

FRIENDS OF THE NAZARENE©

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“They Follow the Lamb No Matter Where He Goes”

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Nazarene Saints Publishing© is a Bible research group for a better Scriptural understanding. We are dedicated to the preservation and publishing of Christian writings which aid *Friends of the Nazarene*© to "follow the Lamb no matter where he goes." (John 15:14; 3 John 14; Revelation 14:4) The *Friends of the Nazarene*© are a spiritual community of Messianic Christians. We are apologists dedicated to the defense of the truth that "God is One" and not three. The Bible is our creed. We view this "God-breathed" Book as inspired alone, while the thoughts of men about it are not. We wish to show respect for our multitude of Christian brethren. (1 Peter 3:15)

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“BEHOLD, A WHITE HORSE!”

Not everyone agrees on the identity of the rider of the apocalyptic white horse, the first of the four horsemen of the apocalypse. Some interpret the white horse and its rider as Satan or the Antichrist. Others hold the view that this rider is the enthroned Jesus Christ. How can the Bible help explain the identity of the horseman? The account reads in Revelation 6:1, 2:

RV6:1 *And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the Seven Seals.*

*I heard one of the 4 Living Creatures with a voice like thunder, saying:
“Come!”*

RV6:2 *And I saw, and look! a white horse. The one riding it had a bow. A crown was given to him. He went forth conquering so he might finish his conquest. [Nazarene Saints Rendering ©MM]*

The beloved apostle John has been invited into heaven to behold future events. [Revelation 4:1 First, however, he is blessed to see the celestial Throne-Room and the One sitting on that Throne – Almighty God. After this heavenly scene is described, John sees that enthroned God Almighty has a small Bible [BIBLION] in His right hand. [Revelation 5:1] A slaughtered Lamb is seen receiving this seven-sealed Bible [or, scroll]. [Daniel 7:13] The Lamb is described as *“the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, who has conquered.”* [Revelation 5:5] This proves revealing as to the identity of the rider on the white horse.

This scene of the slaughtered Lamb *“who has conquered”* describes the fulfillment of the two prophecies of Psalm 2:6, 7 and Daniel 7:13. These read:

“While I was watching a Throne was placed and the One Most Venerable took His seat. ... I was gazing into the visions of the night, when I saw [arriving] on the clouds of heaven someone like a human being. He came to the One Most Venerable and was led into His Presence. ... He who is enthroned in heaven laughs [at the nations]. Yehowah mocks them. Then He speaks to them in anger, terrifying them in His rage, ‘But I have installed My king on Zion, My holy mountain.’ Let me [the Messiah] tell of the decree: ‘[Yehowah] said to me: “You are My son, I have fathered you this day. Ask of Me, and I will make the nations your domain.”’” [Daniel 7:9,13; Psalm 2:4-8 NJB, JPS]

Both Peter and Paul give inspired interpretations of the Second Psalm and apply it to the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. [Compare Acts 4:24ff and Acts 13:33.]

It would appear that Daniel and John are seeing the same thing: the entrance of Jesus Christ into the Celestial Throne-Room upon his ascension to heaven. [Acts 1:9-11] Stephen, in his near-death experience, related his own vision just before his martyrdom: *“Stephen, filled with holy spirit, gazed into heaven and saw God’s glory and Jesus standing at the right hand of [The] God. ‘Look! I can see heaven thrown open,’ Stephen said, ‘and the Son of man standing at the right hand of [The] God.’”* [Acts 7:55-57 NJB, NSR] This would be that moment after Jesus had “conquered,” as he himself had said, ***“I have conquered the world.”*** [John 16:33]

Paul gives his own description of the enthronement of Jesus in Ephesians 1:19-23 --

This power results from the highly controlled energy exercised when The God raised the Christ from the dead, ***enthroning him at His own right hand*** in the celestial realms. Christ reigns over every government, authority, dynasty and lordship. His entitlement ascends above every title ever given. This is so, not only now in this period of time but also in that New Age in the future. The God of our Lord ***subordinated the entire universe beneath Christ’s feet***. The Father gave him complete control and leadership

over his Body the Church in everything. Thus Christ is the completion and perfection of every fulfillment in everything. [NSR *Paraphrase* ©MM]

With this background we now rejoin John in the Celestial Throne-Room. The newly slaughtered but victorious Lamb is about to open the first of the Seven Seals which kept the Small Bible closed. John reports, *“And I saw when ...”* and we begin to wonder “when” was this? We remember that Revelation 1:1 began, *“A revelation of Jesus Christ -- which The God gave to him – to show his slaves those things bound to occur.”* [NSR] It seems fair to conclude that Jesus received this “revelation” some time after his ascension to the Celestial Throne-Room as Revelation 5:1ff seems to indicate. But, what, exactly, is this BIBLION, or small book which the Lamb begins to open?

Revelation 5:4 uses the Greek BIBLION [Strong's Exhaustive Concordance # 975, *a diminutive ... book ... writing*] which is the source of the English “Bible,” from the Egyptian city where papyrus materials were prepared for writing. Here it possibly means “little book” or “booklet,” and since it is written on front and back it must be a true codex or book and not a scroll. (Revelation 5:1) This Small (Apocalyptic) Bible contains all the information to follow in the *Apocalypse* for the Seven Seals lead to the Seven Trumpets, which lead to the Seven Plagues. Therefore, it is the *Apocalypse* the Lamb opens, the actual Book of Revelation from chapter 6 onward.

John describes what he sees at the moment of the opening of the First Seal: *“Look! a white horse. The one riding it had a bow. A crown was given to him. He went forth conquering so he might finish his conquest.”* [NSR] We can identify several elements in this First Seal:

- a crowned king
- with a bow
- riding a white horse
- having conquered
- continues to finish his conquest

Of course, we are most interested in this white horse and its rider. First, we wonder if such a “white horse” is seen elsewhere in this “small Bible,” or Revelation? There is only one other occurrence of a white horse in Revelation 19:11-13 and there the rider is identified as “the Logos of the God.” [John 1:1] The context in Revelation chapter 19 would seem to confirm that this rider of that white horse is the Lamb, [Revelation 19:7] the “King of kings.” [Revelation 17:14] Can there be any question that this white horse and its rider is Jesus Christ the Lamb?

This connection alone would seem to argue this first rider on the white horse is the victorious Lord, Jesus Christ. In Revelation 6:2 this first rider is described as having a “crown” and a “bow.” Is there any other place in the Bible where such a king is described as riding a horse with a bow? Indeed there is and it may be this

Hebrew Bible text is the source of the imagery here in Revelation. Consider a Psalm quoted by Paul:

“In your glorious majesty, O Mighty One, gird on your sword and bend your bow. In your majesty ride forth victoriously for the cause of truth and in defense of righteousness – your sharp arrows flying, nations beneath your feet, the courage of the king’s foes melting away.” [Psalm 45:3-5 LXX, RSV, NEB] Paul quotes Psalm 45:6, 7 at Hebrews 1:8-10 and thus makes an inspired interpretation applying the text to the glorified Son, Jesus Christ. The inspirational vision in the Messianic hymn has a king riding with a bow going forth in conquest. It would be difficult not to draw a parallel between this Psalm and Revelation 6:2.

The crown of the rider on the white horse seems to point to Jesus Christ. In Revelation Jesus has already identified himself as a King. [Revelation 1:5; 2:26, 27; 3:21] In the context of the future subjection of earth’s inhabitants, Paul identifies Jesus Christ as “crowned.” [Hebrews 2:5-9] Revelation 6:2 breathes of Christ as king. Using the Second Psalm and the quotes of it by Peter (Acts 4:24-27) and Paul (Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5) it ought to be clear that Christ was enthroned as king upon his ascension to heaven in 33 CE. A study of Daniel 7.13 and Daniel’s location in the vision (Daniel 7:10, 16) would argue for an ascension during the Roman period as Acts 1:6-11 portrays. [Compare John 6:62; 17:13.]

Paul shows Christ “crowned” at Hebrews 2:9 and Christ must “rule” until all his enemies are subdued or conquered. (1 Corinthians 15:25) Christ does not ‘wait to rule. He ‘rules . . . waiting.’ (Hebrews 10:12, 13; Psalm 110:1) Christ has full authority upon his ascension. (Matthew 28.18; Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 2:10; Revelation 3:21) Therefore, this white horse begins its run with its victorious rider in the year 33 CE. John’s visionary experience parallels that of Daniel. (Daniel 7:9-16) In Daniel the reign of the King begins during the 4th kingdom of Rome.

Finally, this rider is described as having “conquered.” We have already noted that the Lamb which opens the First Seal is one who has “conquered.” [Revelation 5:5] Christ’s conquest began with John 16:33 and was confirmed by his victorious ascension to the Throne of God. (Revelation 3:21) This conquest presses on to final and complete victory with milestones mentioned at Revelation 19:19, 20; 20:2, 10, 14. [1 Corinthians 15:24-28.]

The evidence would seem to strongly suggest that the rider on the white horse is Jesus himself and not Satan the Devil, or the Antichrist. Biblical evidence presented above confirms Jesus began his ride as a king who has conquered upon his ascension to heaven in 33 CE. Paul shows that this conquest is not yet complete. [Hebrews 2:5-9] Revelation describes a final victory over the political powers of the earth in Revelation 17:14 and Revelation 19:11-21. Complete conquest over the “last enemy” [1 Corinthians 15:24-28] occurs at the end of the Thousand Years when all the dead are resurrected. [Revelation 20:12-14]

This understanding may also point to the fact that Revelation chapters 1-5 are not part of the Revelation per se. The real apocalyptic prophecy begins to unfold with the ride of the four horsemen.

We rejoice at this revelation which has occurred during the opening the First Seal. We are overjoyed to know Christ's conquest will go on to victorious completion. However, will the beginning of Christ's reign on his white horse mean instantaneous peace and satisfaction for humanity? Jews in general believe that when Messiah comes there will be world peace. Is that true? Or, can humankind expect something else throughout this opening period of Christ's reign? For the answer we look to the three remaining Horsemen of the Apocalypse in future articles.

==== END ====

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **FIRST CORINTHIANS.** The work on Paul's first inspired epistle to the Corinthian Church moves on apace with the paraphrase of the Greek Text finished through chapter 6 and the footnote commentary just completed on chapter 3.
- **HEBREWS & JAMES.** The *Nazarene Commentary*© on the letters of Hebrews and James have been completed and may be requested by email attachment. The work on Hebrews features a new paraphrase of the Greek language with a 104-page commentary with 698 footnotes. The *Nazarene Commentary*© on James is 40 pages long with 209 footnotes. The *Nazarene Commentary*© on various Bible books includes a commentary on every major phrase, a comparison with several other versions, word studies on key Greek words with links to the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance number referencing system. The cross-reference system was computer created with an individual study of each text.

==== END ====

FAITH PERSPECTIVES

[A forum for open expression of Faith]

An Allusion to Christ's Pre-existence in the Synoptics

Most hold the view the the Synoptics do not mention or allude to the pre-existence of Jesus. This is something that I have been thinking about. I note that

Satan in the wilderness temptation challenges Jesus whether he is "a son of The God." [HUIOS ... TOU THEOU = there is no article before "son".]

Surely Satan knows the nature of God, whether He exists in three persons or modes? When all the angels appeared before God in Job 1 and 2 this would have surely included the Son as it did Satan. They both knew the other were sons of The God. Could this be a reference to the pre-existence of Christ? It is true the baptism scene has just accord where The God spoke, "This is THE Son of Me." [Matthew 3:17] Such sonship began there at Jesus baptism as a spiritual Son of God. He was already a human son of God, as Adam. BUT, he had already existed as "a Son of God" in heaven, because he was one of many. Thus, Satan uses "a son of The God."

When the demons address Jesus later in Matthew 8:29, they say, "Son of The God." Again the article is missing before "Son" suggesting one son of many. On this matter we remember that James says "the demons believe [that God is one] and shudder." [James 2:19] If the demons dread God, and yet know that Jesus is God also, would they dare address Him as Son, when he was God? God can never be addressed as "son" for that would suggest an origin procreated by a father. [Southern California, USA]

==== END ====

EIGHT THINGS TO MAKE YOUR CALLING SURE

Introduction. God is the Great Caller. He "calls" or "invites" individuals and groups of people to serve His purpose and to accomplish His will. Every member of the Christian Church should be aware that they have been "called" or "invited." Jesus taught that **"many are called but few chosen."** [Matthew 22:14] This invitation is described by Paul as *"the heavenly calling."* [Hebrews 3:1] In the grand *Apocalypse* those who come off victorious with the Lamb at the Battle of Armageddon are depicted as *"those called, chosen, and faithful."* [Revelation 17:14] It is not enough to be called or invited by God. One must do as Peter exhorts: *"Be quick to make your calling and choosing steadfast."* [2 Peter 1:10 Nazarene Saints Rendering ©MM]

Sharers in Divine Nature

Peter wrote the early Church about transcendent promises and how these Christians could make God's calling and choosing sure. Read his inspired words: *"Grace and peace be doubly increased, incorporate in your intimate relationship with God and our Lord Jesus. For He has endowed us freely with every thing we need by His divine power. God invited us to share His own glory and vital strength by means of our intimate*

relationship with Him. Through these things He has endowed us freely with His priceless and transcendent promises. As a result you faithful may gain an experience in a godlike cosmic process, escaping a cosmos filled with corrupt passions.” [2 Peter 1:2-4 NSR Paraphrase ©MM]

This “calling and choosing” has been given to us like a gift of charity, that is something completely undeserved. Peter says this free grant is according to God’s “divine dynamics.” Some render this phrase as “divine power” as the Greek is *theias dynameos*, or “Divine Dynamics.” This “calling and choosing” would not be possible outside of God’s own Power, for it is a calling “*to His own glory and virtue.*” [2 Peter 1:3] The very thought weakens the knees, for it is an invitation to share His own heavenly splendor, as well as His goodness and moral excellence on an exalted level.

This calling is also based on an “elevated knowing” or “a heightened knowledge.” While some only translate the Greek *epignoseos* as “knowledge” the word conveys much more. It may mean a perfection of knowledge, or an “intimate acquaintance or relationship” with someone. It is not a ‘passing acquaintance’ with God, but a deep and enduring relationship that may be described as intimate. This “elevated knowledge” or “intimate experience” is with both the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. [2 Peter 1:1] Peter is to go on to use “knowledge” in another form that also bears on “making your calling and choosing firm.”

By all of these things God has granted such promises of actually “*sharing in divine nature.*” [RHM, KJV] The depth of meaning here is lost in most translations. The Greek is *theias coinonoi physeos*. According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance *theias* is “a general name of deities or divinities as used by the Greeks.” (#2304) It means god-like. **Coinonoi** [wit the English “coin” buried in it] means “common” or commune, communion. *Physeos* is rooted in “swell” and thus “beget” and may mean: “the nature of things, the force, laws, order of nature ... the sum of innate properties and powers.” (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5449) It is the word from which “physics” comes. Thus, it may be paraphrased, “a godlike cosmic process.” It suggests the hope of the Saints: to gain a god-like existence after God’s own nature.

Eight Things That Make the Calling Sure

Beyond God’s own power – His Divine Dynamic – what things are necessary on the part of the Saint to “*make the calling and choosing sure*”? Peter lists eight specific things, qualities or attributes, to assure a common sharing in that future divine nature. Note these as we read a paraphrase of 2 Peter 1:5-8 – “*For these reasons above, apply yourselves diligently to supply to your **strong conviction**, moral excellence; and to your **moral excellence** supply knowledge; and to your **knowledge** supply self-restraint; and to your **self-restraint** supply an awesome*

*reverence for God; and to your **awesome reverence for God** supply warm brotherly affection; and, to your **warm brotherly affection** supply **loving concern demonstrated by positive action for good**. For if these qualities dwell within you and overflow you will never become inactive or unproductive in your intimate relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ.” [NSR Paraphrase ©MM]*

It has been said that “a chain is as strong as its weakest link.” If we view what we have discussed above “*like an anchor possessed by the soul*” we are much interested in the anchor’s chain. [Hebrews 6:19 NSR ©MM] Peter lists eight “links” in this chain. As we consider each one ask yourself: Which one is my weakest link? Where is my chain to this anchor liable to break? What eight “things” did Peter list?

- **FAITH**
- **VIRTUE**
- **KNOWLEDGE**
- **SELF-CONTROL**
- **ENDURANCE**
- **GODLINESS**
- **BROTHERLY FONDNESS**
- **LOVING CONCERN**

1. FAITH. It does not surprise us that the first attribute Peter mentions is “faith” for this quality is one of the two most important. The Greek is *pistei* and the classic definition is given by Paul in Hebrews 11:1, “*Faith is hoping for something, hoping for the reality of things without visible proof.*” [NSR ©MM] The essential meaning is “trust.” One who trusts in someone that has faith. The person who is trustworthy is faithful. [For details on this first link in our chain see the Nazarene Commentary© on Second Peter.]

The opposite of faith is doubt or unbelief. A person of faith is characterized by being faithful, someone who does not doubt. Doubt is one of the Devil’s most effective tools and it is truly an enemy in our relationship with God. Note how Paul describes the “*large shield of faith that is capable of smothering all the wicked flaming arrows.*” [Ephesians 6:16 NSR Paraphrase © MM]

We note Satan’s effort to undermine the faith of Jesus in the wilderness temptation. [Matthew 4:1-8] Note twice Satan says, “IF you are a son of God ... “ in an attempt to raise doubt in the Nazarene. Satan knows full well that Jesus had pre-existed as the Son of God, but he raises a question regarding this sonship. [See the article “Son of God” in this issue.]

This method was the same used by Satan with Eve in the Garden of Eden. For then Satan also creates doubt by his question, “Is it really so that you cannot eat from any tree in the garden?” [Genesis 3:1-5] The Serpent speaks as if there is

as it were a rumor with a different understanding. His intent is to create doubt, which turns out to be successful in Eve's case.

Doubt may involve several key areas:

- **DOUBT IN GOD**
- **DOUBT IN HIS WORD**
- **DOUBT IN FELLOW WORSHIPPERS**
- **DOUBT IN APPOINTED ELDERS**

That is, not trusting in God, not trusting in His Word, and no longer trusting appointed guides in the Church. On the latter note how Paul includes faith when he writes: *“Be mindful of your guides who spoke to you the Word of The God. As you behold their behavior, imitate their conviction.”* [Hebrews 13:7 NSR ©MM]

There is much in Satan's world [2 Corinthians 4:4] which undermines belief in God and faith in the Bible. Doubt, or lack of faith, may be created when one puts too much trust in the words of god-less philosophers and scientists. Paul warns of this at Colossians 2:8 when speaking of any *“man [who might] spoil you through philosophy.”* [Colossians 2:8 KJV] He cautions: *“He may set forth some human tradition, or some theory about the nature of the universe – but not the teachings of Christ.”* [NOR] These may involve the theory of evolution, or criticisms of Biblical accounts such as the Flood.

Examples of faith can be studied in Hebrews chapter 11. Those named as such examples are Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, Samuel, and David. By reading the Biblical record regarding these men and women, faith can be strengthened. [Compare the *Nazarene Commentary*© on Hebrews chapter 11.]

So, be on guard, when doubts creep into one's thinking. You may need help as Jude 22, 23 cautions. Is more time being spent reading the writings of worldly men rather than His Word? Remember, in the end, it comes down to a question of faith or trust – either in God and His Word, or in the writings of worldly thinkers whose conclusions may be foolishness from God's standpoint. [See *Nazarene Commentary*© on 1 Corinthians chapter 2]

However, is faith the only quality we need to “make our calling and choosing sure”? Let us consider the next seven links in this chain.

2. VIRTUE. The second link in this chain is “virtue.” This is rendered or defined as goodness, moral character, moral excellence, noble character. It is not enough to have faith. In order to make the calling and choosing sure we must be characterized as virtuous. This quality involves morals and is characterized in a person who's words and actions reflect a love of righteousness and integrity. One

may see this quality in Paul's exhortation at 2 Corinthians 7:1, *"Let us cleanse ourselves from every fleshly or spiritual defilement, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."* [NSR ©MM]

What may "defile" us? What ethical and moral rust may begin to corrode this link in our chain? Jesus himself listed those things which lack virtue and defile us. Consider this list in Mark 7:21-23 where the Nazarene mentions that *"harmful thinking"* which may lead to defilement –

- Immorality
- Theft
- Murder
- Adultery
- Greed
- Harmfulness
- Deceit
- Shocking Behavior
- Envy
- Abusive Speech
- Pride
- Unyielding

Jesus has in mind – not the actual actions – but rather those "bad thoughts" which come from the heart and its motivations or inclinations. [Mark 7:21 KJV] The Christian who wishes to "make the calling and choosing sure" does well to meditate on these and search the heart whether spiritual rust and corrosion are at work on this link in the chain.

Remember: SIN BEGINS IN THE MIND! Paul cautioned the Corinthians: *"But, I am afraid that just as the snake with his cunning seduced Eve, your minds may be led astray from single-minded devotion to Christ."* [New Jerusalem Bible] This last phrase is rendered by Rotherham as, "the singleness and the chasteness" due Christ Jesus, indicating virtue is included.

The disciple James writes of the mental mechanism at work in sin: *"Everyone is tempted by their own desire, being drawn away and allured. Then, the desire having conceived gives birth to sin, and this sin, when it reaches full growth, brings forth death."* [James 1:14, 15 NSR ©MM] What leads to sin is what we see and therefore covet – or have an elevated desire for. [EPI-THYMIAS = over+desire; Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1939] In our sinful state some desire or coveting is the normal condition. But, heightened or elevated desire, if not stopped at this moment, may result in acting on those desires and thus sinning. The virtuous person stops the thought before it begins to materialize.

In his world famous sermon on the mountain the Nazarene illustrated how this failure at virtue begins with desire: *"Anyone looking at a woman, desiring her in*

his heart, has already adulterated her." [Matthew 5:28NSR ©MM] Thus, using the *absurdum*, Jesus counseled to remove that eye and enter Life blind in one eye, rather than going to Gehenna with both eyes. [Matthew 5:29; Mark 7:21, 23] Married Christian men do well to act quickly when such thoughts occur and avoid any thing that would arouse such thinking.

3. KNOWLEDGE. The third link in this chain is "knowledge." Here it is not EPIGNOSIS as discussed above, but ordinary "knowledge" [GNOSIN] – that is a familiarity with certain facts. The excellent translator James Moffatt renders this "intelligence" here. Peter uses the word often in his second epistle. [2 Peter 1:2, 3, 5, 6, 8; 2 Peter 2:20; 2 Peter 3:17, 18]

Knowledge involves study and meditation. Jesus himself in pray mentioned the importance of knowledge as well as where it may be found: *"This is the ageless Life – so that they may continue knowing You, the only True God and the one You sent forth, Jesus Christ. ... Sanctify them by means of the Truth. Your Word is the Truth."* [John 17:3, 17 NSR] With knowledge of God's Word of Truth the path ahead lies in darkness. [Psalm 119:105] This is particular true of prophetic elements of the Bible. [2 Peter 1:19-21]

It requires effort as Proverbs 2:1-5 emphasizes: *"My child, listen to me and treasure my instructions. Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight and understanding. Search for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure. Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God."* [The Living Translation]

This "knowledge" found in the Scriptures will cover a number of areas: a) A knowledge of God Himself; b) a knowledge of His will and purpose; and, c) a knowledge of what He requires of His worshippers. This knowledge leads us back to the previous two chain-links – faith and virtue. For knowledge will strengthen faith while identifying what is virtuous. [Hebrews 5:14]

Think of the past year? How much blessed time did you dwell in His Word? How long has it been since you read the Bible? Do you read other materials more than you read the Bible? Have you been a Christian for years and yet have not first completed a full reading of the Bible? Is this link in your chain rusting? It is an early sign of growing weakness when one has ceased to meditate on His Word. Pour the "oil" of God's Word over this link to stop the corrosion. David's hymn is an eternal truth: *"How happy the person who has not walked in the counsel of the lawless. ... But has taken delight in Yehowah's instruction, and in His Law has meditated night and day and [learned to] recite [His Word]."* [Psalm 1:1, 2 NSR ©MM; 23:1, 5]

4. SELF-CONTROL. A person of faith who is virtuous is only so up to the present moment. To guarantee future faith and virtue self-control must be present. For without self-rule, or self-restraint, virtue will collapse and faith will turn into doubt.

David is a prime example. We would describe him as a man of faith, virtuous, and possessed of knowledge – THAT IS up until he lost self-control and sinned with Bathsheba. Married Christian men do well to meditate on 2 Samuel chapter 11 to learn the Nazarene lesson of Matthew 5:28.

No one possesses perfect self-control, particularly regarding the tongue. [James chapter 3; see details in Nazarene Commentary© on the Book of James] Rather than struggling to always say the right thing, it has proven easier for some to learn WHEN NOT TO SPEAK AT ALL. If one can learn to keep the mouth shut – and not express an opinion on every subject and every person – slowly, with time and experience, a Christian will gain better control of the tongue. [Note James 1:19; Ecclesiastes 5:2-7]

Additionally, if one is weak in a particular area, then it is best to avoid those situations that might weaken resolve. For example, if certain women in the Christian Church have the habit of slander, being busybodies, it is well that the godly woman avoid their company lest she fall into this satanic snare. [1 Corinthians 15:33; 1 Timothy 3:11; 5:13; 1 Peter 4:15] To keep this link of self-control from corroding due to gossip and slander all do well to meditate on Proverbs 11:13; 18:8; 26:20, 22.

5. ENDURANCE. The word means patience, steadfastness, fortitude, perseverance. It is not enough to just begin the Christian race. One must endure to the end. [Matthew 24:13; Luke 21:19] For some endurance may mean a martyr's death. For others it may mean many decades of endurance while plagued with persecution, painful afflictions, or life difficulties at home.

Endurance is a word used often throughout the Christian Bible. Jesus taught it. [Luke 8:15] Paul emphasized the need. [Romans 2:7; 5:3, 4; 8:25; 15:4, 5; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:11; Titus 2:2] The letter to the Hebrews stressed endurance: *“For you need to have endurance so that having done the will of The God you might capture the Promise. ... Cast off every weight and that sin which can so easily entangle us, and run with endurance that agony that lies ahead of us.”* [Hebrews 10:36; 12:1 NSR ©MM]

In the most desperate hours in the history of the Christian Church, the end-time Saints particularly are encouraged by our Lord to endurance. [Revelation 1:9:2,3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12]

Some may have to endure for only a few years, as in the case of our Lord. Others, like Paul for a couple of decades. But for examples of great endurance over a long period of time covering over 60 years we look to Moses, Daniel, and the apostle John. Those elderly among us – once full of vigor in zeal for our Lord – who are now in their fifth, sixth, seventh, and even eighth decades of Christian service are to be looked to as examples of endurance. While they may end their

race peaceful in night's sleep, they have endured for so many years, confronting and enduring every kind of test and temptation. It is most beneficial for younger Christians to learn from these while they are still with us.

6. GODLINESS. The word “godliness” is drawn from the Greek EU-SEBEIAN [Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2150] and literally means to “revere well.” It is also translated piety, devotion to God, godly devotion, as well as “fear of God.” The later because it comes from roots meaning godly respect or awe that arouses one to worship God. [Romans 1:20] The word is used five times in Peter's second epistle. [2 Peter 1:3, 6, 7; 2:9; 3:11] The word group occurs about two dozen times in the Christian Bible and most often [10 times] in 1 Timothy.

A person of godliness would be characterized as “religious” [or, pious] for anyone who comes in contact with such a person would realize that they are God-centered. [1 Corinthians 15:28] The word is highly associated with worship of God. Christian worship includes several things:

- **PRAYER** [Psalm 5:2; 32:6; 42:8; Matthew 6:5-8; 21:22; 26:36; Luke 18:1ff]
- **MEDITATION ON GOD'S WORD** [Psalm 1:1, 2; Acts 17:11]
- **HYMNS OF PRAISE** [Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 14:26]
- **CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP** [Psalm 133:1; Acts 2:46; Hebrews 10:25]
- **CHARITY** [Hebrews 13:16; James 1:27]
- **EVANGELISM** [Romans 10:9, 10, 15]

These by no means are the sum of godliness but they do characterize what godliness is. An examination of some of the occurrences of this word help us to know what we should look for when examining this link in our chain. We are encouraged to have our lives full of godliness. [1 Timothy 2:2] Specific truths and doctrines are involved. [1 Timothy 3:16; 6:3] On this matter Paul writes in Titus 1:1, “... *the knowledge of the Truth which is according to godliness.*” [ASV]

One must train like a gymnast to walk in godliness. [1 Timothy 4:7] Godliness begins in the home. [1 Timothy 5:4] Godliness must be pursued [or, be constantly strived for, WMS]. Godliness can be false or without moral power. [2 Timothy 3:5] Persecution may accompany godliness. [2 Timothy 3:12] Godliness is associated with righteousness. [Titus 2:12] Deeds must accompany godliness. [2 Peter 3:11]

Does your family characterize you as a person of godliness? Do your neighbors and work associates recognize your godliness? Or, do people consider you irreligious? Or, is your godliness without any strength or power? [2 Timothy 3:5] Is your godliness a mere hypocritical veneer meant to impress others? [Matthew 6:1-8] If this link in your chain seems to have rust on it, take steps immediately through intense prayer to strengthen your piety.

7. BROTHERLY FONDNESS. It is not enough to just be “religious” and then had

a cold feeling toward the Christian fellowship. The second to the last link in our chain is “brotherly fondness” or “brotherly love.” The Greek word, like the city it is named after, is PHILADELPHIA. It is also rendered brotherly kindness, or love of the brethren. On the very basis of being a Christian no one should have to have someone write about this endearing quality. Paul writes at 1 Thessalonians 4:9, “*Regarding brotherly affection you do not need us to write you, for you are taught by The God to continue to showing loving concern for one another.*” [NSR ©MM]

This link in our chain focuses on the Christian fellowship. Though Friends of the Nazarene ought to be loving all, including enemies [Luke 6:30-35], there is no excuse for failing to have affection for another member of the Church. Is this too much to ask? Note how the beloved apostle John writes that those without love no longer have a relationship with God. Note with great concern his wording:

My brothers and sisters, do not worry about why the world hates you. We realize we have stepped over the gulf between death and life because we continue to love our fellowship. The individual who is unloving in their disposition continues under the condemnation of death. Anybody who hates a fellow is guilty of manslaughter. You realize that anyone guilty of manslaughter does not have everlasting life remaining within. Here is how we really understand what love is: our Lord sacrificed his very existence for us. For this reason we are obligated to sacrifice ourselves for our fellowship. For example: if any of us has this world's resources for maintaining life and is aware that another Christian is in need and yet slams shut the doors of his tender affections -- how is it possible that God still loves that person? My little children, make it your habit to always show loving concern, not in speech or words only, but in positive and real action. [NSR Paraphrase ©MM]

We can only remain in God's love if we continue to have brotherly affection for the Nazarene Community. With James, the brother of our Lord, writes similarly,

[For example], if a brother or sister is living without adequate clothing and lacks daily food, and anyone of you says, “Go in peace. Keep warm and well fed” -- but do not give them their bodily necessities -- what is the profit? Just so, conviction without works is dead by itself. [James 2:14-17 NSR ©MM]

Clearly both John and James learned of the seriousness of this need that it was really a matter of everlasting life versus everlasting extinction. For their Lord and ours show this importance of brotherly affection in the parable of the Sheep and Goats. Read this Christine illustration in Matthew 25:31-46 with a prayerful and meditative heart. Note the emphasis is on charity and hospitality toward **“even ONE of the least of these my brothers.”** Note also, the goats are so, not because of harmful or hateful actions toward these “brothers,” but rather their failure to do anything!

To the Christian goats [the same as the weeds of the parable in Matthew chapter 13] the Nazarene said:

Then the King will also speak to those persons on his left-hand: “Depart from me, those who are cursed into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. And, I got thirsty and

you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger and you did not take me in; ill-clad and you gave me no clothes; sick and in prison, and you did not look after me.” Then (the goats) will respond: “Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or ill-clad or sick or in prison -- and refused to minister to you?” At this the King will tell them: “I tell you this truth: Depending on how much you refused to do to a single one of my humblest brothers, you refused to do it to me.” And these goats will depart into an ageless pruning. [Matthew 25:41-46 NSR ©MM; for details see Nazarene Commentary© on the Gospel of Matthew.]

Can there be any question whatever that the Friends of the Nazarene must have brotherly affection for one another. Most often this quality is mainly involved with charity and hospitality. As Paul writes to the Galatians: *“Never make this error: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a person continues to sow, this they will also reap. ... So, may we never give up in doing what is good because at the appointed time we will reap if we do not tire out. Therefore, truly, as we have the proper season, let us continue to work what is good toward everyone, but more so toward the members of the Household of the Faith.”* [Galatians 6:7, 9, 10 NSR ©MM]

There are some new or weak Christians who have been heard saying, “I have to love my brother, but I do not have to like him.” This is a serious mistake and demonstrates the danger of falling from the love of God. Often in the Christian Bible fellow worshipers are urged to have “affection” or even “tender affection” for their brothers. [Romans 12:10; Philippians 1:8; Titus 3:15] Any dictionary will show that the word “affection” in English is a synonym for “like.” Surely God and His Son have showed such affection for humankind in general, even “the wicked and ungrateful.” The only way to Christian perfection is to learn to “like” all in the Nazarene Community. [Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:30-36]

How does one do this, particularly if there have been hard feelings in the past? The answer lies in two things:

- **FORGIVENESS**
- **A NON-JUDGMENTAL ATTITUDE**

First, if you have difficulty in “liking” someone – usually this is actually a form of jealousy – try meditating on the word “forgiveness” in the Bible. Our Lord laid down the Spiritual Principle in the first commentary on the Lord’s Prayer: ***“For if you forgive others their faults, your heavenly Father will forgive even you. BUT, if you will not forgive others of their faults, neither will your Father forgive your faults.”*** [Matthew 6:14, 15 NSR ©MM] This is a divine rule which always applies within the Christian Church.

Paul echoes the Nazarene when he writes: *“As the Elect of God – holy and beloved – dress yourselves in the tender affections of compassion ... willing to tolerate others and charitably forgiving one another, even if you have a real reason for a complaint against another – just as The LORD also forgave all of you.”* [Colossians 3:12, 13 NSR ©MM] If one learns to forgive, then one will learn

to like those sometimes difficult to bear.

Secondly, STOP JUDGING, even as our Lord taught: **“Stop being judgmental of others, for you will be judged on the basis of your own criticism; and by your own standard you will be measured.”** [Matthew 7:1, 2 NSR ©MM] The dangers of being critical are serious indeed.

Paul asks: “Who do you think you are?” Consider his stern counsel:

Who are you to judge the house servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for [the Lord] can make him stand. ... But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you also look down on your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written: "As I live," says Jehovah, "to me every knee will bend down, and every tongue will make open acknowledgment to God." So, then, each of us will render an account for himself to God. [Romans 14:4, 10-12 NWT (KIT)]

Do you often express your opinion or judgment of others? Do others know whom you like and dislike because you have expressed yourself on this matter? Consider our Lord’s words and tremble:

You either make the tree good and its fruitage good, or you make the tree rotten and the fruitage rotten. For a tree is known by its fruitage. Generation of vipers, how can you speak good when you are wicked? For out of the heart’s bounty the mouth speaks. Out of the good person’s heart comes a treasure of goodness; and expelled out of the wicked person’s wicked treasure comes wickedness. But I tell you that every fruitless word human’s speak will be held to account on Judgment Day. For by your words you will be declared ‘Not Guilty,’ and by your words you will be accursed. [Matthew 12:33-37 NSR ©MM]

God remembers every unkind word we have uttered regarding our fellow Christian. Satan is the “slanderer,” therefore, speaking evilly of another is a satanic sin. Rush, all of us, to beg our Father’s forgiveness and determine to remove the judgmental spirit from your disposition!

How happy we will be if we listen to Peter who encourages this love for the whole brotherhood. Peter’s appeal moves us today:

“Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth with unhypocritical brotherly affection as the result, love one another intensely from the heart. ... Have love for the whole association of brothers. ... Finally, all of you be like-minded, showing fellow feeling, having brotherly affection, tenderly compassionate. ... Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.” [1 Peter 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8 NWT]

But, now, let us look at the last link in our chain.

8. LOVING CONCERN. More is needed than just affection toward those who should love us – our brethren. For, Jesus teaches *“that even sinners love those who love them.”* The Greek here in Peter’s epistle is AGAPEN which may be

defined as a concern, or interest, based on principle and motive, and shown in action toward another. The KJV has “charity” here. Peter uses the word 8 times in 1 Peter but only once here. Note the difference between brotherly affection and love. They are not the same. One may love other Christians but not have affection for them. To be complete, or spiritual perfect, one must not only love fellow Christians but also strive to like them as pointed out above. In this regard, the perfected Christian is one who will demonstrate loving concern by positive action to even wicked and ungrateful enemies. [For studies on love and agape see 1 Corinthians 13 in *Nazarene Commentary*©.]

As disciples of the Nazarene we must be living examples of what he taught. It is generally agreed by most Bible students that “love” was at the top of the list of Jesus’ teachings. Consider, how our Lord put it:

Give to everyone asking you, and from the one taking your things away do not ask [them] back. Also, just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them. And if you love those loving you, of what credit is it to you? For even the sinners love those loving them. And if you do good to those doing good to you, really of what credit is it to you? Even the sinners do the same. Also, if you lend [without interest] to those from whom you hope to receive, of what credit is it to you? Even sinners lend [without interest] to sinners that they may get back as much. To the contrary, continue to love your enemies and to do good and to lend [without interest], not hoping for anything back; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind toward the unthankful and wicked. Continue becoming merciful, just as your Father is merciful. [Luke 6:30-36 NWT]

Many claiming to be Christians miss the point that this “love” is regarding sinners, wicked enemies who are unthankful and may never return your kindness. Also, this “love” is shown, not by preaching the Gospel to them, but by three major actions: [compare also Matthew 5:43-48]

- **PRAYER**
- **DOING GOOD**
- **GIVING MONEY WITHOUT REPAYMENT**

Only after doing this can one expect to remain “sons of the Most High.” Only by this kind of love can one become “perfect” after the manner of God.

Ask yourself: when someone -- who is not a member of my church or group -- was in need did I respond by showing the kind of love described above? Did I insist on repayment of a “loan” to someone who came to me in need? Do I only demonstrate the Golden Rule when it comes to family and close friends? Is charity -- including giving without the recipient knowing -- on my list of what worship means? [Matthew 6:3, 4]

We have considered the eight links in our chain which anchors our hope, which will make our calling and choosing sure. It is left to each one of us to take a look in the mirror and make an honest assessment in your spiritual fruitage. [James

1:24] Peter continues in his theme by stressing the need to make an effort at the application of what we have discussed above. He writes: *“for if these things exist and abound you will not be ineffective nor unfruitful in your heightened knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”* [2 Peter 1:8 NSR ©MM]

Note these eight things must not only exist in your Christian walk, but they must “abound” Or, as others render this, overflow, increase and multiply. Let us now conclude with Peter’s closing words.

Make Your Calling and Choosing Sure

Note Peter’s serious tone as he warns if these eight things be lacking:

Because if these qualities do not reside in your heart you have become blind by closing your own eyes. You have forgotten the cleansing of yourself from your sins in the past. Rather, my brothers, be swift about making your invitation and election steadfast for yourselves. For if you are practicing these qualities you will never stumble in some point. Then you will be supplied with the wealth of entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. [2 Peter 1:9-11 NSR ©MM]

Peter charges that if these things are not within you – that is they are lacking – such a Christian is first of all blind or short-sighted. Such persons have forgotten the cleansing of their sins in the blood of their Lord. [1 John 1:7] Paul puts it as a serious warning when he writes:

HE10:26 For our sinning willingly, after we receive the heightened knowledge of the Truth, leaves no sacrifice regarding sins. HE10:27 But rather some fearful expectation of condemnation, ‘a fiery zeal’ [Isaiah 26:11 LXX] ‘ready to consume the rebellious.’ [Deuteronomy 17:6] HE10:28 Any person who disregards the Law of Moses dies without compassion upon ‘the testimony of two or three.’ [Deuteronomy 19:15] HE10:29 How much worse do you think the punishment will be upon the person who has trampled underfoot the Son of the God? Who has esteemed the ‘blood of the covenant’ [Exodus 24:8] -- in which he was sanctified -- as something common, [and thus] outrageously scorned the [spirit of Grace]? HE10:30 For we realize the One who said: “Vengeance is mine. I will repay.” [Deuteronomy 32:35] And, again: “יהוה יִשְׁפֹּט אֶת עַמּוּתוֹ” will judge His People.” [Deuteronomy 32:26] HE10:31 It is a dreadful matter to fall into the hands of a Living God. [Hebrews 10:26-31 NSR ©MM]

Peter then urges, *“Be quick to make your calling and choosing steadfast.”* Goodspeed renders this, *“make all the greater efforts,”* while the *Berkeley Version* says, *“exert yourselves.”* We are reminded our the Nazarene’s own words: ***“You must strain every nerve to enter the narrow gate, for many will attempt but will not succeed.”*** [Luke 13:34 GDS] Unfortunately, the vast majority of those who receive the call or invitation will not be chosen. For our Lord summarizes his parable at Matthew 22:1-14 with the words, ***“For many are invited but few chosen.”***

The “choosing” is that action taken by God after a person responds to the invitation. [John 1:12, 13] Romans 8:30 records the blessing on those who make

their calling and choosing sure, *“Those whom he called [INVITED] are the ones he also declared to be righteous [CHOSEN]. Finally those whom he declared righteous are the ones he also glorified.”* (NWT) Revelation 17:14 adds one more item when it describes the victorious Saints at Armageddon, *“... those called and chosen and FAITHFUL.”*

Peter assures that, *“if you are doing these [eight] things you will not stumble at some point.”* Or, as the translator Weymouth puts it, *“For as long as you practice these things you will never stumble.”* Having examined these eight links in our chain – and being assured that they not only exist but overflow – we will be able to show the confidence of Paul: *“I have fought the good fight. I have run to the finish line. I have kept the faith.”* [2 Timothy 4:7 NSR ©MM]

Then, and only then, will it be *“richly provided, the entrance into the everlasting Kingdom.”* Or, as Goodspeed renders it, *“triumphantly admitted.”* Thus, like Paul at the end of his race, we will also be able to say, *“The Lord will rescue me from every evil plot and will preserve me for His celestial Kingdom.”* [2 Timothy 4:18 NSR ©MM]

Rather than viewing these eight “things” as great burdens beyond our ability, rely on our Heavenly Father, by means of Jesus Christ, and the spiritual pressure of the Holy Pneuma. Make “earnest effort” to strengthen every link in this chain to that grand Anchor! Overflow in faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Then – Rejoice! – that you make your calling and choosing sure!

==== END ====

“MESSIAH”

“MESSIAH” DEFINED:

Matthew records at 16:13-16, *“Now when Jesus had come into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he said, questioning his disciples, **Who do men say that the Son of man is?** And they said, Some say, John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He says to them, **But who do you say that I am?** And Simon Peter made answer and said, You are **the Christ**, the Son of the living God.”* (Bible in Basic English)

(*For a detailed discussion on the phrase “Son of God,” please read the article entitled “Son of God.”)

The word "christ" is the Greek form of the Hebrew word *mashiyach*, i.e. "messiah," which means "anointed" and is used throughout the Scripture to denote a "consecrated" person, usually (but not necessarily) a king or a priest.

Although many English translations fail to translate "*mashiyach*" consistently, it occurs no less than thirty-eight times in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament).

Those Called "Messiah" in the Scriptures

King Saul

*"Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Jehovah in Gilgal; and there they offered sacrifices of peace-offerings before Jehovah; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you; and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my youth unto this day. Here I am: witness against me before Jehovah, and before his **messiah**: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, Jehovah is witness against you, and his **messiah** is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they said, He is witness." (1 Samuel 11:14-12:5, American Standard Version*)*

(*All references are taken from the American Standard Version. I have inserted the word "messiah" where it occurs in the original Hebrew text.)

*"And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, Jehovah forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, Jehovah's **messiah**, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is Jehovah's **messiah**. So David checked his men with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. And Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way...Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that Jehovah had delivered thee to-day into my hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee; but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord; for he is Jehovah's **messiah**." (1 Samuel 24:5-7, 10)*

*"Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's **messiah**, and be guiltless? And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle and perish. Jehovah forbid*

*that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's **messiah**: but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go...Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off; a great space being between them; and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king? And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept watch over thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not good that thou hast done. As Jehovah liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept watch over your lord, Jehovah's **messiah**. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head...And David answered and said, Behold the spear, O king! let then one of the young men come over and fetch it. And Jehovah will render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness; forasmuch as Jehovah delivered thee into my hand to-day, and I would not put forth my hand against Jehovah's **messiah**.” (1 Samuel 26:8-11, 13-16, 22-23)*

*“And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a sojourner, an Amalekite. And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to put forth thy hand to destroy Jehovah's **messiah**? And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him, so that he died. And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain Jehovah's **messiah**.” (2 Samuel 1:13-16)*

Eliab [King David's brother, when Samuel thought that it was he who was chosen by God to be king]

*“And Jehovah said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons...And Samuel did that which Jehovah spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably; I am come to sacrifice unto Jehovah: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely Jehovah's **messiah** is before him. But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:1, 4-7)*

King David:

“And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out thence a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came

out, and cursed still as he came...But Abishai the son of Zeruah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed Jehovah's **messiah**?" (2 Samuel 16:5; 19:21)

"Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah, among the nations, and will sing praises unto thy name. Great deliverance giveth he to his king, and showeth lovingkindness to his **messiah**, to David and to his seed, for evermore." (2 Samuel 22:50-51) [See also Psalms 18:49-50]

King Solomon

"And Jehovah hath performed his word that he spake; for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as Jehovah promised, and have built the house for the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel. And there have I set the ark, wherein is the covenant of Jehovah, which he made with the children of Israel. And he stood before the altar of Jehovah in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands...Now therefore arise, O Jehovah God, into thy resting-place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O Jehovah God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Jehovah God, turn not away the face of thine **messiah**: remember thy lovingkindnesses to David thy servant. Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of Jehovah filled the house." (2 Chronicles 6:10-12, 41-42, 7:1)

Israelite High Priests

"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any one shall sin unwittingly, in any of the things which Jehovah hath commanded not to be done, and shall do any one of them: if the **messiah** priest shall sin so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto Jehovah for a sin-offering...if the **messiah** priest shall sin so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto Jehovah for a sin-offering...And the **messiah** priest shall bring of the blood of the bullock to the tent of meeting." (Leviticus 4:1-3, 5, 16)

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob:

"He is Jehovah our God; His judgments are in all the earth. Remember his covenant for ever, The word which he commanded to a thousand generations, The covenant which he made with Abraham, And his oath unto Isaac, And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute, To Israel for an everlasting covenant, Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, The lot of your inheritance; When ye were but a few men in number, Yea, very few, and sojourners in it; And they went about from nation to nation, And from one kingdom to another people. He

suffered no man to do them wrong; Yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes, Saying, Touch not mine **messiahs**, And do my prophets no harm. Sing unto Jehovah, all the earth; Show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, His marvellous works among all the peoples. For great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised: He also is to be feared above all gods.” (1 Chronicles 16:14-25) [See also Psalms 105:1-15)

King Cyrus

It is Jehovah “That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith Jehovah to his **messiah**, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings; to open the doors before him, and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before thee, and make the rough places smooth; I will break in pieces the doors of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that it is I, Jehovah, who call thee by thy name, even the God of Israel.” (Isaiah 44:28-45:3)

The Messiah

The Scriptures speak of one particular Messiah who would come to be both King and High Priest, and would bring restoration, not only to Israel, but to the whole world. This, of course, is none other than Jesus the Messiah, our Lord. When Jesus’ disciple Thomas had finally seen the risen Jesus, he knew for sure that the God of Israel had begun to fulfill his promises of restoration, and that Jesus truly was the Messiah, God’s appointed King. Thomas exclaimed, “My Lord **and** my God.” (John 20:28)

Messiah’s Relationship with His God

This relationship between God **and** his chosen King Messiah was foretold by the royal king David:

“Why do the nations rage, And the peoples meditate a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against Jehovah, and against his **messiah**, saying, Let us break their bonds asunder, And cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh: The Lord will have them in derision. Then will he speak unto them in his wrath, And vex them in his sore displeasure: Yet I have set my king Upon my holy hill of Zion... Serve Jehovah with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, For his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all they that take refuge in him.” (Psalms 2:1-6, 11-12) [See also Acts 4:23-30)

This relationship, Jehovah and His Messiah, is clearly seen in the salutations of the majority of the New Testament letters. The reality of the exclamation, “My Lord **and** my God” is stressed, not a Trinity:

*“To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father **and** the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (Romans 1:7)

*“Grace to you and peace from God our Father **and** the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 1:3)

*“Grace to you and peace from God our Father **and** the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.”* (2 Corinthians 1:2-3)

*“Grace to you and peace from God the Father, **and** our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (Galatians 1:3)

*“Grace to you and peace from God our Father **and** the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be **the God and Father of** our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”* (Ephesians 1:2-3)

*“Grace to you and peace from God our Father **and** the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (Philippians 1:2)

*“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ that are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. We give thanks **to God, the Father of** our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.”* (Colossians 1:2-3)

*“Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father **and** the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.”* (1 Thessalonians 1:1)

*“Grace to you and peace from God the Father **and** the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (2 Thessalonians 1:2)

*“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Saviour, **and** Christ Jesus our hope; unto Timothy, my true child in faith: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father **and** Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (1 Timothy 1:1-2)

*“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father **and** Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (2 Timothy 1:1-2)

*“To Titus, my true child after a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father **and** Christ Jesus our Saviour.”* (Titus 1:4)

*“Grace to you and peace from God our Father **and** the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (Philemon 1:3)

*“James, a servant of God **and** of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting.”* (James 1:1)

*“Blessed be **the God and Father of** our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”* (1 Peter 1:3)

*“Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God **and** the Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God **and** of Jesus our Lord.” (2 Peter 1:1-2)*

*“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, **and** with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3)*

*“Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us, from God the Father, **and** from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.” (2 John 1:3)*

*“John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and **he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests** unto **his God and Father**; to him be the **glory and the dominion for ever and ever**. Amen.” (Revelations 1:4-6)*

Peter and the Messiah

On the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), in the year our Lord Jesus was impaled, Peter witnessed to the people, and in doing so quoted the prophets Joel and King David**: (**The Divine Name [יהוה] has been rendered in the following quotes because it appears as such in their corresponding Hebrew Scripture references.)

*“For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: **And it shall be** in the last days, **saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams: Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, And signs on the earth beneath; Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the day of יהוה come, That great and notable day. And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of יהוה shall be saved.**” (Acts 16-21 compare Joel 2:28-31)*

Peter continues:

*“Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David saith concerning him, **I beheld the LORD** [Possibly יהוה though the Greek has the article here.] **always before my face; For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou madest known unto me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance.** Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he*

both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses.” (Acts 2:22-32 compare Psalms 16:8-11)

As we can see, Peter is describing how God [Editor: Greek, HO THEOS = The God] -- the only true God, the God of Israel, the God of their forefathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob -- has fulfilled his promise concerning the much anticipated Messiah. He continues:

“Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, יהוה [Jehovah] said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.” (Acts 2:33-36 compare Psalms 110:1)

Imagine waiting for generation after generation, thousands of years, for the promised Messiah, and you finding out that you just had a hand in torturing and killing him! (Remember what happened to the Amalekite who killed the messiah Saul -- 2 Samuel 1:1-16) This is why we read: *“Now when they heard this, **they were pricked in their heart**, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37)*

The people asked, “What shall we do?” The true gospel has not changed. The answer Peter gave them then is the answer we must give today: *“And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off even as many as יהוה our God shall call unto him.**” (Acts 2:38-39 compare Joel 2:32)*

None of the New Testament writers ever *preached*, i.e. *publicly proclaimed* that Jesus was God Almighty. That Pentecostal day would have been the perfect time to explain the Trinity if there was one, but notice, from Acts to Revelations, there is no explanation whatsoever. Indeed, the word “Trinity” is never used, not even once! The disciples boldly preached that Jesus is *the Messiah*, the *Son of God*:

*“And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? **The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus;** whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But*

the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of Jehovah; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old. Moses indeed said, **A prophet shall יהוה God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.** Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, **And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.** Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, [literally, "His boy."] sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." (Acts 3:12-26 compare Deuteronomy 18:15-19)

Note the opportunity Peter has if he had believed Jesus was actually God! He identifies "this Jesus" with several designations: Holy, Righteous One, Servant. Had Peter called Jesus "God" or "Jehovah" the Jewish Court would have not much more than give them a warning not to speak of Jesus. Consider:

"And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." (Acts 5:40-42)

Peter had not changed from his original confession before his Lord: "You are the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the Living God!"

Paul and the Messiah

Saul of Tarsus -- who was completely committed to destroying the followers of Jesus -- had, to say the least, an incredible experience on the road to Damascus. We have been so inundated with false teaching, such as the Trinity doctrine, that if what happened to Saul, happened to "Christians" today, many would claim that God Almighty appeared to them on that road. However, notice that Paul does not make any such claim, nor do we not find him in any of his letters, committing himself to explaining the Trinity to the various congregations.

"And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened. And he was certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus. And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God. And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests. But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ." (Acts 9:17-22)

Notice Paul in Thessalonica:

*“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it behooved **the Christ** to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is **the Christ**. And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.” (Acts 17:1-4)*

Notice Paul in Corinth:

*“After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought, for by their trade they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was **the Christ**.” (Acts 18:1-5)*

Also, note how the new disciple Apollos spoke in Achaia:

*“Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately. And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he helped them much that had believed through grace; for he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was **the Christ**.” (Acts 18:24-28)*

Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, the Trinity doctrine is a false teaching. “*Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.*” (Deuteronomy 6:4) Jehovah is the only true God, as Jesus himself has clearly stated (John 17:3), and Jesus is his Messiah, the Son of God, God's appointed King! Like Peter, we too confess: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!”

We Friends of the Nazarene take Paul's warning seriously:

“I marvel that you are so readily leaving Him who called you by the grace of Christ, and are adhering to a different Good News. For other “Good News” there is none; but there are some persons who are troubling you, and are seeking to distort the Good News concerning Christ. But if even we or an angel from Heaven should bring you a Good News different from that which we have already brought you, let him be accursed. What I

have just said I repeat—if any one is preaching to you a Good News other than that which you originally received, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:6-9, Weymouth New Testament)

==== END ====

“SON OF GOD”

Important Foundational Truths Examined

Two of the definitions sited for “son” in *Webster’s College Dictionary* are: “a male child or person in relation to his parents” and “a male person looked upon as the product or result of a particular agent, force, or influence: *sons of the soil*.” It is the phrases “in relation to” and “the product or result of” that cannot be forgotten when one discusses “sonship.”

There are many today who falsely teach that Jesus is God (a third person of a Trinity), and that the Jews of his day believed that “Son of God” meant the same thing as “God.” The Scriptures themselves reveal that this is simply untrue. Understanding that being a “son” involves existing “in relation to” someone else, and describes someone who is “the product or result of” someone else, in and of itself, disproves the veracity of the Trinity doctrine which states that the three are co-equal. The “Son of God” is, by definition, a *product* or *result* of “God.”

What Did Jesus Believe About Himself?

Notice the dialogue between Jesus and some unbelieving Jews:

“I and the Father are one. *The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, **Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?** The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”* (John 10:30-33, ASV)

This is certainly not the first time the Jews *falsely* accused Jesus of something. On another occasion, they accused him of violating Sabbath because his disciples did not ceremonially wash their hands before eating bread. But Jesus handily corrected them by stating that they were teaching for doctrine, the commandments of men. They were laying aside God’s commandments so they could hold onto their man-made traditions. (Mark 7:1-13) Jesus never once violated the Sabbath! He simply refused to hold on to their *traditions* when they

were contrary to God's *commands*. The particular law in which the Pharisees went over and beyond reads:

"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and the base thereof of brass, wherewith to wash. And thou shalt put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: when they go into the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations." (Exodus 30:17-21, ASV)

So, we see in John chapter 10, that now the Jews were falsely accusing Jesus of making himself God, but once again, Jesus puts them in their place:

*"Jesus answered them, **Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?**"* (John 10:34-36; compare Psalms 82:6 and Isaiah 41:23)

At Psalms 82:1-7, God is referring to the Jewish people, perhaps those in positions to judge and make decisions, and he calls them "gods" [Hebrew ELOHIM] and "sons of the Most High." At Isaiah 41:8-25, God again is speaking to the Israelites, this time it appears to be all the people, not just the leaders. Irregardless, God himself, twice refers to human beings as "gods." [Hebrew = ELOHIM] Jesus draws on this and points out that he did not call himself "God," but the "Son of God."

Elsewhere, Jesus stated: "***For the Father is greater than I.***" (John 14:28)

The Greek word here translated "greater" is MEIZON which *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* defines as "larger (lit.[erally] or fig.[uratively]; spec.[ifically] in age)." [See also Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3187, larger, greater, greatest, more]

And again in another place: "***The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner.***" (John 5:19) Can one imagine or even suggest that God could do nothing of himself? How then could the world come into being?

What Is the Son?

Colossians 1:15 states that Jesus "*is an image of the God invisible, firstborn of all creation."* (*The Interlinear KJV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English* by Alfred Marshall) Notice that Paul does not state that Jesus is God, but rather, "an image" of God. Before looking more closely at the words image, firstborn, and creation, we must remember: "*And God created the man in His own image;*

in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female.”
(Genesis 1:27, Green’s Literal Translation) Also, Paul wrote that the man “*is the image and glory of God.*” (1 Corinthians 11:7)

Paul uses the same Greek word for “image” at Colossians 1:15 as he does here at 1 Corinthians 11:7 – “... *a man is God’s image and glory.*” We know that man has sinned, but Jesus did not have an earthly father, nor did he ever commit sin. So although Paul uses the same Greek word in Colossians (in reference to Jesus) that he does in 1st Corinthians (in reference to man), we find qualification in the book of Hebrews. In reference to Jesus we find: “*He brightly reflects God’s glory and is the exact representation of His being...*” (Hebrews 1:3, Weymouth New Testament)

At Colossians 1:15 and 1 Corinthians 11:7 the Greek word Paul uses for “image” is EICON which according to Strong’s Concordance means “a likeness, i.e. (lit.[erally]) *statue, profile, or (fig.[uratively]) representation, resemblance.*” Notice again, Paul describes Jesus as a likeness of God, not God.

Now, the Greek word translated “firstborn” at Colossians 1:15, as well as six other places in the New Testament, is PROTOKOS. PROTOKOS comes from the combination of the Greek words **protos** meaning “first,” and **tikto** meaning “to bear; to bring forth.” Simply, PROTOKOS means “first brought forth,” just as we find PROTOKOS used at Luke 2:7: “*And she gave birth to her first-born son, and wrapped Him round, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*” (Weymouth New Testament)

The Greek word translated “creation” at Colossians 1:15 is KTISIS which means “formation,” deriving from the Greek word **ktizo** meaning “to fabricate.” Spiros Zodhiates, Th.D., in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, states in reference to KTISIS, “Creation, in a pass.[ive] sense, what has been created, ...Denotes a particular created thing (Rom.[ans] 1:25; 8:39; **Col.[ossians] 1:15**; Heb.[rews] 4:13).”

That the Son of God would be “created” as His first begotten is pictured in Proverbs 8:22-24, 30 where the same Greek word KTISIS occurs, “*Yehowah created me as the beginning of His work, the first of His ancient works. Before this Age he established me, in the beginning before He made the earth. I was begotten when there was as yet no watery abyss, before the fountains of water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills were formed was I conceived ... Then I was brought forth at His side as a Master-craftsman.*” Here both “created” [EKTISE] and “begotten” [GENNA] are used, making a strong allusion to a procreated son.

It is interesting to note the several different ways that God’s Firstborn actually became a “son.”

1. As a created Son as the beginning of God's work [Proverbs 8:22; Colossians 1:15; Revelation 3:14]
2. At his birth as a perfect human after the likeness of Adam [Luke 1:31, 32; 3:38; Romans 5:14]
3. At his baptism and anointing as a "spiritual" son of God [Matthew 3:16, 17; John 1:32-34; 3:3-5]
4. Upon his resurrection [Romans 1:4]
5. Upon his enthronement in heaven [Psalm 2:6, 7; Acts 13:33; Daniel 7:13, 14; Ephesians 1:20-22]

So, in examining Colossians 1:15, and the remainder of the chapter more closely, we find that Paul is plainly stating that Jesus is a likeness of the invisible God, and is the first brought forth [OR, CREATED] of all that has been created. Because he is the first brought forth of all that has been created, and all things have been created in union with him, Jesus has the preeminence over all other created beings. He is above all created things and all created things are being reconciled, placed together, and reunited as a whole in him.

Before we move on to an examination of the specific phrase "son of God" we note that even Satan and the demons recognized Jesus as "son of God." During the wilderness temptation twice Satan infers that Jesus was "a son of The God." [Matthew 4:3, 6] Satan knew quite well that Jesus had pre-existed as one of many "sons of God." [Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7] Thus, he does not use the article [THE Son of God] but rather, "a son of The God."

On one occasion demons addressed Jesus as "Son of The God" at Matthew 8:29. James writes that the demons are aware that "God is One" [not Three!] and yet tremble in fear. [James 2:19] If the demons were aware that Jesus was really this God they dreaded, how would they dare address Jesus as "Son of God"?

The Specific Phrase: "Son of God"

In Jesus' day, the phrase "son of God" came to be understood as referring to the king of the Jews. This is due to God's own statements about his appointed kings, David and Solomon:

"And it came to pass the same night, that the word of Jehovah came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith Jehovah, Shalt thou build me a house for me to dwell in? for I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle...And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as at the first, and as from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel; and I will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies. Moreover Jehovah telleth thee that Jehovah will make thee a house. When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my

name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.” (2 Samuel 7:4-6, 10-17) [See also 1 Chronicles 17:1-15]

The aforementioned Scripture reference finds initial fulfillment at 1 Chronicles 22:6-10:

“Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build a house for Jehovah, the God of Israel. And David said to Solomon his son, As for me, it was in my heart to build a house unto the name of Jehovah my God. But the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days: he shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.”

So we see that in the Bible, Solomon is the first king of Israel referred to as a “son” of God. It was understood in Jesus’ day that although Solomon had eventually died, the promise of God saying, “*I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son” (2 Samuel 7:13-14), had yet to be completely fulfilled. So, there was eventually going to be a “son of God” sitting on the throne for ever.*

As discussed in the article “Messiah,” the term messiah (or “christ,” from the Greek word CHRISTOS) was used for King Saul, King David, King Solomon, and even Persian King Cyrus! This is why the term Messiah and the title Son of God came to refer to the king of the Jews, and is on a number of occasions, used interchangeably when the kingship is being discussed.

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE PROVING THE TERMS WERE INTERCHANGEABLE:

(1) Notice what happens with Herod and the magi:

“Now Jesus having been born in Bethlehem of Judaea, in the days of Herod the king, behold magi from the east arrived at Jerusalem, saying, Where is the king of the Jews that has been born? for we have seen his star in the east, and have come to do him homage. But Herod the king having heard of it, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and, assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ [the Messiah] should be born.” (Matthew 2:1-4, 1889 Darby Translation)

The magi asked where was “the king” of the Jews. Herod was troubled because he was the king of the Jews! But notice, although the magi asked for “the king”

of the Jews, Herod automatically knew to ask the chief priests and scribes where “the Christ” [the Messiah] was suppose to be born according to the Scriptures.

(2) Notice the following dialogue when Jesus is before Pilate:

*“And as soon as it was day, the assembly of the elders of the people was gathered together, both chief priests and scribes; and they led him away into their council, saying, If thou art the Christ, tell us. But he said unto them, **If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I ask you, ye will not answer. But from henceforth shall the Son of man be seated at the right hand of the power of God.** And they all said, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, **Ye say that I am.** And they said, What further need have we of witness? for we ourselves have heard from his own mouth. And the whole company of them rose up, and brought him before Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.” (Luke 22:66-23:2)*

Here we have it again. The chief priests and scribes insisted on Jesus answering whether or not he was the Christ [the Messiah]. When he finally was willing to speak, he still had not *directly* answered their question, but alluded to Daniel 7:13 and Psalm 110:1 in a compound paraphrase. So they insistently asked him *again*, this time phrasing it the Son of God. Notice -- They asked him if he was the Christ; then they asked him if he was the Son of God.

When they had determined that they had adequate evidence against him, they brought him before Pilate. And what did they accuse him of? Claiming to be a king! They said, “What further need have we of witness? for we ourselves have heard from his own mouth,” but Jesus’ response was to the question of whether he was “the Son of God.” To that question Jesus responded “**Ye say that I am.**” They immediately turn around and bring him to Pilate and said that he claimed to be “Christ, a King!”

(3) Now, notice the dialogue with Nathanael:

*“Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, **Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!** Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, **Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.** Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, **Because I said unto thee, I saw thee underneath the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.** And he saith unto him, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.**” (John 1:47-51)*

Again we see the equating of the Son of God with that of being King of Israel. Also, consider the fact that Nathanael was not prompted in any way as to a particular response. Jesus didn’t even ask him who Nathanael thought he was. This is yet more evidence to show that the Jews in Jesus’ time interchangeably used the three titles, “Son of God,” “Messiah,” and “King of Israel.” [Editor’s note: The Jews were also aware that the “Son of Man” of Daniel 7:13 was the same as David’s “Lord” in Psalm 110:1 – the Messiah]

(4) Now, take a look at the dialogue when Jesus is before Pilate, as described by John:

*“Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment; and they came unto him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him with their hands. And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him. Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man! When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he **made himself the Son of God**. When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee? Jesus answered him, **Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin**. Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar’s friend: every one that **maketh himself a king** speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King! They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.” (John 19:1-16)*

This is remarkable proof that the terms, Messiah, Son of God, and King were understood by the Jews in Jesus’ day to be interchangeable. Notice that first they said that Jesus made himself “the Son of God.” Then they said that he made himself “a king.” Obviously, the two terms were used interchangeably!

(5) John 19:19-21 states:

“And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.”

Pilate would not rewrite the title placed on the stake. Did he know that Jesus was King, Messiah, Son of God? Possibly. He certainly thought he was innocent of the charge. But notice, the sign was written in the three major languages of the time: Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Not only were the Jews familiar with the fact that the titles King of the Jews, Son of God, and Messiah were interchangeable, but the people of the nations did also!

Remember, the Roman soldiers were mocking Jesus as a King, and the sign read “JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS,” yet notice what happens in Mark 15:37-39:

*“And Jesus uttered a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom. And when **the centurion** [an officer in the Roman army], who stood by over against him, saw that he so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.”*

Remember, this was a *Roman* soldier, and he understood that the charge read “THE KING.” Yet his response, was, “*Truly this man was the Son of God*.”

The Son’s Likeness to Melchizedek

It is no coincidence that Jesus is likened to Melchizedek, the king-priest (Genesis 14:18-20), and is spoken of as a “Son” in the same reference:

*“And no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron. So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that spake unto him, **Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee**: as he saith also in another place, **Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek**. Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation; named of God **a high priest after the order of Melchizedek**.”*
(Hebrews 5:4-10)

Notice what is recorded in the inspired word about this man Melchizedek: “*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High*.” (Genesis 14:18)

As previously stated Melchizedek was both king and priest. The writer of the book of Hebrews describes Jesus as “*a high priest after the order of Melchizedek*.” (Hebrews 5:10) The Greek word here translated “order” is TAXIS which has wide application, one of which refers to “character, fashion, quality, or style.” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* states in reference to TAXIS, “Rank, quality, character, as in the phrase ‘a priest according to the order of Melchizedek’ (Heb.[rews] 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11, 17, 21; quoted from Ps.[alms] 110:4) which means a priest of the same order, rank, or quality as Melchizedek. Also Heb.[rews] 7:11, not according to the order or rank of Aaron.”

Melchizedek is described as “*Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually*.” (Hebrews 7:3, King James Version) Again, notice that Melchizedek is said to have been made like unto “the Son of God,” and we have already seen the relationship between the phrase “Son of God” and being “king.” Jesus is of the same “quality,” which is to say, both king and priest,

and obviously no end of days. Finally, it is also noted by the writer of Hebrews that the name “Melchizedek” means “king of righteousness,” and that he was “King of Salem,” which means “King of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2) Is Jesus not truly the King of Righteousness and Peace? [For more details on Melchizedek research the word in *Nazarene Commentary CD-ROM* in the section under “Error of the Trinity.”]

Others Who Are Called “Son of God”

In this discussion on the phrase “Son of God,” it is important to understand that it, as well as the phrases “sons of God” and “children of God,” are used for people other than kings, because one can be a son in the simple sense of being “produced by” a father, or in the sense of being “like” a father.

Adam

Notice the following examples of “sons” in the sense of simply being *produced* or *created*: “Adam, the son of God.” (Luke 3:38 - In the literal Greek, the word “son” is not used, but the great majority of translations use it because it is certainly what is being alluded to in this reference.) Therefore, Adam as he stood in his created perfection, before he transgressed, was a “son of God.”

Angels

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose. And Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years. The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.” (Genesis 6:1-4; the 3rd Century BC Jewish Greek Septuagint [LXX] uses “angels.”)

“Now it came to pass on the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, that Satan also came among them...Again it came to pass on the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, that Satan came also among them to present himself before Jehovah.” (Job 1:6; 2:1)

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4-7; the LXX uses “my angels”)

The Saints as Sons of God

Notice the following examples of “sons” in the sense of being “like” the one who created or produced them:

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God...Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.” (Matthew 5:9, 43-45)

“And Jesus said unto them, The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But those counted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. For they are not able to die any more; they are equal to angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But that the dead are raised, even Moses pointed out at the Bush, when he calls יהוה the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” But He is not [a] God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him.” (Luke 20:34-38)

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Romans 8:14)

“Therefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:24-26)

“He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:10-13)

The word here translated “received” is the Greek word PARALAMBANO which means “to take with one’s self, to join to one’s self; to accept or acknowledge one to be such as he professes to be; not to reject, not to withhold obedience.” It is this type of person who Jesus has given “the right to become children of God.”

“Not however that God’s word has failed; for all who have sprung from Israel do not count as Israel, nor because they are Abraham’s true children. But the promise was ‘Through Isaac shall your posterity be reckoned.’ In other words, it is not the children by natural descent who count as God’s children, but the children made such by the promise are regarded as Abraham’s posterity.” (Romans 9:6-8)

“Do all things without murmurings and questionings: that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world.” (Philippians 2:14-15)

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”
(1 John 1:1-3)

“He who is habitually guilty of sin is a child of the Devil, because the Devil has been a sinner from the very beginning. The Son of God appeared for the purpose of undoing the work of the Devil. No one who is a child of God is habitually guilty of sin. A God-given germ of life remains in him, and he cannot habitually sin--because he is a child of God. By this we can distinguish God’s children and the Devil’s children: no one who fails to

act righteously is a child of God, nor **he who does not love his brother man.” (1 John 1:8-10)**

“Hereby we know that we love the children of God, **when we love God and do his commandments**.” (1 John 5:2)

“And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore **Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate**, saith Jehovah, **And touch no unclean thing**; And I will receive you, And will be to you a Father, And ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith Jehovah Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:16-18)

“And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true. And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. All this shall be the heritage of him who overcomes, and **I will be his God** and he shall be one of My sons.” (Revelations 21:5-7)

As with the Messiah Jesus Christ, these “sons of God” are also called the “anointed” as a Body and will also rule as kings. [2 Corinthians 1:23; 1 Corinthians 6:2; 1 John 2:20-22; Revelation 1:5; 5:10]

Conclusion

Jesus is truly the “Son of God” in every sense of the phrase. He was fathered by God, not by an earthly father; he is the exact likeness of God; and he is the King whom God has appointed to inherit all things. Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God!

As “children of God” we sing the hymn:

“And I have anointed my king upon Zion, the hill of my holiness. I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; I this day have begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee nations for an inheritance, and for thy possession the ends of the earth: Thou shalt break them with a sceptre of iron, as a potter's vessel thou shalt dash them in pieces. And now, O kings, be ye wise, be admonished, ye judges of the earth. **Serve Jehovah** with fear, and rejoice with trembling. **Kiss the Son**, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, though his anger burn but a little. Blessed are all who have their trust in him.” (Psalms 1:6-12)

==== END ====

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