

THE SON OF DAVID

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When Jesus was on earth, He was often addressed as the “Son of David.” Thus the children and the multitude cried out as He entered Jerusalem in triumph, “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 21:9). There is some very important reason why the people referred to Him as the “Son of David.”

Jesus Himself claimed to be the Son of David. He tells the Philadelphian Church that He has “the key of David,” “He that openeth and no man shutteth, and that shutteth and no man openeth” (Rev. 3:7). Paul says He was “made of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:3). But it was not merely fleshly descent from David that made Christ to be preeminently the “Son of David.” Fleshly descent means little or nothing to God, as the sons of Ishmael, and all the uncircumcised heart who descended from Abraham, indicate so clearly.

Not because He came of the physical lineage of David was Jesus so highly honored. Many in Israel could claim that honor, for what it was worth. Jesus says of Himself, in the last chapter of the Bible, that He is both “the root and the offspring of David” (Rev. 22:16). If Jesus was David’s descendant, He was also His ancestor.

What makes Him “the Son of David” is the fact that Jesus’ spiritual experience while in the flesh, is preeminently interpreted by David’s experience.

Both had the same experiences; both had the same temptations; both were hunted as fugitives; both were rejected by their own people while anointed all the while of God; both wrestled with the awful temptation to think themselves cut off from God; both cried out in anguish, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?”

As we proceed in our meditation this morning, we shall see how Christ is not only the “Son of David;” He is also the Son of man. As such, He is in a certain sense, and I speak reverently, our Son. He has lived our experiences. He has wept our tears. He has known our anxiety, our anguish. He has felt the awful weight of our own guilt. He has even felt something that we seldom realize He felt: He felt the shame of our own folly.

Think of David, anointed to be King over Israel, yet rejected by the incumbent king, driven, harassed, hunted like a wild beast upon the mountains of the wilderness for ten long, weary years. How often he must have wrestled with the temptation to wonder if the anointing by Samuel was not, after all, a mistake. How could it be that he should be chosen by the Lord as King over Israel, anointed thus, and yet be so apparently forsaken of God. Patriarchs and Prophets tells us that at one time he nearly despaired of ever coming to the throne. He even sought shelter among the Philistines.

Think of the Son of David, Christ: anointed (the word “Messiah” means anointed, or smeared with the holy oil), yet driven into the same wilderness to be tempted forty days. How tempted? The same way David, his father, was tempted. Christ must

earn His title, "Son of David." "If Thou be the Son of God," said the tempter; how those words stung like a sharp arrow in His tender heart! How could He be the Anointed One, and thus be so apparently forsaken of God? Could this "heavenly" visitor be right? Could this be an angel sent from Heaven to save Him from the pitiable delusion of supposing He was the Messiah when He was not? Do not forget, dear friends, Christ was tempted. That means that temptation meant something to Him. It was something He had to wrestle with, and the trial was fully as hard or harder, than it is for us. We have His help; He had no help.

Perhaps this "good" angel is sent from Heaven to ask Him in a kindly way, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," to reveal to Him the truth, before it is too late and before He disgraces Himself and His family before the nation, that He is not the Messiah.

Christ was the root of David in that He Himself was the basis of David's faith, the source of David's victory. Christ was the offspring of David in that He depended, while in the flesh, upon the Psalms of David, and David's life experience, for His own spiritual sustenance. No angel from heaven appeared to help him fight his battle with the tempter in the wilderness. Christ was dependent upon the written word alone for victory. Of all the writings of the Old Testament, none meant more to Him than the tearstained Psalms of David. Through this spiritual kinship, Jesus was the "Son of David," the Word made flesh.

Come with me to view one of David's Psalms. Scripture says, "Psalm of David," yet we know that above all it is a Psalm of the crucified, rejected, heavily punished Christ. Note "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me" (Psalm 69:9); also, "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Ps. 69:21). These verses make it plain that the author of these thoughts is Christ Himself.

How David experienced that is not so plain to us. Both are co-authors, by experience. Whether David ever had literally, vinegar offered Him to drink we are not told; it could well have been so.

Perhaps it is as the poet that he writes, in vivid imagery, of how in place of comfort in his distress, his acquaintances offered him reproach and scorn. Surely that was so at Ziklag, when, after the burning of the encampment by the Amalekites, his own followers talked of stoning him. But in Christ's case, we know positively, literal vinegar was offered Him in His death thirst.

Now let us look through the window of this Psalm into the inner soul of Christ. Verse 1. The Saviour Himself crying, "Save Me, O God." Yes, for Hebrews 5:7 says, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared." Christ the Saviour, crying in agony, "Save Me." "I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow Me" (Ps. 69:2). Christ knew how to comfort

that that poor girl, Margaret Wilson, a Scottish martyr.

On May 11, 1685, she was chained to a stake on the Solway Firth. At the last moment, choking on the salt water, Margaret was allowed to offer a prayer, but she continued to refuse to swear and oath declaring James VII as head of the church. Tied to a stake, the tide waters of the ocean rolled in over her soul. She defiantly quoted from the psalms, and sang until she drowned. In her affliction, He was afflicted.

“I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing” (Ps. 69:2). Have you ever felt there was no solid rock beneath your feet, no place to stand on? It is not only that you did not know just what to do in some specific given situation; it is that you felt the very basis of your life and character to be a bottomless pit. And we are all sinners. Could it be that Christ suffered for poor sinners like that? Yes; but what a pity that so few know it!

“I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God” (Ps. 69:3). The faith of Jesus produces the patience of the saints. David waited ten long years. Christ waited, it seemed interminably. Like one who watches on the horizon for approaching help until the eyes seem unable to see any more. Have you waited and waited for some answer to prayer, and it seems your faith is about to fail? The Son of David had the same experience—don’t forget it!

“They that hate Me without a cause are more than the hairs of Mine head: they that would destroy me, being Mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I

restored that which I took not away” (Ps. 69:4). It seems strange how anyone could really hate Christ. But there were so many they were more than the hairs of His head. Had there been a cause to hate Him, they could not have hated Him, for sin is causeless and without excuse. Sin is in its essence hatred of Christ. Are we sinners? “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” If so, then we too are guilty.

I see a ray of hope in this verse: “being Mine enemies wrongfully.” Satan and his angels are His enemies rightfully, by eternal nature. But we are His “enemies wrongfully”; let us merely confess the wrong of it, and we shall be restored to our rightful place as His friends.

Christ went out of His way to avoid being a stumbling-block to any honest soul. I suppose every follower of His has to do the same, but not in a self-righteous spirit.

Now, the most difficult verse of all, “O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee” (Ps. 69:5). Christ never acknowledged sin. In verse 4—clearly He denies imputation of sin of His own. *He confesses sin which is not His own.* “But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:5, 6). “For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

“Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel” (Ps. 69:6). Christ’s concern was not for Himself, but for God’s people. “Those that seek Thee. . .”—ourselves! Is one ashamed of Him? No, His prayer was answered. This, I submit, is the true motive for our following Him, today. Not that we might save our own poor little souls, at any cost; but that we might not bring shame upon Christ. Love that never fails. This is a good prayer for us all to pray.

“Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered My face” (Ps. 69:7). It is shame more bitter to bear than blame or guilt. One can manfully, bravely, even nobly, bear blame or guilt, but not shame. To be called a fanatic or a fool is more difficult to endure than to be called an apostate, or a sinner.

“I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children” (Ps. 69:8). When one’s own family turns against him, that is difficult to endure. It has been said, “Failure at home is failure everywhere.” Jesus’ own brothers turned against Him. His own mother at times expressed her doubts and anxieties.

“For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon Me” (Ps. 69:9). “And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up” (John 2:17).

“When I wept, and chastened My soul with fasting, that was to My reproach” (Ps. 69:10). O, how the

people misunderstood Him! They thought that unless a man maintained a smiling, cheerful countenance, as did Annas and Caipphas and Herod, surely God had forsaken Him. A tear-stained face was evidence of servitude to Satan, of being abhorred by God! But Jesus face *was* tear-stained!

“I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them” (Ps. 69:11). Psychiatrists are telling us now, that the forced effort to keep on smiling and laughing in public while the heart is bleeding, is destructive of personality and health. Weeping is a wonderful medicine, they say, a preventive for ulcers and tension disorders. That is one reason why drugs are so dangerous to take. They inhibit personality, repress conviction, destroy peace, prevent catharsis in tearful confession to God. An earnest long season of prayer on our knees, is worth more than all the sleeping pills in the world. On the cross, Jesus would take nothing to try to deaden His pain.

“They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards” (Ps. 69:12). But Jesus endured both the scorn of the rabble “drunkards,” and the sincere criticism from the sober elders who “sat in the gate.”

Now we come to Christ’s prayer. “But as for Me, My prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of Thy mercy hear Me, in the truth of Thy salvation” (Ps. 69:13). We can be so glad this Psalm doesn’t end with verse 12! So often we stop there. We pour out our complaints to God and our fellow men, but stop short of seeking earnestly for relief. The “acceptable time” (Isa. 49:8)

is the hour of human shame and agony. Hanging on the cross, forsaken of men, even of His disciples, Christ found His hour of acceptance with God. “Whom the heavens must receive.”

“Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me” (Ps. 69:14, 15). He returns to the beginning of His meditation and asks for specific, positive deliverance.

Then He expresses confidence in His Father’s loving-kindness. “Hear me, O LORD; for thy loving-kindness is good: turn unto Me according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies” (Ps. 69:16). Here was His righteousness. Sin is doubt of God’s loving-kindness. Sin is the idea that God may love someone else, but not you! Confidence is the opposite of sin. Here is where Christ triumphed.

“Thou hast known My reproach, and My shame, and My dishonor: Mine adversaries are all before Thee” (Ps. 69:19). Did the Father suffer with His Son? “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). God has given “all men” not only a grace that abounds much more than sin abounds, but that grace has also given “all men” a gift, that is justification.

A college professor provides an illustration. He said, “In my classes, I have good students and also some bad ones. But I pronounce no judgment on their performance until the final test is taken. Then some students pass while others fail. Up to that moment they are all treated as potential successes.

I use this as an illustration of how God treats us ‘in Christ.’ HE TREATS US ALL AS RIGHTEOUS. The separation between the goats and the sheep will come [only] in the judgment. Then some will be found to be ‘tares,’ while others will have been ‘wheat.’”

This is an insight in God’s grace. One widely read author says that “God has encircled the world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air we breathe.”¹ Are you a sinner? Have you carried a burden of guilt? Do you feel that God does not accept you? Remember the words of Jesus: “He that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). Because of Christ’s sacrifice, He treats you today as though you were righteous; He accepts you “in Christ;” He has laid your iniquity on Him, imputing your sins to Him. When He said of Jesus at the Jordan, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17), He was putting His divine arms around *you* also! Now let your life today sing a song of praise for that great salvation.

Christ’s faith leads Him to identify Himself with His Father. “That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him” (John 5:23). Christ not only links His cause with that of David; He links His every experience to the Father. Our privilege is to claim kinship with Christ. “In all their affliction He was afflicted” (Isa. 63:9)—or just some. Suppose they made mistakes, and because of their own blindness and folly they suffer

¹ *Steps to Christ*, p. 68.

affliction. Does He say, “Well, that’s your shame. I’ll wait until you work this one out alone. You’ve got to suffer alone when it’s your own fault, like that!” Never!

“Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none” (Ps. 69:20). This is what killed Jesus. Who reproached Him? The wicked hardly “reproached” Him—they taunted Him. Could it have been some of the disciples who sadly said, “We trusted that it had been He that should have delivered Israel?” “If only He had taken a different course, all would have been well. He practically asked for this! He has led us astray!” Whether or not this may be true, we do know that “there was none to show pity,” no “comforters.” Not one, even of the Eleven, went up to Him on the cross, and embraced His wounded legs and said, “Jesus, we still love you and we still trust in you implicitly. We know the Father is with you!” “You are bearing our sins, and we thank you and will praise you in eternity!” No, not one! “I found none,” implying that His eyes swept repeatedly over the crowd about the cross, looking for *one* to comfort Him.

“Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents” (Ps. 69:22-25). This is not imprecation with

selfish vengeance. It is simply merciful justice. The world dare not repudiate this. If righteousness is to be rewarded, iniquity must be punished. The universe would otherwise disintegrate. There is no judgment so severe as the final judgment of Love.

Why must it be so severe? “For they persecute Him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded” (Ps. 69:26). They reproach the Sin-Bearer! The one moment of truth, the distilled drop of reality in all time and eternity, was the hour of the cross. And that, they despised. “Thou hast smitten, . . . Thou hast wounded.” “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief” (Isa. 53:10). Yet, that’s just what the people at Calvary thought! And now Isaiah says, “Yes, it *pleased* the Lord to bruise Him!” Why? Here is one of those glimpses of truth so sublime, so sacred, so tender, that words are helpless to express it. That it should “please” the Father to bruise, to put to grief, His beloved, only Begotten Son, is beyond us to grasp, except by means of the insight given us that “God so loved the *world* that He gave His only begotten Son,”—gave Him to shame and spitting and scorn.

“But I am poor and sorrowful: let Thy salvation, O God, set Me up on high” (Ps. 69:29). And now Jesus, hanging on His cross, triumphs in faith. “I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs” (Ps. 69:30, 31). The triumph leads to song. This song preceded the mighty

words, “It is finished.” Christ bowed His head and died a mighty Conqueror.

Today we fulfill the words of verse 32. “The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God. For you is this truth made forever secure: “For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not His prisoners” (Ps. 69:33).

Christ took the initiative in coming to save us and in dying our second death on His cross. There is nothing we can do to repay Him; but it pleases Him when He can find a people who “appreciate” what He sacrificed for us!

Perhaps, even on His cross hanging there in the darkness just before He screamed, “My God, why have You forsaken Me,” the Father permitted Him to have a brief glimpse in prolepsis of the multitudes who would “appreciate” what He had done. Psalm 22, you remember, is the prayer that Jesus prayed as He hung on His cross, as though a stenographer took it down: He was permitted to know that “all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord ... A seed shall serve Him. ... They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this” (Psalm 22:27-31; in the Hebrew, that last clause is one word only—the Hebrew word for “It is done!”).

“When men and women can more fully comprehend the magnitude of the great sacrifice which was made by the majesty of Heaven in dying in man’s stead, then will the plan of salvation be magnified, and reflections of Calvary will awaken sacred and living emotions in the Christian’s heart. . . . This world will appear of but little value to those

who appreciate the great price of man’s redemption.”²

The key word that we need here is “appreciation,” one of Ellen White’s favorite words. There is no word for “appreciation” in our Greek New Testament, but its absence is an amazing revelation: its absence is very eloquent because the idea permeates the Letters of Paul.

Paul was obsessed with what happened on the cross of Jesus. Even though there was no one word to express it, his grasp of what the cross means needs the words “heart-appreciation.” He felt that his heart wasn’t big enough to express the idea he wanted to say; doubtless he would read Psalm 119:32, the prayer of David, “when Thou shalt enlarge my heart,” and long for his own shriveled up little worldly heart to be “enlarged” to appreciate “the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love (*agape*) of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that [he] might be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:17-19).

Is your heart big enough to “appreciate” it?

² Ellen G. White, “Jesus Crucified,” *The Signs of the Times* 14, 22 (June 10, 1889), pp. 346-347.