

18 Jan 2020

The following is Dr Aw's email response to questions on the "sons of God", that were emailed to him this week.

Dear C.,

I am delighted that you are seeking a clearer understanding of God's Word. You will find it a joyful labour which will result in an increase of faith and love for Him who is the Word made flesh, our Lord Jesus.

I append below my answers to your queries. They are by no means exhaustive but I hope they are of help.

Q1: In Job 1:6 "Now there was a day when the sons of GOD..." KJV, NASB using NIV version, 'sons of GOD' were referred to as 'the angels'. Does this mean angels are sons of GOD?

A: The phrase 'sons of God' occur in both Old and New Testament and need to be understood in context of the passages in which they occur.

For instance, 'sons of God' in Job 1 : 6 refer to angels who present themselves before God. This meeting is also mentioned in Job 2 : 1. Evidently these events take place in a heavenly sphere so these beings cannot be humans. This is further substantiated by Job 38 : 4, 7 when God challenged Job thus: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth! Tell me if you have understanding . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

There are different orders of angelic beings (e.g. archangels, seraphims, cherubims). The morning stars who are angels are grouped with the 'sons of God'. So 'sons of God' in Job 38 : 7 should be the same as those who met in council in Job 2 : 1. Besides that, the event of Job 38 : 7 describes the creation of the world before the creation of man, so 'sons of God' in this verse cannot refer to humans and must be angels.

In other contexts, 'son of man' clearly refers to man. See, for example, Psalm 8 : 4: "What is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him ? " (NIV) There are many other such verses, as a search of a concordance will reveal, of which Numbers 23 : 19 is another.

Q2: Satan is a fallen angel. Does it means satan is (/ originally was before his fall?) also a son of GOD?

A: As a general term, 'sons of God' describe beings of the heavenly host (including Satan) who have access to God's presence. Satan was more than an ordinary angel. He was one of the morning stars referred to in **Q1**. Look up Isaiah 14 : 12 - 15 describing the fall of the 'morning star' Satan when pride took hold of him. The book of Revelation describes Satan's activities in the last days in detail.

Q3: John 3:16 refers to JESUS as GOD's only begotten son. How could we reconcile these 2 verses (Job1:6 & John3:16) in the bible?

A: A creature made by God partakes of the nature of God and may rightly be called a "son of God". So angels and men are sons of God and the context gives the interpretation. For the same reason, the Lord Jesus often referred to Himself as the "Son fo Man" because He took on the nature of man His creature for the purpose of saving him.

Your question as to how one might reconcile Jesus being God's **one and only Son (NIV), His only Son (ESV)** of John 3 : 16 with Job 1 : 6 is answered by the Lord Himself in the verses **just before** verse 16, where He refers to Himself as the Son of Man.

"No one has ever gone into heaven except the One who came from heaven - the Son of Man". He saw no contradiction between being called both God's unique Son from heaven and calling Himself the Son of Man. Paul put it so well in Philippians 2 : 5 - 11.

Let us rejoice in the blessed truth of Romans 8 : 14 - 17: ". . . because those who are led by the Spirit of God are **sons of God**. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirits that we are God's children. Now if we are God's children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we might also share in His glory."

Yours in Him,
Swee Eng