

# Jesus really is the ultimate Son of God

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- [ 0 : 00 ] It would be great if you could get that piece of paper with the Bible reading on it in front of you. Or even better, we could actually bring our own Bibles to church.
- I know, I know, Anglican. Church didn't fall down. No, okay. Well, my daughter applied for her first ever job while we were on leave at McDonald's a couple of weeks ago.
- But we haven't heard anything yet. I told her it was because she didn't ask me to write her reference. To which she replied, why would that help? Which, to be fair, is true.
- I mean, why would a father's reference for her daughter really make any difference? But references are often part of the job process, aren't they? Because they help confirm they're the right person for the job.
- Well, as we come to our passage in Luke today, it's like we are given references for Jesus to confirm that he's the right son for the job.
- [ 1 : 03 ] You see, our passage is connected all together by the idea of son of God. In fact, the words the son come up a whole stack throughout our passage.
- And I'm going to need to help us understand the background to it, which means we'll spend a little bit of time on that to start with. So you'll have to work a little bit harder this morning.
- But often when we hear the phrase son of God, we automatically think God the son, the second person of the Trinity. And that's because we've been taught that for over 2,000 years of church history.
- And it's true that Jesus is God the son. And there's only one God the son. But the phrase son of God, the other way around, was originally a title for God's representative.
- Someone who is meant to reflect God's character and life-giving rule in the world. And there are actually a number of sons of God.
- [ 2 : 05 ] So even in our passage today, if you look at the end of the second big paragraph there, you'll notice that Adam, right at the end of verse 38, the son of Adam, who is called what?
- The son of God. So Adam was called son of God. Not just because he was created by God, but because he was created in God's image, you remember.
- To reflect God's character and life-giving rule in the world. And I say life-giving rule because God's rule is not like human rule that is often oppressive.
- God's rule often does bring blessing and life. For example, God's rule says to forgive others rather than to hold on to grudges. And does that not free us from becoming bitter and consumed with pain and anger?
- It is actually freeing life-giving. Or God's rule says to love others and pursue peace. Is that not life-giving? God's rule says to trust in him rather than try and earn our way to heaven, which is a great relief and literally life-giving.
- [ 3 : 19 ] But the way Adam was to reflect God's character and life-giving rule was by obeying God's word that told him how to rule.

And remember, God said in the beginning of the Bible that you can eat from any tree in the garden, hundreds of them, all these fruit trees. You can have the biggest fruit salad ever imaginable every day.

Just don't put that one fruit in it. Well, there was kiwi fruit. It's always slimy, kiwi fruit. Michelle loves it. But it wasn't kiwi fruit, of course. It was fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And God said, just don't put that one fruit in it, because if you eat it, you will surely die. Is that not a life-giving rule? But this son of God, Adam, didn't go so well, did he?

Instead of always obeying, he gave in to temptation. And so God called Abraham, formed the nation of Israel, who on the next slide are actually called God's firstborn son, because they were, as a holy nation, to reflect God's holy character and God's life-giving rule to the world.

[ 4 : 33 ] How? Well, again, by obeying God's word. For as they obeyed God's word, they would live long in the promised land that God was giving them, and the nations around them would say, hey, they're on to something.

Let's go and join them. And they would find life under God's rule too. But this son, Israel, didn't go so well either, did they?

Instead of always obeying, they too gave in to temptation. And so later, every king in David's line, which on the next slide, was going to be called the son of God.

So this is God to David. He says, I will raise up your offspring to rule on your throne. And notice, I will be his father, and he will be my son.

So every king from David onwards was called the son of God, which is why the last bit makes sense. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men. And if that was talking about Jesus only, that would sound odd, wouldn't it?

[ 5 : 35 ] But it was talking about every king in David's line. But every king in David's line didn't always obey God, did they?

In fact, at one point, they even lost God's word. And the point is, in the minds of the first century readers, the title, Son of God, was first of all, not talking about God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, but talking about God's representative, like God's king.

Those who are meant to reflect God's character and life-giving rule in the world by obeying God's word. But no son always did.

Instead, every son gave him to temptation. And then Jesus comes on the scene. And Mary is told on the next slide there, that her son would also be called the Son of God, the Son of the Most High.

Why? Because he will be a king too. He will be given the throne of his father, David. He'll be in David's line. But here's the question. How do we know this son, Jesus, will be better than any of the other sons of God that came before?

[ 6 : 49 ] How do we know we're not wasting our time following this son, Jesus, being here this morning? Well, Luke shows us that we can be certain that Jesus is the right son by giving us these references for Jesus, if you like, to confirm he's the right son for the job.

So the first reference is a reference from heaven. Have a look at chapter 3, verse 21 and 22. When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven, Now, this reference from heaven includes the voice of the father, doesn't it?

And he declares Jesus is his son. Yes, no doubt he's, you know, actual God, the son, the second person of the Trinity, but he's actually quoting the Bible about God's king.

And so on the next slide is a Psalm 2, which was read at the coronation day of Israel's kings from David's line. And when the new king from David's line was crowned, he would declare that God said to him, You are my son.

[ 8 : 11 ] The king is now God's son. Today I've become your father. In other words, this voice from heaven, from God, is declaring Jesus to be a king from David's line.

His son. In other words, this reference from God confirms Jesus is king who can give God's life-giving rule. But this reference from heaven also includes the spirit who descends on Jesus, we read in verse 21 there.

And the spirit coming upon Jesus signals two things. First, God is commissioning Jesus for his ministry. This is backed up by the very next verse in verse 23 in your sheets there.

It says, Now Jesus himself was about 30 years old when he began his ministry. And so this baptism with the spirit coming on him is like a signal to begin his ministry.

But the spirit coming on Jesus also signals Jesus is God's servant too. From our first reading.

[ 9 : 15 ] Remember the first reading on the screen where God said, Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one, in whom I delight. I will put my spirit on him.

And what's happening at the baptism? The spirit is being put on Jesus. And if you think that's a long bow to draw, then notice what God also says there. He says, My chosen one in whom I delight.

Or literally, with whom I am well pleased. What does God say at the baptism? You are my son whom I love. With you I am well pleased. You see, this reference from heaven declares that Jesus is not only the king, but he is the servant from Isaiah.

And that's important because Isaiah has several servant songs which tell us what this servant will do. Like the most famous one, Isaiah 53 on the next slide, which talks about how this servant will be pierced for our transgressions.

Punished so that we could have peace. By his wounds we can be healed spiritually. Forgiven. And as the rest of the Bible makes clear, because of this servant we can become fellow sons and daughters of God with Christ.

[ 10 : 31 ] That we too might be God's representatives in the world like Christ. And so this reference from heaven with God's voice and the spirit's dissension confirms Jesus is God's, both God's king and servant, servant king.

The son of God who will bring life, God's life-giving rule to the nations, including forgiveness. The one who will be a light to the Gentiles so that we can be fellow sons and daughters.

The one in whose teaching the nations will put their hope. Now, with a reference from heaven like that, sounds like Jesus sure is the right son for the job, doesn't it?

There was a high school student in Los Angeles called Connor who asked his principal for a reference for a college scholarship. And his principal wrote this. It's a bit small. I thought it was as big as I could get it.

Let me read it to you. He says, To a fortunate reader. Sounding good already. When Connor Brown looks at a tree, he doesn't see a tree. He sees the polarity of the water molecules that pulls them to the surface of the leaves.

[ 11 : 37 ] He sees a poem he read in sixth grade He sees the article from a 2008 issue of Time magazine about the environmental damage. And he goes on at the bottom of the screen.

The boy's brain is like nothing you've ever seen. And he goes on for some time afterwards. And he concludes on the next slide by saying, Wherever he goes, he'll play with the mind of every person he meets, push even the brightest to new heights, and develop into an even more brilliant, thoughtful human being.

I guarantee the trees outside your office will never look the same again. What a reference! Needless to say, with a glowing reference like that, it confirmed his brilliant ability, and he got the scholarship.

Well, here is God's glowing reference for Jesus from heaven itself. You are my son. You are the king. And here's the spirit to say, you are my servant.

To confirm that this son of God is the ultimate son of God. But so too does the next reference from history confirm Jesus as being the ultimate son of God.

[ 12 : 48 ] So point two, and we move on to verse 23. Firstly, from his family history. Now, Jesus himself was about 30 years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matat, the son of Levi.

I'm not going to read through more, don't worry. In fact, I wanted to save Dorothy from reading through all 78 names. 78 names there. We're not going to unpack them all, particularly because we don't know much about many of them other than this passage here.

So why does Luke spend all this time on it? In fact, it's different to Matthew's genealogy if you're familiar with the book of Matthew. Matthew traces Jesus' heritage to King David to show he's king and then back to Abraham to show that Jesus would fulfill God's promises to Abraham.

But then he stops. Luke, however, goes all the way back to Adam. Why? Well, to highlight that Jesus is part of the human race.

You see, yes, Luke knows about the virgin birth. That's why he says in verse 23, Jesus was the son, so it was thought of Joseph. He knows Jesus is ultimately from God.

[ 14 : 08 ] It's why he ends the genealogy with God. But Luke also wants to highlight that Jesus is one of us, a son of the human race.

And so he goes back to being a son of Adam. Why is that important? Well, because it means Jesus can now be our king and servant.

Let me see if I can illustrate. With our government's recent decisions, including this conversion bill I've mentioned before, I must confess, I was muttering to my parents in New South Wales. And I said, don't repeat this, but I said, I wish your premier was our premier.

I know I can get in hot water for this, but now I know she's not perfect, but I've seen a couple of her press conferences and she always comes across as so genuine and sympathetic. But to be our premier, well, lots of things would happen, have to happen, including she have to become one of us, a Victorian, wouldn't she?

Well, to be our genuine and sympathetic king, Jesus has to become one of us. A human, you see. And this reference from his family history shows that he is, confirms that he is.

[ 15 : 25 ] And so he can be our king, our son of God, for he's one of us. But he's also the very best of us. For where every other son of God failed, he succeeded.

We see this, not from his family history, but his personal history in chapter four. Have a look at chapter four, verse one. Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil.

He ate nothing during those days and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, if you are the son of God, tell this stone to become bread. Now here, we're not to miss the comparison between Jesus and Israel.

Remember, Israel were also called God's firstborn son. Israel was led by God in the wilderness for how many years? 40 years. And here is Jesus led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness for how many days?

40 days. We're meant to see there's a comparison here. Now I assume Jesus was able to drink water, but we're told that he ate nothing. I remember doing the 40-hour famine.

[ 16 : 41 ] Do you remember those days? 40-hour famine? I struggled through 40-hour famine. And then kids can make it barely through 40 minutes before asking for something to eat or at least with teenagers, you know, opening the fridge door and just staring to see if there's anything there.

And so Luke's comment that Jesus was hungry I think is a bit of an understatement. But we're told this so that we know it was a real temptation, that he really was hungry. This would have been a real temptation.

But the question I had is why is it a temptation at all? I mean, Jesus turned water into wine, so what's wrong with stone into bread? Well, the devil knows he is the Son of God.

The word if there is really since you are the Son of God. He's heard God declare it at his baptism just a few verses earlier. The demons on the next slide I think shout it by the end of the chapter.

They say you are the Son of God, you know, the King. They know. So rather, it's about the devil tempting Jesus to trust in his own power as Son of God rather than trusting in the Father to provide.

[ 17 : 47 ] And I say this because of the background behind verse 4. Verse 4, Jesus answered, It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone. That's a quote from Deuteronomy 8 on the next slide.

I told you you have to do a bit of work this morning. God led Israel into the wilderness, cause them to hunger and then feed them with manna, bread, so that they might learn their life ultimately depends on God's word, not bread alone.

And they needed to learn that lesson so that they might trust more in God's word to provide than in their own resources to provide, their own bread alone.

Of course, Israel didn't. Remember, if you remember the story, they stockpiled manna for the next day and they trusted in their stockpile rather than God's word that said he'd give them fresh manna the next day.

And so the temptation here for Jesus is to trust in his own power to provide for himself rather than God's word to provide for him.

[ 18 : 57 ] For us, it's a little bit different. God has given us the power, the resources and abilities in order to provide for ourselves and others. So usually in our situation, we ought to use that power.

But like Israel and Jesus, we're not then to trust more in ourselves and our resources to provide than God. So for example, we can ask ourselves the question, do we trust in a healthy super or bank account more than in God to provide?

And if you're not sure, ask yourself this question, what helps you to sleep better at night, knowing that you have enough money or that God is your father? Or, to put it differently, do we trust in our own brains and abilities to provide more than in God to provide?

So when we face a need or a problem, for example, how long does it take us to pray for God's help? I'm a doer, so as soon as I see a need or a problem, I immediately try and fix it.

And I've been told by my wife several times, I just want you to listen, don't fix the problem, but anyway, I fix the problem. And sometimes it's days before I've realized that I haven't even yet prayed for God's help in this.

[ 20 : 19 ] In fact, I think sometimes God graciously prevents me from fixing the problem simply so that I might remember to pray and trust him about it too. I don't know, does that happen to you?

Trusting ourselves more than God is an easy temptation to fall into, isn't it? But this son of God didn't. Jesus resists the temptation, so the devil tries again in verse five.

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world and he said to him, I will give you all their authority and splendor. It has been given to me and I can give it to anyone I want to.

If you worship me, it will all be yours. I hear the temptation is to worship another because it's easier.

I should point out that the devil's claim to have all authority and splendor of the world is exaggerated. That's his job. He bends the truth, right? God's love. For the Bible does call him the prince of this world and the one who is at work in non-Christians hearts and minds and so on.

[ 21 : 26 ] But all the authority and splendor is really God's, isn't it? And God has already given it to Jesus. Remember what Jesus was declared at his birth?

He is Lord, even at his birth. It's his. But to enter into it, he has to first go to the cross, doesn't he?

His path to glory is through suffering agony for us. And so this would have been a real temptation for Jesus to sidestep all that suffering.

After all, in the Garden of Gethsemane, do you remember what he prayed? You know, please take this cup from me. And here is the devil offering to do just that, to take it from him, to offer him another way.

It would have been a real temptation. All he had to do was worship or follow the devil instead. And this temptation to worship another because it's easier, it's real for us too. I mean, if we worship the world, we'd all get our Sunday morning sleep ins back, wouldn't we?

[ 22 : 33 ] That would make our weekends a little bit easier. We'd have more time to do what we want, like the world does. Or if we followed ourselves, we wouldn't have to love our enemies, but could satisfy our desires by doing whatever we wanted.

That would make life easier. Or if we worshipped the world, followed the world's views about humanity, we could save ourselves a whole lot of persecution, couldn't we?

That would make life easier. Now, it's all short-term ease, of course, because life in hell will not be easier, will it? Nor is life in this world without God easier in the long run.

Nonetheless, it's an easy temptation to fall into, isn't it? But again, this son didn't. Instead, verse 8, Jesus answered, it is written, worship the Lord your God and serve him only.

Given Jesus has been using God's word to resist temptation, the devil tries to use God's word in order to give temptation. Verses 9 to 13. We don't have time to unpack it now, but just note at the end, Jesus doesn't give in, does he?

[ 23 : 48 ] And so that's the point. Jesus succeeds where every other son like Israel, kings, us, have failed.

Jesus defeated the devil here, which signaled he could defeat the devil later at the cross. He never gave in to temptation, which means he didn't have to pay for his sins, but could pay for ours instead.

He could be our servant king. You see, unlike every other son of God, Jesus always obeyed God's word, which meant he could perfectly reflect God's character and life-giving rule to the world.

What better son of God is there? And so the big application for us this morning is not so much to resist temptation like Jesus did, though don't mishear me, we should try.

You know, we should even, you know, employ Jesus as a tactic of remembering God's word to help us resist. It's why I think it's such a sad thing that we've lost the art of memory verses. I think we should bring them back to Sunday school and the like.

[ 24 : 55 ] But in the end, none of us can resist completely like Jesus, can we? Rather, the big application is to know with certainty that Jesus is the ultimate son of God, the ultimate servant king, the right one for the job of reflecting God's character and life giving rule.

A rule that comes with forgiveness for us, that makes us fellow sons and daughters who are loved by God too. You see, Luke has written his gospel, as it says on that title slide there, so that we may know with certainty the things we have been taught, like Jesus is the son of God.

God. And today Luke has given us these references from heaven and history so that we can know with certainty Jesus is the ultimate son of God, the perfect servant king.

We're not wasting our times following him. We can entrust our lives to him. I mean, when you go for major surgery, you put your life in the surgeon's hand, don't you?

And most of you will ask your GP, are they a good surgeon? Are they good at their job? And if you know others who have been and had operations by this surgeon, you will ask them, how's it going?

[ 26 : 17 ] Did it work? Are you healed? You'll get personal references, in other words, to confirm you can entrust your life into their hands. Well, here are Jesus' references from heaven and history that confirm he is the right son of God, that we can put our lives into his hands.

So will we? Will we continue to trust in and follow him? Let me finish with another reference for another student. This time he's called Jack.

His last name and school name are blacked out for privacy, but here it is on the slide. It says, Jack is an adequate student, sincerely English department chair.

That's it. That's not a great reference, is it? But these references for Jesus confirm that he's no adequate son of God.

He is the ultimate son of God, the one we can keep entrusting our lives to. So let's pray we would. Let's pray. Our gracious heavenly father, we do thank you for this reminder this morning that we can know with certainty that Jesus is the ultimate son of God, the perfect servant king.

[ 27 : 39 ] And so father, we pray that knowing this, we might continue to entrust our lives to him, following him, for we ask it in his name.

Amen. Lord, I God, I do you