

The Son of God and Messiah in the Old Testament

Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.
(Matt. 16:16)

The Christ, referring to the anointed One of God, speaks of the Lord's commission, whereas *the Son of the living God*, referring to the Second of the Triune God, speaks of His person. His commission is to accomplish God's eternal purpose through His crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and second coming, whereas His person embodies the Father and consummates in the Spirit for a full expression of the Triune God. (Recovery Version, note 1)

The revelation of the Triune God (the Father, Son, and Spirit) is hidden yet implied in the Old Testament. God is manifested in three aspects: as a transcendent invisible Creator; as a physical, visible, immanent man; and as an invisible, yet immanent and realizable Spirit (see my article in the April 2006 issue of *A&C*). These three manifestations of God in the Old Testament prefigure the manifestation of God in the New Testament as the Father, the Son (with humanity), and the Spirit. In the April 2008 issue I wrote concerning the revelation of God as Father in the Old Testament. In this article I explore the notion of the revelation of God as the Son in the Old Testament. God is revealed explicitly as the Son in only a few crucial and significant places. He is the Son in His eternal status (Isa. 9:6), in His role in creation (Prov. 30:4), in His pre-incarnation status as a man of God and Messenger (Angel) of God, in His incarnation (prophetically) to produce a divine and human seed (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Gen. 12:7; 2 Sam. 7:12-14), in His process of human living, death, resurrection, ascension, and kingship (Psa. 2; 2 Sam. 7:12-14), and in His coming back (Dan. 7:13-14). The revelation of the Son of God in humanity as the Son of Man is also interrelated with the revelation of Him as the Messiah "the Anointed One" or "Christ" commissioned by God with a threefold status as Priest, King, and Prophet. He is also prophesied in the Old Testament as the sent One and the Servant of

God is revealed as the Son in the Old Testament in His eternal status, in His role in creation, in His status as a man, in His incarnation as a divine and human seed, and in His human living, death, resurrection, ascension, and kingship.

Jehovah to carry out God's economy of salvation. He is a Son of the Father in an individual sense, but also He is reproduced in many sons of God in a corporate sense to express and represent God with His dominion over the earth, thus fulfilling God's purpose in creating humanity (Gen. 1:26).

The Meaning, or Significance, of the Notion of Son

The notion of son is mutually interrelated to the notion of father. In the natural realm a father becomes a father when he begets a son and the son comes into existence.

The son has the life of the father, by which he expresses the father and lives to represent the father in carrying out his purpose. These characteristics are also reflected in humankind, who are created by God in His image and likeness to have dominion over the earth and who are placed in front of the tree of life (Gen. 1:26; 2:9). Image and

likeness are related to expression, and dominion is related to representation.

The Son in His Eternal Status

With respect to God, the eternal existence of a Son is assumed more than explicitly mentioned in the Bible. If there is an eternal Father (Isa. 9:6), then there must be an eternal Son, since the notions of father and son are mutually dependent or correlative to each other. Indeed, the relationship of father and son are so interrelated that in Isaiah 9:6 the Son is even called the Eternal Father (Heb. *'Abi'ad*). The eternal status of the Son (as well as the place of His human birth and His status as Ruler in Israel) is indicated in Micah 5:2, which says, "You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, / So little to be among the thousands of Judah, / From you there will come forth to Me / He who is to be Ruler in Israel; / And His goings forth are from ancient times, / From the days of eternity." His coming forth in divinity is implied in Isaiah 4:2 in the title *the Shoot of Jehovah* (with the fruit of the earth indicating His humanity). The eternal status of the Son is

also confirmed in the New Testament. The Word in the beginning with God is the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father (John 1:1, 18; cf. Heb. 7:3). In John 17:5 the Son asks the Father to glorify Him with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Philippians 2:6-8 indicates that Christ Jesus existed in the form of God before He took the form of a slave when He became a man. Christ's preexistence is "pre-supposed in Gal. 4:4 and Rom. 8:3, where Paul speaks of the fact that God sent forth His Son" (Barton 86).¹ The New Testament indicates that He preceded Abraham (John 8:58), David (whom David called Lord, Matt. 22:42-45; Psa. 110:1), and John the Baptist (John 1:15).

The Son's Involvement in Creation

Another matter that confirms the Son's pre-existent status is His involvement in creation, which is more explicitly stated in the New Testament. It is through (δία) the Son that all things come into being (John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2, 10). Proverbs 30:4 hints at the divine agency of God and His Son in creation:

Who has ascended into heaven and descended? / Who has gathered the wind in His fists? / Who has wrapped up the waters in His garment? / Who has established all the ends of the earth? / What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?

In the Bible creation also comes about through the agency of the word (Psa. 33:6, 9; 148:5; Gen. 1:3; Heb. 11:3; 2 Pet. 3:5), wisdom (Prov. 8:22-31; 3:19; Jer. 10:12; 51:15), and God's hand (Isa. 66:2; Acts 7:50). In the New Testament Christ is revealed as the Word (John 1:1, 14), as God's wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30), and at God's right hand (Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1).

The Son's Pre-incarnation Manifestations

While the Son [of God] is explicitly mentioned only rarely in the Old Testament, He is manifested in numerous pre-incarnation appearances. His preferred or usual manifestation seems to be in human form, as a divine-human man of God or Messenger (Angel) to express God and represent God in His interaction with human beings. In these manifestations as a man or Messenger, He is frequently addressed by a divine title as Jehovah or God.

Jehovah appears as a man to Abraham with two other men (Gen. 18:1-33), to Joshua (Josh. 5:13-14), to Manoah and his wife (Judg. 13:6-21), to Ezekiel in a vision upon the throne (Ezek. 1:26-28), as a man of fire (8:1-3), showing him the temple and its surroundings (40:3; 43:6-7; 44:1-5), to Daniel as one of the three men/angels who interact with him (Dan. 8—12), to Nebuchadnezzar (3:25), and to Zechariah (Zech. 1:8;

2:1). He is also likened to a man in a number of other places (Exo. 15:3; Psa. 78:65; Isa. 42:13; Jer. 14:9; Mal. 3:17), even wrestling with Jacob (Gen. 32:24-30),

Many times the function of this human being is as a Messenger or Angel (the Hebrew word *mal'ak* and the Greek ἄγγελος both mean "messenger"). The Son is a Messenger to bring the Father's message to the intended recipients. Many times the Angel is also identified and addressed as God or Jehovah. The Angel of Jehovah and the Angel of God appear to Hagar (Gen. 16:7-13; 21:17-18). The Angel of Jehovah appears to Abraham (ch. 22). The Angel of Jehovah appears also to Jacob (chs. 31—32; cf. Hosea 12:4), to Moses (Exo. 3), to the children of Israel in their journey to the good land (chs. 14—33; also as the Angel of His presence, Isa. 63:9), to Balaam (Num. 22), to Israel, Gideon, and Samson's parents (Judg. 2; 6; 13), to Elijah (2 Kings 1), to the children of Israel in captivity, and to Joshua the high priest (Zech. 1:3).

The Incarnated Son as a Divine-human Seed

The incarnation of the Son of God as a divine-human seed was promised beforehand in the Old Testament with the birth of three seeds, the seed of the woman (Gen. 3), the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12), and the seed of David (2 Sam. 7). These three seeds promise the coming of a divine and human seed who accomplishes judicial redemption through His death, carries out His organic salvation as the Spirit, and reigns eternally in His uplifted and deified humanity. The seeds have both individual (referring to particular offspring) and corporate (referring to descendants) aspects. The initial offspring (Cain, Ishmael, Esau, and Solomon) and the first descendants failed to fulfill the promise, and it was necessary that another seed (related to but coming from different lines than the initial seeds²) come later as the promised seed to be sown and multiplied in another group of descendants.³

The Seed of the Woman— the Terminating, Redeeming, and Victorious Seed

God promised the first seed immediately following the fall of man. Eve was promised that the seed of the woman would destroy the serpent Satan, who had just deceived her, bringing into humanity the deadly fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It seems that Eve expected the immediate fulfillment of the promise through the birth of her first child, Cain, by her response: "I have acquired a man, Jehovah" (Gen. 4:1),⁴ perhaps indicating her hope that her child, a man-Jehovah, a divine-human seed, would deal a quick deathblow to the serpent. However, not much later, she realized that Cain did not qualify, and perhaps being disappointed, she named her second son Abel (meaning "vapor," "breath," or "vanity").

Cain's slaying of his brother Abel made it even clearer that Cain was not the fulfillment of the promise.⁵ Eventually, it became clear that Eve was not that woman, and her immediate descendants in general did not fulfill the promise.

Isaiah later prophesied concerning the woman through whom the serpent-destroying seed would come into existence. He gave a sign to Ahaz, under the threat of attack from Syria and Ephraim, that a virgin would give birth to a son called Immanuel (Isa. 7:14). Although there has been much controversy over this woman (whether she should be understood as a virgin or simply as a young woman), it is striking that a woman is mentioned and not her husband (so also Galatians 4:4; cf. the birth of other sons with prophetic names, including Isaiah's own son—in Isaiah 8:1, 3—and Hosea's children—Hosea 1:2-9).⁶ However, if we take the literal meaning of the name Immanuel ('*immanu* "with us," '*El* "God"), to indicate the embodiment of God in humanity, a virgin birth or at least a conception without a human father is required for the Son of God as a preexistent divine being to be born into humanity.⁷ It is not clear, and it is not recorded in the biblical account, who fulfilled the sign in the immediate context, but the fact that Judah is called Immanuel's land (Isa. 8:8) indicates that Immanuel is a particular child to whom the land belongs, either a king or the seed of Abraham to whom the land was promised (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8). At least Immanuel was recognized as an appropriate name for the God-man, the Lord Jesus, at His birth (Matt. 1:23).

Isaiah 9:6 also testifies of a birth of a royal child who has both divine and human characteristics. As Oswalt states, "This child (also described in 11:1-5) is presented to us as the ultimate fulfillment of the Immanuel sign" (247). The child born (indicating humanity) is called the Mighty God ('*El gibbor*) and the Son given, the Eternal Father ('*Abi'ad*). The giving of the Son (cf. John 3:16) and the divine names testify of His divine status. The child is a royal leader: the government is on His shoulder, and He is called Wonderful Counselor and Prince of peace. Isaiah 9:7 continues, "To the increase of His government / And to His peace there is no end, / Upon the throne of David / And over His kingdom, / To establish it / And to uphold it / In justice and righteousness / From now to eternity," implying that this seed is the seed of David and that His kingdom is an eternal kingdom (cf. Dan. 2:44).

The promised seed of the woman terminated the serpent, the devil, and all the products of the fall—sin, death, the

self, the flesh, the world, and the old creation—by His death on the cross (Heb. 2:14), thus accomplishing redemption. Genesis 3:15 says that in the process of bruising the serpent's head, the seed of the woman would suffer the bruising of his heel, fulfilled in the Lord Jesus' crucifixion in the nailing of His feet to the cross (Psa. 22:16).

The seed of the woman (Immanuel) has a corporate manifestation in and with the church (Matt. 18:20; 28:20; Acts 18:10). Through the church's subjective experience of Christ's death to be freed from all the by-products of the fall, "the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20, cf. Luke 10:19). Ultimately, the sign of the universal bright woman in Revelation 12 fulfills the promise of the seed of the woman, when the stronger part of the woman—the man-child, her corporate seed—is taken up to God's throne and causes Satan the dragon to be cast out of heaven at the beginning of the great tribulation in order to execute God's judgment on him (vv. 4-11).

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The Seed of Abraham—the Inheriting, Blessing, and Multiplying Seed

A number of generations after the fall, God again promised a seed, this time to Abraham. To the seed of Abraham was promised the inheritance of the land as an eternal possession (Gen. 13:15; 17:8; Exo. 32:13; Deut. 1:8; 2 Chron. 20:7;

Neh. 9:8), the possessing of the gate of his enemies (Gen. 22:17), the multiplication as the stars of heaven and the sand of the seashore (v. 17; 26:4; 15:5; 28:14; Exo. 32:13; Heb. 11:12), and that in his seed all the families or nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; 12:3).⁸

The initial descendants of Abraham did not fulfill the promise, and it was Isaac, not Ishmael, and Jacob/Israel, not Esau, who were the line to bring forth the promised seed. The children of Israel, the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, however, maintained a line of descendants through which the promised seed would come. Abraham and Sarah's only begotten son, Isaac, was offered up by his father to die and be received back, foreshadowing the death and resurrection of God's only begotten Son (Gen. 22; John 3:16). The children of Israel are collectively considered God's son in Hosea 11:1: "Out of Egypt I called My son," pointing back to their Exodus from Egypt (see also Exo. 4:22-23; Jer. 31:9). This is also understood as a prophecy that is fulfilled in the return from Egypt of Joseph and

Mary with the Lord Jesus as the incarnated Son of God, where they had escaped the persecution of Herod until his death (Matt. 2:15).

In the fulfillment of the promise, the land, the seed, and the blessing all become one. The land is a type of Christ as the all-inclusive bountiful supply of the Spirit received by the believers at regeneration as a pledge of their eternal inheritance (Gal. 3:2, 5, 29; Eph. 1:14). The seed is Christ as a descendant of Abraham. He is the divine-human seed who passed through death and resurrection to be compounded and consummated as the life-giving Spirit to be sown into the believers. In Him all the nations are blessed (Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:16). They experience and enjoy the promise of the Spirit as the blessing of Abraham and as a fulfillment of the type of the promised land (v. 14). As Witness Lee states,

This verse indicates that the Spirit is the blessing that God promised to Abraham for all the nations and that has been received by the believers through faith in Christ. The Spirit is the compound Spirit...and actually is God Himself processed in His Trinity through incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and descension that we may receive Him as our life and our everything...

The physical aspect of the blessing that God promised to Abraham was the good land (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 17:8; 26:3-4), which was a type of the all-inclusive Christ (see Col. 1:12 and note 2). Since Christ is eventually realized as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17), the blessing of the promised Spirit corresponds with the blessing of the land promised to Abraham. Actually, the Spirit as the realization of Christ in our experience is the good land as the source of God's bountiful supply for us to enjoy. (Recovery Version, Gal. 3:14, note 3)

The believers' experience of the life-giving Spirit brings them God's organic salvation. As the Spirit, the seed of Abraham can be sown into the spirits of all the believers to be multiplied to become as the stars in the heavens, Abraham's descendants by faith, the sons of God, the church (vv. 7, 26, 29). The multiplication of the seed as the sand on the seashore or the dust of the earth refers to Abraham's natural descendants, the Jews, as a partial and physical fulfillment of the promise.

The Seed of David— the Transformed, Building, and Reigning Seed

Finally, David⁹ is promised that his seed will be called the son of God, build a house for God, and reign forever:

When your days are fulfilled and you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, which will

come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. It is he who will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he will be My son. (2 Sam. 7:12-14; see also 1 Chron. 17:13; 22:10; 28:6)

Psalm 89 reiterates this promise, indicating that David's seed will be established forever, His throne from generation to generation (vv. 3-4, 29, 36), His dominion will extend over the earth including the sea and the rivers. He will call God His Father, and He will be made God's Firstborn and the highest of the kings of the earth (vv. 25-27).

Psalm 45:6-7 indicates that the throne of the King is also God the Son's throne (explicit in Hebrews 1:8-9), indicating a King who is divine and human:

Your throne, O God [the Son], is forever and ever; / The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. / You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; / Therefore God, Your God [the Father], has anointed You / With the oil of gladness above Your companions.

David's son Solomon, as the initial fulfillment of the promise, built the temple, as a type of Christ building God's house, the church (1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 16:18), which consummates in the New Jerusalem as God's tabernacle and temple (Rev. 21:3, 22). However, Solomon and his descendants were not deified as sons of God and were cut off.

The royal line was cut off at the time of the Babylonian exile due to Israel's turning from Jehovah, and this line was not restored at the return from the exile. Psalm 80 refers to Israel as a vine that has been cut down, which is also his son (cf. the son's identification with Israel in Hosea 11:1):

Even the stock (*kannah*) which Your right hand has planted / And the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. / It is burned with fire; it is cut down; / They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. / Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, / Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself. (Psa. 80:15-17)

The man of Jehovah's right hand, the son of man whom He has strengthened for Himself refers to Christ as the Son exalted as the hope of restoration for Israel. Other verses also speak of the cutting down and restoration of Israel through a descendant of David. Psalm 89:38-51 laments the devastation of David's kingdom.

The seed of David becomes a shoot, a sprout, and a branch. It was prophesied, "A sprout (*hozer*) will come

forth from the stump of Jesse, / And a branch (*netser*) from his roots will bear fruit” (Isa. 11:1). The stump and roots of Jesse imply that the kingship, or the royal line, of David was “cut down,” and the sprouting or branching implies a restoration at a later time. Jeremiah 23:5-6 (cf. 33:13) refers to a descendant of David, the righteous Shoot (*tsemah*), who will reign as King, act prudently, execute justice and righteousness in the land, and in whose days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely. He is called Jehovah our righteousness, indicating His divine and human status. Psalm 132:17 says, “I will cause a horn of David to shoot forth.”¹⁰

The deification of the seed of David and His reigning is spoken of in Psalm 2. Although the nations and the kings of the earth oppose Jehovah and His Anointed (v. 2), He has installed His King on Mount Zion in the heavens and declares that He is the Son of God to inherit the earth.

This psalm reveals the steps of Christ in God’s economy, beginning from His being anointed in eternity in His divinity (v. 2) and continuing with His resurrection (implying His death also—v. 7; cf. Acts 13:33), His ascension (v. 6), His setting up His universal kingdom (Rev. 11:15) with the nations as His inheritance and the ends of the earth as His possession (v. 8), and His ruling the nations with an iron rod (v. 9). (Recovery Version, Psa. 2:6, note 1)

Verse 7 says, “I will recount the decree of Jehovah; / He said to Me: You are My Son; / Today I have begotten You.” This verse has been interpreted as the inauguration of a king into his office. In the New Testament it is quoted three times to refer to Christ in resurrection, with “this day” referring to the day of His resurrection and ascension in which He was inaugurated into His heavenly kingship and ministry (Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5). *Begotten* refers to His being brought forth in resurrection to be designated the Son of God in His humanity (Rom. 1:4). Psalm 2:12 admonishes the kissing of the Son and acknowledges the blessing of those who take refuge (believe and trust) in Him. This is the kind of response worthy of such a One.¹¹

Daniel 7:13-14 indicates the Lord’s second coming (Matt. 26:63-64) and His rule over the earth:

There with the clouds of heaven / One like a Son of Man was coming; / And He came to the Ancient of Days, / And they brought Him near before Him. / And to Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, / That all the peoples, nations, and languages might serve Him. / His

dominion is an eternal dominion, which will not pass away; / And His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.¹²

The corporate aspect of the seed of David is intimated in Psalm 89:27 in the use of *the Firstborn*, implying many brothers (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 1:6), who are the many sons of God. The temple, as the house of God, is fulfilled in the Father’s house, the church, which is also corporate, with the believers being the many abodes (John 2:16, 21; 14:2). The corporate aspect of the reigning seed is intimated in Exodus 19:6 with God’s desire that the children of Israel be to Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. According to Peter, the believers corporately are a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9), and Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth has made us a kingdom and priests (Rev. 1:5-6; 5:10; 20:6).¹³

The vision in Daniel 2 indicates the replacement of human government (signified by the great image) with God’s kingdom. The image is struck by a stone cut out without hands, which becomes a mountain to fill the whole earth (vv.

34-35). The stone becoming a mountain indicates that “the God of the heavens will raise up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and its reign will not be left to another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms; and it will stand forever” (v. 44).

The great mountain here signifies the eternal kingdom of God, which will fill the whole earth forever (v. 44; 7:13-14). After coming to crush the aggregate of human government, the corporate Christ—Christ with His over-coming bride—will become a great mountain to fill the whole earth, making the whole earth God’s kingdom. Thus the great human image will be replaced with the eternal kingdom of God on earth (Rev. 11:15-17).

The increase of the stone into a great mountain signifies the increase of Christ (cf. John 3:29-30). The church is Christ’s increase in life, but the eternal kingdom of God is Christ’s increase in administration (Mark 4:26-29). Hence, Christ is not only the church but also the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 12:12; Luke 17:21). As the stone, Christ is the centrality of God’s move, and as the mountain, He is the universality. Hence, He is the all-inclusive One, the One who fills all in all (Eph. 1:23). (Recovery Version, Dan. 2:35, note 3)

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resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit to bless the nations, and to His ascension, second coming, and reigning forever over the earth as the firstborn Son of God. They also point to His duplication in His Body the church, which is a corporate seed to execute Christ's judgment on Satan, to minister the Spirit as the blessing to the nations, and to become the Father's many sons, His house, and His kingdom to reign with Christ forever (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 20:6).

The Son's Commission as the Anointed One

In addition to and closely associated with the revelation of the Son of God as a King descended from David is His revelation as the Messiah, Christ, or anointed One. The term *Son of God* refers to the person of the second of the Trinity, and the terms *Messiah*, *Christ*, and *anointed One* refer to His commission or work (Matt. 16:16) in four aspects: Prophet, Priest, King, and as the building of God. The anointing is on both a certain individual and on a corporate body or group.

Anointing (Heb. *mashah*) is a particular action of applying or smearing an object or person with oil. In the Old Testament the action of anointing is mostly related to God's building and its furnishings and related to three kinds of persons: priests, kings, and prophets. The first occurrence of anointing in the Old Testament occurs with Jacob's anointing a stone pillar in Bethel, "the house of God" in Genesis 28:17-22 and 31:13. Other items to be anointed were unleavened wafers (Exo. 29:2; Lev. 2:4), the tabernacle with its furnishings and utensils (Exo. 30:26-28; 40:9-11), and the heads of Aaron and his sons, the priests officiating in the tabernacle (28:41; 29:7; 40:15). Later, at the time of the kingship, the kings were also anointed, usually with flasks of oil, for example, Saul (1 Sam. 10:1), David (16:13; 2 Sam. 2:4; 5:3), Solomon (1 Kings 1:34, 39), Jehu (2 Kings 9:3; 2 Chron. 22:7), Joash (2 Kings 11:12), Jehoahaz son of Josiah (23:30), and even the Persian king, Cyrus (Isa. 45:1). The prophets were also anointed; Elijah anointed Elisha (1 Kings 19:16). Isaiah 61:1 talks about the anointing of Jesus with the Spirit to carry out His earthly ministry:

The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me, / Because Jehovah has anointed Me / To bring good news to the afflicted; / He has sent Me to bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted, / To proclaim liberty to the captives, / And the opening of the eyes to those who are bound.

It seems that the patriarchs were also considered anointed prophets (1 Chron. 16:22), although there is no record of their anointing, and only Abraham is called a prophet (Gen. 20:7).¹⁴ At the end of the seventy weeks in Daniel 9:24, the Holy of Holies (in the restored temple) will be anointed.

The person who is anointed is called in Hebrew *Mashiah*, from which comes the English *Messiah*. It first is used to refer to the anointed priest (Lev. 4:3). Then *Mashiah* is applied to the king (1 Sam. 2:10, 35). Numerous times it is used to refer to specific kings and also in a general way to the Davidic monarch (Psa. 2:2; 20:6; 28:8; 84:9; 89:38, 51; 132:10, 17; Hab. 3:13). Finally, *Mashiah* is applied prophetically in Daniel to the Prince who comes and then is cut off at the end of the 69th week, or the 483rd year, after the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (9:25-26), which is a prophecy pointing to the crucifixion of Jesus around A.D. 30. The word *karat* (cut off) is also used for making a covenant (because of the cutting up and distribution of the flesh of the victim in order to be eaten in the sacrifice of the covenants) and sacrifices (Gen. 15:9-18). The cutting off of the Messiah with Himself as the sacrifice enacted a new covenant.

Christ is the fulfillment of all three anointed offices, or functions. He is a Prophet whom Jehovah God raised up like Moses (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22; 7:37). He is a King enthroned in the heavens in His ascension; "Jehovah declares to my Lord, / Sit at My right hand / Until I make Your enemies / Your footstool" (Psa. 110:1). And He is also a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, bringing together the two anointed functions of priesthood and kingship (v. 4; Heb. 5:6; 7:17, 21).¹⁵ This happens as a result of His ascension and enthronement, as seen in the following note:

Christ is not only the King with power and authority (vv. 1-2); He is also the High Priest (Heb. 2:17; 4:14; 6:20; 8:1; 9:11). Christ's heavenly ministry in His ascension includes both His kingship and His priesthood. As the King He has the scepter to rule over the earth and to manage our affairs, and as the High Priest He is interceding for us and taking care of our case before God (Heb. 7:25-26; 9:24; Rom. 8:34; Rev. 1:12-13). (Recovery Version, Psa. 110:4, note 1)

As was mentioned in note 13 above, priests function mainly to express God, and kings function to exercise God's dominion on the earth, thus fulfilling the purpose in God's creation of man (Gen. 1:26).

Whereas the Lord was anointed by the descending of the economical Spirit at His baptism to carry out His earthly ministry, it was mainly at His ascension that He was anointed and was made Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

As God's sent and anointed One, He was Christ from the time that He was born (Luke 2:11; Matt. 1:16; John 1:41; Matt. 16:16). But as such a One, He was also officially made the very Christ of God in His ascension...The Lord was made Lord, the Lord of all, to possess all; and He was

made Christ, God's Anointed (Heb. 1:9), to carry out God's commission. (Recovery Version, Acts 2:36, note 1)

The individual and corporate matter of anointing is seen in Psalm 45:7, which says, "You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; / Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You / With the oil of gladness above Your companions." This refers to the anointing of Jesus following His resurrection and ascension. His companions, or partners, share with Him the spiritual anointing (Heb. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:21). The corporate anointing is also seen in a type of Christ and His Body in Psalm 133 with the oil on Aaron's head running down to his beard and even to the hem of his garments.

As a result of the Lord's anointing of His Body, the church, the church fulfills the same function as the Lord, the individual anointed One. As was mentioned above, the church is a kingdom of priests to express Him and minister Him to others as well as represent Him by exercising His dominion (see Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20). The church also prophesies (speaks for the Lord, speaks the Lord forth, as well as foretells) as a result of the Lord's baptism of His Body in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:13).¹⁶ Prophesying is continued by the church for its building up (ch. 14).

The Son's Coming as the Sent One and Servant of Jehovah

The Son's coming is also indicated prophetically. He is revealed as the sent One and the Servant of Jehovah to carry out redemption and reproduce Himself in the believers in resurrection.

Sent One

The notion of the Son as the sent One is not that common in the Old Testament, but it is much stressed in Jesus' ministry in the New Testament. More than forty times He presents Himself as being sent by or from the Father, whom He refers to as "He who sent Me" (John 7:28; 8:26, 29).

Zechariah 2:8-11 also indicates the sending of the Son, who is also called Jehovah of hosts:

Thus says Jehovah of hosts, After the glory He has sent Me against the nations who plunder you; for he who touches you touches the pupil of His eye. For I am now waving My hand over them, and they will be plunder for those who served them; and you will know that Jehovah

of hosts has sent Me. Give a ringing shout and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for now I am coming, and I will dwell in your midst, declares Jehovah. And many nations will join themselves to Jehovah in that day and will become My people; and I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that Jehovah of hosts has sent Me to you.

Jehovah of hosts in this passage is both the sent One in the first person "I," "Me," and "My" (underlined, vv. 8-9, 11; so also 4:9; 6:15) and the Sender in the third person "He" and "His" (double underlined, vv. 8-9, 11; so also 4:9; 6:15). According to the New Testament the Sender is the Father (John 5:37; 6:44; 8:16, 18; 12:49), and the sent One is the Son (5:36; 6:57; 8:16). The sending in Zechariah refers to God sending the Son against the nations that captured and plundered Israel at the time of the Babylonian exile.

Isaiah 61:1 combines the notions of anointing and sending, referring prophetically to the Lord's earthly ministry:

The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me, / Because Jehovah has anointed Me / To bring good news to the afflicted; / He has sent Me to bind up the wounds of the broken-hearted, / To proclaim liberty to the captives, / And the opening of the eyes to those who are bound.

The Lord also sent the believers corporately as apostles (sent ones) to the Jews initially

and eventually to the whole inhabited earth to preach the gospel and establish churches (Matt. 10:16; John 17:18; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 26:17).

The Servant of Jehovah

There are also a number of places in the Old Testament that indicate prophetically the Son as a servant of Jehovah in His suffering humanity to carry out redemption, the most striking of which are Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. While neither passage calls Him explicitly a son of God, they indicate a continuation of life beyond His death, an indication of both His divinity and humanity. Both passages mention His being forsaken or smitten of God (Psa. 22:1; Isa. 53:4) and contain many details fulfilled by the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus on the cross. Both passages also mention His resurrection and its corporate issue. In resurrection He declares the Father's name to His brothers in the midst of the church (Psa. 22:22; Heb. 2:12), and He also reproduces Himself as a servant in His people (a seed), who serve Him by speaking concerning Him and declare righteousness to a coming generation (Psa. 22:30-31).

The corporate anointing is also seen in a type of Christ and His Body in Psalm 133 with the oil on Aaron's head running down to his beard and even to the hem of his garments.

Isaiah 53:10-11 mentions His seeing a seed and the fruit of the travail of His soul and making many righteous:

The seed here, a corporate seed, is the church as the Body of Christ, comprising all the believers produced as the many grains by the death of Christ as the one grain and by His reproductive resurrection (John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3). Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is the resurrected Life-giver, the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:6, 17), to produce a seed for the building up of His Body as His continuation for Jehovah's pleasure and for Christ's satisfaction...Today Christ is extending His days by living in His believers (Gal. 2:20)...[who] as His Body are His extension. (Recovery Version, Isa. 53:10, notes 2 and 3)

The believers also serve God individually and collectively as a servant of God (1 Thes. 1:9; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 7:15; 22:3). They serve in the spirit as priests of the gospel (Rom. 1:9; 15:16), and they serve one another as slaves (Gal. 5:13).

Conclusion

God the Son is revealed as the eternal preexisting Son, the Creator, a pre-incarnated man of God and Angel, and the incarnated Son as a divine-human seed with a three fold status: Redeemer, Life-giver, and reigning One. He is also anointed by God and sent by God as a suffering Servant to die and resurrect. As the divine-human seed in His three statuses and the One anointed and sent by God as a Servant of God, He expresses both an individual aspect and a corporate aspect in His reproduction in the believers to fulfill His economy. In this way He functions as a Son of His Father to express Him and represent Him and to bring about God's dominion, or rule, over the earth both individually and corporately in His Body the church.

by Roger Good

Notes

¹Barton also cites other verses in the New Testament to prove Christ's preexistence; e.g., He is presented as the Son of Man descended out of heaven (John 6:62; 3:13), where He was before (82-83).

There is debate among scholars as to when Christ was viewed as a pre-existent Son, both by Himself and by the church. Bultmann and others consider that He was initially recognized as Son of God by the early church after His resurrection (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4), then subsequently at His transfiguration (Mark 9:7), then at His baptism (1:11), then at His birth (Luke 1:35), and lastly in His preexistence. But as Lewis S. Hay points out,

This neatly devised scheme does not do justice to the dissilient data. In the first place, the concept of pre-existence was already present in the earliest stages of Christological development when Jesus was identified with the apocalyptic Son of Man. Paul can speak of Jesus' being "designated Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4), but also makes use of the familiar Christ-hymn (Phil. 2:6-11) in which the pre-existence is a dominant theme. (112)

Aquila H. I. Lee also supports the notion of the preexistent Son, pointing out many places which indicate that Jesus conceived Himself to be the Son of God having "a unique personal relationship to God as His Father" (117). For the most part, Jesus does not claim for Himself the name Son of God or Messiah (perhaps since according to Jewish tradition that would disqualify Him from those designations). He does, however, acknowledge His status as Son of God and Messiah when these titles are conferred on Him by others (e.g., Matt. 16:16; Luke 22:67, 70; Matt. 26:63-64; Mark 14:61-62; John 1:49-51). In these places and elsewhere, He charges people not to make Him known by these titles but rather refers to Himself as the Son of Man (Mark 3:11-12; 14:61-62; Matt. 16:20; 26:63-64; Luke 22:69; John 1:51).

²The first lines of descendants were disqualified from the eventual bringing forth of the promised seed. The line of Cain was replaced by the line of Seth (cf. Gen. 4:25, which says, "God has appointed me another seed instead of Abel, because Cain slew him"). The line of Isaac (not Ishmael, Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7) and Jacob/Israel (not Esau, Rom. 9:12-13) was part of the line to bring forth the promised seed. The line of David's son Nathan (Luke 3:31; Zech. 12:12)—rather than Solomon, whose descendant, Jeconiah, was "thrown away" and disqualified never to sit on David's throne again (Jer. 22:28-30)—would bring forth the promised seed.

³It is important to understand the notion of seed embodied in the Hebrew word *zera'* (and not just descendant[s]), implying that the seed is to be sown and multiplied to become a corporate seed.

'Seed' had a collective meaning of 'posterity' even as it did in Genesis 3:15; 12:7; 13:15. But the seed simultaneously pointed to the one person who represented the whole group and was the earnest [or pledge] of a line of descendants yet to come. (Kaiser 151)

Paul argues for the singular notion in Galatians: "To Abraham were the promises spoken and to his seed. He does not say, And to the seeds, as concerning many, but as concerning one: 'And to your seed,' who is Christ" (3:16).

⁴This reading treats *Jehovah* with the definite direct object marker *'et* as a noun in apposition to *a man*. Most versions translate *'et* as the preposition *with*, implying a sense of "with [the help of] Jehovah." But this reading does not fit the context as well. Martin Luther rendered this verse in apposition in his 1545 translation: "Ich habe den Mann, den HERRN." See also Kaiser, who states,

Translating the particle as “with” doesn’t make too much sense. Hence it must be a record, even as Luther seems to argue in his translation, of the mistaken hope of Eve that she had received immediate relief from her punishment with the birth of Cain. (37)

Another example of an indefinite noun (without *’et*) and a definite noun (with *’et*) in apposition to each other occurs in Judges 3:15: “Jehovah raised up a savior for them, that is, (*’et*) Ehud the son of Gera.”

⁵Cain was told that he could or must rule over sin as the embodiment of the serpent (Gen. 4:7), speaking of the ability of fallen human beings to at least restrict Satan’s desire to destroy humanity.

⁶Raymond Brown points out that the word *’almâ* used in Isaiah 7:14 occurs only nine times in the Hebrew Old Testament and that there is “no clear instance in the OT of *’almâ* being applied to a woman already married” (147, note 43). The use of *parthenos* by the Septuagint (at a later time where the immediate context was no longer so crucial) to translate *’almâ* here is a more explicit reference to a virgin, occurring sixty-five times in the Septuagint, and mostly it clearly refers to virgins. Oswalt argues that *’almâ* (rather than *betûlâ*—perhaps more unambiguously meaning “virgin” in Hebrew) is better suited to the twofold task of a sign “rooted in its own time to have significance for that time” and extending “beyond that time and into a much more universal mode if its radical truth is to be any more than a vain hope” (211).

⁷While there are many people who bear theophoric names (with *Jeho-*, *Jo-*, and *El-* prefixes or *-el* and *-yah* suffixes), this one is quite striking, as it indicates God’s presence with His people. Most theophoric names indicate either an action or attribute of God, but with this name the child not only bears a theophoric name but prophetically also fulfills its meaning in reality.

⁸Psalms 72 also indicates that the blessing of the seed of Abraham comes through a kingly seed (v. 1): “His name will be forever; / As long as the sun endures, His name will spread; / And men will be blessed in Him; / All the nations will call Him blessed” (v. 17).

⁹The promise of a ruler coming from Judah goes back even to Genesis 49:10: “The scepter will not depart from Judah, / Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, / Until Shiloh comes, / And to Him shall be the obedience of the peoples.” The Qumran community, among others, interpret this messianically, interpreting Shiloh as “the Messiah of Righteousness...the Branch of David. For to him and his seed is granted the Covenant of kingship over his people for everlasting generations” (Vermes 464, 4Q252, English translation). Micah 5:2 also indicates His birthplace, Bethlehem.

¹⁰Isaiah 4:2 refers to Him as the Shoot of Jehovah, indicating divinity, and the fruit of the earth, indicating humanity (see above). Zechariah 3:8 mentions the shoot referring to Zerubbabel (also a descendant of David), and in 6:12, referring to the high priest Joshua.

¹¹The reading of *bar* as Aramaic for *son* in this verse is disputed partly because the Hebrew word for *son* (*ben*) is used earlier in the psalm (but *bar* meaning “son” also occurs three times in the Hebrew text of Proverbs 31:2). Whereas some versions translate the phrase *pay homage in good faith* (TNK), “with trembling kiss his feet” (NJB), “kiss the Chosen One” (YLT), or *δράξασθε παιδείας*, “accept correction” (LXX), the context still suggests that the Son is the logical object however He is addressed. Schniedewind considers that the use of the Aramaic *bar* is deliberate and rhetorical, appropriate to a setting of the “aftermath of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis, the fall of the northern kingdom, and the rise of the Assyrian empire” (cf. Isa. 7), which he proposes as a setting for this psalm (69).

¹²As Owen states, an argument that

the “son of man” in Dan 7:13-14 is only a symbol for the triumphant people of Israel founders upon several textual

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of His Father to express Him
and represent Him and to bring
about God’s dominion,
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in His Body the church.**

details: (1) he comes “with the clouds” (indicating his heavenly origin); (2) he is said to be “like” a son of man (pointing to his supra-human nature); (3) he is to be served by “all peoples, nations and languages,” which would include Israel itself; and (4) interpreting the “son of man” as only a symbol of Israel leaves the kingdom of God

without any individual corresponding to the kings of the previous four kingdoms (see 7:17). It is much more likely that the figure spoken of here is to be understood as a heavenly being, whether the angel Michael (see 10:13) or some other unidentified person with a heavenly origin. (3)

¹³The kingdom is for God’s dominion, whereas priests are for the expression of God’s image. This is the kingly, royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9), which is for the fulfillment of God’s original purpose in creating man (Gen. 1:26-28). This kingly priesthood is being exercised in today’s church life (5:10). It will be practiced intensively in the millennial kingdom (20:6) and will be ultimately consummated in the New Jerusalem (22:3, 5). (Recovery Version, Rev. 1:6, note 2)

¹⁴Satan is also called the anointed (but using a different noun from the same root—*mimshalh*) cherub (Ezek. 28:14).

¹⁵Zechariah 6 indicates that the Shoot (Zerubbabel as a type of Christ) “will build the temple of Jehovah; and he will bear majesty and will sit and rule on his throne; and he will be a priest on his throne; and the counsel of peace will be between the two of them” (v. 13).

Between the two means between the priesthood and the kingship. In the Old Testament no king could be a priest, but in the millennium both Christ and the overcomers will be kings to reign and priests to serve God. These two responsibilities will be reconciled in both Christ and the overcomers. In the millennium the overcomers will be priests, drawing near to God and Christ, and they will also be kings, reigning over the nations with Christ (Rev. 2:26-27; 20:4, 6). This will be a reward to the overcomers. [All] the believers...will serve God in the priesthood and represent God in the kingship in the new heaven and new earth for eternity (Rev. 22:3, 5). (Recovery Version, Zech. 6:13, note 1)

¹⁶The Spirit coming upon or baptizing the members of the Lord's Body is the fulfillment of anointing with oil. Isaiah 61:1 associates the Spirit coming upon someone with the anointing. Acts 10:38 states that God anointed the Lord Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power. The believers have also received an anointing within them to teach concerning all things, especially to abide in God (1 John 2:20, 27)

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Footnote from the Recovery Version of the Bible

"In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of Jehovah came to **Zechariah** the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, saying, Jehovah was extremely angry with your fathers" (Zech. 1:1-2).

Zechariah: Meaning *Jehovah remembers*. Zechariah was born of a priestly family in captivity (Neh. 12:1, 4, 12, 16). He was first a priest, and then he became a prophet. He returned to Judah with Zerubbabel at the time of the prophet Haggai in about 520 B.C. (Ezra 5:1). Zechariah and Haggai encouraged the building of the temple of God under the hands of Zerubbabel and Joshua. Joshua was the high priest, representing the priesthood, and Zerubbabel, a descendant of the royal family, was the governor of Judah, representing the kingship. Thus, the temple of God was built by the kingship with the priesthood. Likewise, in the building up of the church as the Body of Christ, both the priesthood and the kinship are needed (1 Pet. 2:5, 9)...

The central thought of Zechariah's prophecy is that Jehovah remembers His chastised people and sympathizes with them in their suffering of the nations' excessive action in carrying out Jehovah's punishing of Israel. God used the nations to punish Israel, but the nations went too far in carrying out God's punishing of His elect. For Israel's suffering of His punishment, God sent Christ as His Angel to be with them and go with them through their captivity (vv. 7-11). He also raised up "craftsmen" to deal with the nations who had dealt with Israel excessively (vv. 20-21). Through Zechariah, a prophet of restoration, God gave His chastised people a hearty word of consolation and promise, saying that He would bring the scattered Israel back to their own country with the expectation of a time of restoration and prosperity (vv. 12-17; 2:1—4:14; 6:9-15; 8:1-23).

In Zechariah's prophecy Christ was sent to Israel as their King in a lowly form (9:9-10) and as their Shepherd to feed them (11:7), but He was detested (11:8), sold (11:2-13), attacked (13:7), and pierced (12:10) and thereby accomplished redemption for them (13:1a; 1:8; 3:9). Eventually, Christ will fight for Israel to deliver them out of the hand of Antichrist for their household salvation (12:1—14:21). In the restoration Christ will be King over all the earth (14:8-11, 16, 20-21).