we think. It should change how we live. It should fuel our worship, and fuel our devotion, and our love, and our joy, and our hope, and the way that we see everything. Lord God, the Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of praise. Let's pray together.