

Scripture: Matthew 22:41-46

Topic: "A Mystery -- Whose Son?"

Text: Matthew 22:42 & 46a ... "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" .... "And no one was able to answer him a word...."

Proposition: Jesus can best be thought of as a "son" from several different ways: through David, Mary, mankind, and as the Son of God, but the highest and important designation is the last. ~~That~~ It is a mystery how he got that way, but a mystery that means a great deal to Christians.

Dates written: October 26-Nov. 1, 1970

Dates and places used:

NOV. 1, 1970 - Calland Park, Fla.

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### Introduction:

1. A young husband was eating some dessert which his new young bride had lovingly prepared for him. As he tasted the first forkfull, he asked, "What is this stuff?" She immediately was hurt, and bristled at him, "It's pie."

He came back, "I know that, honey, but is it sweet potato pie or pumkin pie?"

She jumped up and ran crying to ~~her~~ the bedroom, ~~and~~ It took quite a bit of petting and comforting on his part to get her calmed down. After going through all that, he heard her say, "All right, I'll believe you didn't mean anything, but you're really not very smart. Here it is Halloween, and what other kind of pie would I have but pumkin pie?"

2. This young fellow was dealing with two puzzles, or in the terms of our sermon topic, with two mysteries. The lightest, least-important one (tho the one he had intended alone to discuss) was the kind of pie. The big one which he would never understand fully was the working of his wife's mind, and her way of reacting to his remark, or question. Like all

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I. There are several possible replies as to whose son Jesus is.

1. They replied that they thought "the Christ," which is the title meaning leader, savior, messiah, which Jesus accepted from some of his followers, was the son of David. Certainly they were right to an extent. The book of Matthew, in which we find the Scripture we read today, starts out with

the genealogy of Jesus through his earthly father Joseph back to the Israelite traditional hero and power figure, David. We wonder why Matthew put so much emphasis on this line of descent if he knew of the virgin birth and accepted it. Evidently it was not as important to him as identifying Jesus with the Messiah who Scriptures prophesied would come through the line of the house of David to save Israel. However, Matthew does, of course, speak of Mary as being with child of the Holy Spirit, so he seems to find great importance in both trains of thought. Matthew, the scholars say, was written to convince the Jews that Jesus had been the real and long-awaited Messiah, so his presentation of the genealogy makes a great deal of sense.

2. We have mentioned two answers that might be given to the question as to whose Son the Christ is: David's <sup>AND JOSEPH'S</sup> through a long line of descent and Mary's. Another reply might be that he is "the son of man." He used that phrase quite frequently to refer to himself. A prime point in traditional and orthodox Christian

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over the years has been that Jesus was fully and in every respect a human being, a man, as he lived his short life in Israel. If that had not been so, his example on earth would not have very much meaning for us, for to imitate ~~a god~~, or God, is hopelessly impossible for a human being. That Jesus is the son of man is a vital and true answer, too, tho not the only answer.

3. <sup>ANOTHER</sup> ~~The final~~ answer to the question of the sonship of Jesus is that he is the son of God. This is also a term, or phrase, which he on occasion used about himself. It is s term which Christians by the millions have used every since. We have gone further in the trinitarian doctrine and said that he is God, in the sense that he is one full and accurate expression of God in the world in which he lived, under those circumstances, <sup>AND</sup> wherever he is now that he is resurrected.

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3. ~~the true~~ answer to the question of the sonship of Jesus is that he is the son of God. This is also a term or phrase, which he on occasion used about himself. It is a term which Christians by the millions have used every since. We have gone further in the trinitarian doctrine and said that he is God, in the sense that he is one full and accurate expression of God in the world in which he lived, under those circumstances, wherever he is now that he is resurrected.

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IT IS REALLY IS A MYSTERY.

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1. Part of the mystery, of course, is how he got that way. Most people who think of themselves as Christians think that the account of the virgin birth explains the how. There are other devoted Christians, however, who just cannot accept that as logical or as true to the original versions of the Scriptures. Too many people in each group use their belief on this as a test oath, so to speak, and cut off from the Christian fellowship those who don't accept their views on this subject of the virgin birth. I would plead for the right to believe and let believe. The important thing is to recognize Jesus both as son of man and son of God, and to realize that how he got that way really is a mystery.

2. However, it is a mystery that ~~because it exists~~ has meant a great deal to the world, and still does. Because Christians have seen in the Christ the ~~eternal~~ only historic manifestation of God in the flesh, they have been able to find company and comfort through all the situations of their lives. They don't know just how he does it, but they do know **THAT HE**

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strangely but truly warms their hearts and gives them strength and guidance. They see in his death on the cross ~~the~~ testimony that God was and is willing to undergo the very worst possible to redeem us from our bad thoughts and ways and their results, that he forgives, that he lets us have a new start, even again and again. With such a faith, life is never hopeless. A commitment to such a faith is indeed like being "born again," into a meaningful and useful life.

### Conclusion:

1. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen tells the story of a 6-year-old girl who was anxious to help in mission work, so she went into the lemonade business. She put up on her front lawn a sign: "Lemonade - 5 cents a glass." Many customers came back 3 and 4 times and soon the lemonade was gone. Her mother asked her where she was getting all the lemons. The little girl answered, "from the cocktail shaker you had in the icebox."

(The Quotable Fulton J. Sheen, Droke House)

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 (The cocktail shaker J. Sheen broke  
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THAT SOME of you understand why her business was so good!

2. Those who are committed to Jesus Christ as the son of man and the son of God, and who accept him as their personal savior and guide, are honest to admit they don't know all about him. But they know why they believe in him, in spite of much of the mystery surrounding him, his birth, life, ~~XXXXXX~~ crucifixion and resurrection.

3. You can never confine in words and formulas whose son Jesus is, or what he means. It will always be a mystery, much more so than the operation of some of the scientific formulas and processes by which I benefit so strongly. *BUT WHICH I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.* But it is a mystery which is the most helpful thing you'll ever contemplate.

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