

## THE TERM SON OF GOD AS A PROOF OF JESUS' HUMANITY: A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS

Zaifuddin Md Rasip  
Fakulti Pengajian Islam  
Universiti Malaysia Sabah

zaifuddin@ums.edu.my

Vol. 6, Issue 2 | July 2023

### KEYWORDS

Bible,  
Christianity,  
Divinity of Jesus,  
Humanity of Jesus,  
Son of God

### ABSTRACT

Trinity is the most important doctrine in Christianity. The concept of the Trinity has made Jesus divine. One of the arguments that is often used as proof of Jesus' divinity is that the term "Son of God" as it is found in the Bible. The focus of this paper is to examine the term "Son of God" as stated in the Holy Bible as a proof of Jesus' divinity or in fact it is a proof of his humanity. The main objective of this research is to discover the meaning of the term Son of God in the context of the Old Testament and New Testament. The research also examines the verses in the Bible which confirm the humanity of Jesus. Since the paper discusses fundamental doctrines in Christianity, the method of the study involves extensive textual analysis. The result of the study shows that the term "Son of God" cannot be understood in the literal sense, rather in its metaphorical sense.

### INTRODUCTION

Trinity is regarded as the central dogma of Christianity (Kung 1992, 373). The Trinity according to the Athanasian Creed is; "The Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God" (Melton 1998, 2-3). Thus the Son has the same nature as the Father (*homoousios* - ομοούσιος). The Logos had been made flesh to give human beings spiritual life and save mankind from extinction. But this salvation would have been impossible if the Logos himself had been a

frail creature. Thus Christ, the Logos made flesh, must be of the same nature as the Father (Armstrong 1994, 110). If someone accept the doctrine of Trinity he must accept the divinity of Jesus. Paul sees Jesus Christ gradually reshaping human beings who turn to the Lord (Fitzmyer 1989, 69). He ardently declared that Jesus was a divine being who possessed the nature of God but who had humbled himself and come down from heaven and assumed human form, died on the cross in order that might rise again, after his victory over death, to the right hand of God as

the Lord of life and death (Noss, John S. & David S. 1990, 510).

### **The Trinity: A new doctrine in Christianity**

Although Trinity is the central doctrine of Christianity, the word Trinity is not found in the Bible. It did not find a place formally in the theology of the Church and certainly was not fully assimilated into Christian life and its profession of faith until the end of the fourth century (ISA 1989, 5-7). Thus Michel Servetus (1511-1553)<sup>1</sup> was fascinated because he did not find one word about the Trinity, nor about its Persons, nor about an Essence, nor about unity of the Substance, and neither about one Nature of several beings (Zaifuddin Md Rasip 2002, 193). What he found was that the teaching of the NT did not contradict the strict monotheism of the Jewish scriptures. He then wrote his famous book, "*Concerning the Errors of the Trinity*", denying that the Trinity was the true Christian doctrine (Bainton 1964, 281). Servetus' theology runs parallel with the teaching of Arius, "There was a time when he was not".<sup>2</sup> He rejected the

idea that Jesus could eternally coexist with God. Indeed, the Father is not always the Father because there was a time when He was solitary (Kannengiesser 1991, 1/1).

According to Ibn Taymiyyah (1994, 3/134) it is mentioned nowhere in the discourses of the prophets that Jesus was eternal and born not made. They did not designate the eternal as the son of God. Nor is it stated that God made anything eternal son for himself. An American Unitarian scholar William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) (Noll 1992, 230-234) believed that Christianity is a continuation of the Jewish religion which believed in the Oneness of God as he said:

"The NT is built on the Old [OT]. The Christian dispensation is a continuation of the Jewish, the completion of a vast scheme of providence, requiring a great extent of view in the reader. Still more, the Bible treats subjects on which we receive ideas from other sources besides itself; such subjects as nature, passions, relations, and language by the known truths, which observation and experience furnish on these topics... We believe that God never contradicts, in one part of the scripture, what He teaches in another; and never contradicts, in revelation, what He teaches in His works and providence"

Like Servetus, Channing also did not find the teaching of the Trinity in the NT. What was clearly taught by the Bible, according to him, was that the Father alone is the true God. He believed that the Bible itself provides the key for the Unitarian faith. Thus, he was perplexed as to how Christians read the NT but still accepted the Trinitarian doctrine;

---

Father indeed, was not always Father because there was a time when He was solitary, while the Son did not always exist because he was created (J.D.N. Kelly 1960, 232-233).

---

<sup>1</sup> He was a Spanish doctor, considered as the founder of Modern Unitarianism. His name was Michael Serveto, however, he was well known in the Latinized form Servetus. He came from a respected, devout Catholic family. His father was a nobleman and a judge, and one of his brothers was a priest (Armstrong 1994, 110).

<sup>2</sup> Arius (Ἀρίος) (256-336CE) was born in Libya. He studied under the greatest critic of the Pauline Church, Lucian of Antioch, who was killed for holding views not approved by the Pauline Church. Arius was a presbyter of the Alexandrian Church, and presided over an independent church in that city, called Baucalis. The central idea of Arius' teaching was the concept of God's eternal oneness. Jesus the son must be a creation of the Father and not co-eternal with him. Thus, the Father must have existed before the Son. Therefore, there was a time when the Son did not exist. Hence the familiar and repeatedly used Arian slogan, "There was a time when he was not (ἦν ποτε ὄτε οὐκ ἦν). Arius rejected the idea that the Son could eternally coexist with the Father. The

We are astonished that any man can read the NT and avoid the conviction that the Father alone is God. We hear our Savior continually appropriating this character to the Father... We challenge our opponents to adduce one passage in the NT, where the word God means three persons (Channing 1819, 15).

Thus, Channing objected to the doctrine *homoousios* which was approved in the Council of Nicaea (325CE) in Bithynia (Iznez in Turkey today). Unitarians during the early reformation rejected the doctrine of trinity as unscriptural, asserting instead the Unity of God and the essential humanity of Jesus. Jesus was seen as the supreme teacher and leader of humankind, and salvation was to be achieved by making one's life conform to his teaching, as the purest expression of God's will.

### **Paul, the inventor of the Trinity**

Christianity began as a reformatory movement within Judaism which rested on the belief in the Only God. If people were to read the Bible from cover to cover without any preconceived idea of the Trinity, what comes through very clearly to an impartial reader is that God alone is the Almighty, the Creator, separate and distinct from anyone else, and Jesus is also separate and distinct, and a created being, subordinate to God (ISA 1989, 12). According to Kee (1990, 44), the teachings of Jesus were clearly monotheistic until Paul<sup>3</sup> laid the foundation of the doctrine

---

<sup>3</sup> Paul was born a few years after Jesus in the city of Tarsus. He is the most important and powerful human personality after Jesus in the history of the Church. Half of the books of the NT are attributed to him, and more than half of another distinctive NT writing - the Acts of the Apostles- is devoted to a description of his career in spreading the Christian message from Damascus in Syria to Rome. Paul also has been the most controversial figure for the Jews and Christians until the present day. For many Jews, Paul remains the Jewish apostate. For most Christians he is the Apostle (Kung 1994, 17).

of Trinity. Although the concept of the Trinity was not clearly thought out by Paul, the idea of original sin, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and the divinity of Jesus led to the formation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (Barton 1990, 316). Although Paul did not mention the word Trinity, explicitly the Trinitarian concept could be derived from Paul's letters that line up God (the Father), Jesus (the Son) and the Spirit in a parallelism that becomes the basis for later dogma of the three distinct persons in the Trinity (Fitzmyer 1989, 57).

It is God himself who makes us, together with you, sure of our life in union with Christ; it is God himself who has set us apart, who has placed his mark of ownership upon us, and who has given us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the guarantee of all that he has in store for us (NT, 2 Cor, 1:21-22. see also NT, 1 Cor, 2:7-16, NT, Romans, 5:1-5).

There is no doubt that the idea of the divinity of Jesus was raised by Paul which in the end, led to the constituting of the doctrine of the Trinity as a new doctrine in Christianity (Maccoby 1986:184).

### **Son of God as a proof of Jesus' humanity**

This term is mentioned several times in both the OT and the NT. According to Rochards 1931, 572) the Jews considered themselves as the children of God;

"And you shall say to the Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord, Israel is my first-born son" (OT, Exodus, 4:22.)

The people of Israel used the term sons of God for themselves because they were the children of God (Maccoby 1986, 77). This definitely does not imply the divinity of the Jews and the Jews themselves never claimed divinity with this term. God calls the nation of Israel His son (OT, Hosea, 1:10, 11:1). The context is that God used a

metaphorical figure of speech denoting His relationship with Israel. Even God mentions "the first born", and this implies that there could be a "second born", a "third born" and so on who will all be the sons of God (McGrath 1995, 326).

According to Ibn Taymiyyah (1994, 3/133-134), the Christ is God's selected and beloved because of that he is called son of God. Furthermore, prophets in the Bible were called gods, as in NT, John (10:34-36): "Jesus answered to them; 'Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came - and Scripture cannot be set aside - what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? The title was also applied to prophet Yaacob when God addressed him with 'my firstborn son' (OT, Exodus, 4:22). Nowhere in the discourses of the prophets is it mentioned that the word of God is the son of God in the real sense of the word. As the title applies to these creatures, it entails that the Christ is created like them. Thus, the title is given to the human Christ not the Christ as a deity 'eternal born not created'. The term Son of God was also used to refer to David and his offspring;

"I will announce," says the king, "What the Lord has declared. He said to me: 'You are my son; today I have become your father'" (OT, Psalm, 2:7).

David is referred as the begotten son of God. Again, couldn't Jesus be another 'begotten' son of God, as David is? The passage shows that the 'son' is going to be David's offspring for generations to come. At this point in time, Solomon was not even conceived. The context of the passage shows that not only is Solomon going to be a 'son', but that all of David's ruling offspring are going to be 'sons' (Kung 1992, 376). The references to chastisement do not apply to Solomon to

the temporal kingdom of David's family (Douglas 1990, 400). God had established a special relationship with David and promised him that He would maintain this relationship with David's descendants. God used a figure of speech in this passage to describe a special relationship that He would maintain with David's descendants (Maccoby 1986, 77). Jesus is a descendant of David. Thus, son cannot have a literal meaning, otherwise Jesus would be punished if committed a mistake as another punishes his son. To be punished is not in the character of God, but shows the humanity of Jesus.

Son of God is used to refer to those who worked hard for peace;

μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.

"Happy are those who make peace, for they will be known as sons of God" ( NT, Matthew, 5:9).

In the New International Version of the Bible, υἱοὶ θεοῦ is translated as 'Sons of God' (Phillips 1957, 8). The word αὐτοὶ which means 'they' is the plural of αὐτός, which means 'he'. While υἱοὶ is the plural of υἱός which means 'son' (Rienecker 1980, 12). This verse clearly stated that the pacemakers are also called son of God. It means that God has many children and not only Jesus. Thus, the term of Son of God does not imply the divinity of Jesus, otherwise all pacemakers are divine (Earle eds. 1977, 31). Anybody who loves peace and proclaims peace on earth is to be called son of God (Winter ed. 1975, 35).

The term is also used for the righteous regardless of their race and origin:

If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. Behold what manner of love the father has bestowed

on us, that we should be called children of God (NT, 1 John, 2:29 – 3:1).

The expression "Son of God" was applied in Jewish literature to a righteous or favored individual whose life reflected a close proximity to the conception of God as a moral being. Thus, Jesus did not consider himself to have divine conception of God as a moral being. Thus, Jesus did not consider himself to have divine status (Tanner 1990, 158-159).

Believing in the coming of the Messiah is one of the fundamental tenets of Judaism which led them to hope for a better future. The survivors will be delivered into the hands of the Messiah who will assemble the nation, wipe out those who had oppressed Israel and then sit on the throne of his kingdom forever (Wells 1989, 170). God's rule would be eternal and supreme. The coming of the Messiah was closely related to the establishment of the kingdom of God (Peterson 1993, 15). Jesus saw himself, in some special sense, as God's son, a term that perhaps would have had messianic and royal, not ontological, significance because the Jews did not expect a divine messiah (Witherington 1990, 213-214).

Son of God in the OT is also used for the angels;

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and satan also came among them. And the Lord said to satan; 'From where do you come?' So satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it" (OT, Job, 1:6-7).

It is clear from the text that the term sons of God referred to the angels. The angels present themselves before God to report their activities (Douglas 1990, 663). The term sons of God in this verse definitely did not refer to the divinity of the angles.

The term Son of God was used also in ancient Israel as a designation for the king (Maccoby 1986, 77). In the Psalm of Enthronement, as the king assumed royal power on Mount Zion, he was addressed by God:

Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the declare: You are my son, today I have begotten you (OT, Psalms, 2:6-7).

This was not understood literally in ancient Israel as an act of divine begetting, but as a new relationship whereby the king became God's agent of rule over his people and their land. The king was chosen and empowered by God for the role, and hence was addressed as God's son (Kee 1990, 80). According to Jewish usage of the time, the term Son of God designated a man who had been chosen and empowered by God to do His will, and especially to the king (Bultmann 1962, 1/28). There is no evidence that the term Son of God was used even in Hellenistic circles to refer to a divinized man. Thus, the voice acclaiming Jesus as Son of God, should therefore be understood as the agent of his commissioning for the task of establishing God's rule on earth, and it cannot be understood as implying his divinity (Ungaran 2019, 42). The fact that Jesus was the King of Jews was realized after his birth. There were men who came from the East, asking;

Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east (NT, Matthew, 2:2).

Jesus was the King of glory who made an ultimate claim upon human life. In response to that ultimate claim, the Christian should render worship to God alone, feel glad to serve Jesus and acknowledge him as king and ruler (Pelikan 1985, 48). However, Jesus' definition of his kingship is not of this world (NT, John, 18:36) which could imply that his rule will not be established

by means and standards and expectations deriving from the world order. He is a king who refuses to exercise royal, political or military power. He is a king spurned by the leaders of his own people (Kee 1990, 8). Thus as a king of Israel, no wonder Jesus was called the son of God.

As son of God, Jesus admitted that he was subordinate to the Father. Thus, in John, it is reported that Jesus said: “ὅτι ὁ πατήρ μου μείζων μου ἐστίν (The Father is greater than I am)” (NT, John, 14:28). In fact, Jesus insisted that he is not the Supreme Being because the Father is always greater than him. God is Supreme, there is no one greater than God. Jesus, however, is not Supreme; there is Someone superior to him. Thus, it must be understood that the Father would be much more excellent and glorious than the son (Winter 1975, 607).

The very fact that Jesus had called God his "Father" implied a distinction. Paternity by its very nature, involves prior existence and a certain superiority over the son. At the same time, Jesus indicated his father's superiority is that he had been anointed by the Father (NT, Luke, 4:18). Anointing is the giving of authority or a commission by a superior to someone who does not already have the authority. Here God is plainly superior, for He anointed Jesus, giving him the authority that he did not previously have (ISA 1989, 18).

Jesus himself had used the term sons of God for all true believers;

Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? (NT, John, 10:34-36).

Jesus notes that all true believers are called sons of God. Thus, Jesus included himself as one of the many metaphorical 'sons' of God. So, when he spoke of himself, and his relation to the Father, it is evident that his "sonship" is set apart from and superior to the metaphorical

"son of God" relationship. It is clear that the term son of God used in the OT and NT shows the humanity of Jesus. Jesus was only speaking metaphorically when he called himself the 'Son of God'. According to al-Ghazali (2020, 7), the affirmation of the textual passages referring to the Divinity of Christ must be approached metaphorically. He mentions such divinity texts such as "I and the Father are one". Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them; "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?". "We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are "gods"' (NT, John 10:30-34). Al-Ghazali (2020, 8) argued that the passages mentioned are not particularly different from sufi expressions in which they feel completely at one with God. It does not mean that Jesus is God in literal meaning but he was speaking metaphorically.

### **The Bible confirms the humanity of Jesus**

Adam was the first man created by God (OT, Genesis, 5:1). He had no father. Adam was also called the son of God.

"The son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God" (NT, Luke, 3:38).

As the first man God created, Adam is figuratively called God's son. Deuteronomy (32:6) illustrates this where God, as the Creator, is called the Father. Thus, the term son of God used for Jesus cannot have a literal meaning, because Adam also the son of God. If Jesus is considered as the son of God in a literal sense because he had no father, indeed Adam has a greater right to that title because he had neither a father nor a mother. Thus, the sonship of Adam and Jesus takes a metaphorical form. Jesus himself denies his divinity;

Ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἐνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἐστίν.

But a mediator is not needed when only one person is involved; but God is one (NT, Gal., 3:19-20).

The word ἐστίν means 'is', to show that God is one; ὁ θεὸς εἷς ἐστίν 'God is one'. If there were more than one God, or many Gods or plural Gods, the word εἰσίν (*eisin*), which means 'are', would have been used instead of ἐστίν.

In 1Corinthians it was also clearly mentioned that there is one God;

As concerning therefore, the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that which are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many), But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we are in him (NT, 1Cor., 8:4-6).

In the Greek text, the word εἷς which means 'one', was mentioned twice here; καὶ ὅτι οὐδεὶς Θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς that 'but there is no God except me', in verse four, and in verse six, ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ 'to us there is one God the Father'. The word εἷς is used only in the masculine and nominative and can never give the impression of pluralism but is clearly monotheism (Zaifuddin Md Rasip, 2002, 71). This verse is one of the most explicit statements of Jesus' denying his divinity. Jesus admitted that he was subordinate to the Father and the Father is greater him (NT, John, 14:28), fact that the Bible describes that the Father has no equal shows He is the absolute one (see also OT, Isaiah, 45:2, OT, Psalm 83:81, OT, Genesis 17:1, OT, Exodus 18:11).

The people who witnessed the miracles that Jesus showed acknowledged that

Jesus was a prophet (Zaifuddin Md Rasip 2020, 194-197). The Bible confirms this fact;

Ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου οὖν ἀκούσαντες τῶν λόγων τούτων ἔλεγον ὅτι Οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης.

When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, "Surely this man is the Prophet we've been expecting" (John, 7:40-41).

Οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης mean; This is surely the prophet. The word ὁ προφήτης means the prophet is used referring to Jesus. It means that Jesus was really a prophet. Even the affirmation of the word truly or suerly (ἀληθῶς truly), is used, it shows that Jesus is truly a prophet (Zaifuddin Md Rasip 2020, 197). As one of the prophets of God, besides calling people to worship one God, Jesus himself worshipped one God;

"He often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" (NT, Luke, 5:16).

"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up on a mountain by himself to pray" (NT, Matthew, 14:23).

These two verses which speak about Jesus are of great significance. He was worshipping God as any other mortal. As a human Jesus offered prayers to God, who heard him because he became obedient through suffering (Freed 1990, 361).

Jesus replied, "The most important is on this, Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength." (NT, Mark, 12:29-30).

In the Greek text, the words ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν Κύριος εἷς ἐστίν, mean the Lord our God is only One Lord, and εἷς indicates one and masculine in gender. From these verses it is clearly stated that the God of Israel is

One. In the grammar of this verse "One" is singular, and has no plural modifiers to suggest that it is anything but one entity.

The OT is strictly monotheistic, and hundreds of times throughout the OT God is spoken of as one undivided individual (OT, Isaiah 45:5, OT, Genesis 17:1, OT, Exodus 18:1). Not only that, the OT also makes it abundantly clear that God is one person. The NT, moreover, which was written in Greek, is full of evidence and facts that God is one person, and here are some examples of those verses;

Αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή, ἵνα γινώσκωσίν σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεόν, καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν χριστόν.

And eternal life means knowing you, the only true God, and knowing Jesus Christ, whom you sent (NT, John, 17:3).

The words σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεόν, mean 'You the only true God', are used only in the accusative singular, and if there were more than one God the word τους would have been used instead of τὸν and it should have been written χουμας τους μονους αληθαινους θεους (Zaifuddin Md Rasip 2002, 70-71). This is strong evidence of the humanity of Jesus, the prophet of God, who worshipped only One God.

The refusal of Jesus to be called the son of God also occurred during the trial at the Sanhedrian. When he was asked if he claimed to be the Son of God; ἵνα ἡμῖν εἴπησθε εἰ σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (tell us if You are the Messiah, the Son of God?) Jesus replied; Λέγει αὐτῷ (you have said it). Jesus did not assert that he was the Son of God, rather he said that he is the Son of Man;

"But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." (OT, Matthew, 26:64).

Was Jesus a prophet? If he was a prophet, definitely it is evidence of his humanity. Fortunately, some traces of what might have been Jesus' claim to be a prophet remain in the Gospel texts. For example, in the story of Jesus' rejection at Nazareth, his prophetic role seems to have been assumed;

A prophet is respected everywhere except in his home town and his own family (OT, Matthew, 13:57, see also NT, Mark, and NT, Luke, 4:24).

At the conclusion of Luke's Sermon on the Plain, after Jesus entered Capernaum and healed the centurion's slave (NT, Luke, 7:1-10) and rise the widow's son at Nain (NT, Luke, 7:11-17), he was invited to the Pharisee's home to share a meal. After the prostitute anointed Jesus' feet, the Pharisee thought to himself:

If this man really were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is (NT, Luke, 7:39).

Why would the Pharisee wonder if Jesus was a prophet unless this was Jesus' claim or at least a claim made for him by his followers? (Tanner 1990, 168). When Jesus entered Jerusalem, some people were asking about him, but the crowd knew that he was a prophet;

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the holy city was turned into uproar. "Who is he?" The people asked. "This is prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee." The crowd answered (NT, Matthew, 21:10-11, see also NT, Luke, 13:33).

All of these verses could not be understood as indicating anything else but the prophethood of Jesus. In addition to that, Jesus explained that as the servant of God, he is not greater or even equal to God;

I am telling you the truth: no slave is greater than his master, and no



messenger is greater than one who sent him (NT, John, 13:16, see also *ibid.*, 17:3). In this verse, the distinction is made very clear by Jesus between himself and the One who sent him. Thus Jesus is not equal to the Father, therefore Jesus cannot be a God. In the Bible, Jesus is also referred as the servant of God.

Behold my servant, whom I have chosen (NT, Matthew, 12:18).

To you first, God having raised up His servant Jesus, sent him to bless you (NT, Acts, 3:26).

These two verses, which are the fulfillment of OT, Isaiah 42:1- 4, speak of Jesus as the servant of God and not as God. All these verses that speak of Jesus as a prophet of God, a messenger of God and indeed the servant of God, if anything, affirm the fact that Jesus was a man who worshipped God like any other mortal. Ibn Hazm (1982: 1/12) refutes the divinity of Jesus by quoting verse from NT (Luke 22:69); But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God. This verse shows that the Son is not the same level as the Father. Ibn Hazm (1982, 1/12) also mentioned that the Son and the Father are not the same by quoting verse from NT (Matthew 24:36); However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. Hence, both of these verses according to Ibn Hazm, refute the divinity of Jesus and confirm the humanity of Jesus. There is no God other but Him, He is one (*wahid*), there is only one other than Him in this world, He created all existence, there is nothing that resembles Him in any aspect whatsoever (Ibn Hazm 1982: 1/18).

Jesus' disciples often addressed Jesus as 'rabbi' (NT, Mark, 9:5, 10:51, 11:21, 14:45), a term of respect usually reserved for persons highly trained in the Law. It is used once in the NT of John the Baptist

(NT, John, 3:26) but otherwise only of Jesus. The term came from the Hebrew word *rabi*, meaning master, and in the term *rabbi*, my lord. Another expression used to address Jesus, *διδάσκαλος* is a Greek word that means 'teacher' (Niswonger 1988, 146). Besides prophet, another designation of Jesus which appears in the Gospels is *rabbi*, Bultmann (1951, 58) even says that Jesus actually lived as a Jewish *rabbi*. He disputes along the same lines as Jewish rabbis, uses the same methods of argument, the same turns of phrase; like them he coins proverbs and teaches in parables. Jesus' teaching shows in content also a close relationship with that of the rabbis. It seems safe to say that it was as a *rabbi* that Jesus was known and addressed by his immediate followers and by others (Pelikan 1985, 11). To the Christian disciples of the first century the conception of Jesus as a *rabbi* was self-evident, because the Bible clearly give this title to Jesus. There is no doubt that the characteristics of a *rabbi* appeared plainly in Jesus' ministry and way of teaching, unless, if the tradition has radically distorted the picture (Bultman 1951, 61). The evidence of the forms of addressing Jesus is found in various layers of the traditions;

οὐκ ἔστιν μαθητῆς ὑπὲρ τὸν διδάσκαλον, κατηρτισμένος δὲ πᾶς ἔσται ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος αὐτοῦ.

A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher (NT, Luke, 6:40. See also NT, Matthew, 10:24, NT, Mark, 5:35, NT, John, 20:16).

This verse clearly stated that the disciples call Jesus as *διδάσκαλος* which means teacher or *rabbi*. So, the students can be like the teacher if they are well trained. However, if Jesus were God, the disciples could never be like him, because he would always be superior. Thus, the title *rabbi* which was given by his followers to Jesus

is evidence of his humanity. Jesus did not think of himself as being perfect. He knew in his heart that only God is perfect:

Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is God (NT, Mark, 10:18).

Jesus made a very clear with distinction between God and himself. Jesus also confessed his limited knowledge and ignorance, as evidence of his humanity and at the same time denied his divinity. It is impossible to accept his divinity and at the same time accept his limited knowledge. If he is God, he could not be ignorant of anything of the past, present or future;

Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ἢ τῆς ὥρας οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι ἐν οὐρανῷ οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός, εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ.

No one knows, however, when that day or hour will come, neither angels in heaven, nor the Son; only the Father knows (NT, Mark. 13:32).

In any case, the verse mentioned above, cuts at the very root of the idea of his divinity. In fact, it shows that he is subordinate to God because nobody knows, not even Jesus himself. The phrase οὐδὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι not the angel, οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός not the son, εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ but only the Father, implies that it is only the Father who knows about the day of judgment, not the angel and the son. Had Jesus been the equal Son part of Godhead, he would have known what the Father knows. But Jesus did not know for he was not the equal to God.

In all of the Bible, there is not one verse where Jesus says that he is God come down to earth, that he is divine or that he should be worshipped. On the contrary, he taught the people to worship only to one God:

You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve (NT, Luke, 4:8).

If Jesus had been God who came down to earth, he would not have made such a statement, because God would not worship God. Instead of claiming to be God, Jesus called people to worship the One God. It is clear from Jesus' answer when he was asked about the most important commandment;

“Which commandment is the most important of all? Jesus replied; The most important is on this, Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.” (NT, Mark, 12:29-30).

The divinity of Jesus is never taught by Jesus and has no origin in the NT, but was adopted sometime after the ascension of Jesus. Even in Luke it is stated that Jesus did not allow himself to be called him Son of God, which may refer to his divinity, because he realized that he was only the Messiah.

Demons also went out from many people, screaming, “You are the Son of God!” Jesus gave the demons an order and would not let them speak, because they knew that he was the Messiah” (NT, Luke, 4:41)

In addition to the previous evidence from the NT that refutes the divinity of Jesus, it can also be demonstrated that Jesus' divinity is inconsistent with the prophecies contained in the OT about the coming of the Messiah. He saw himself as Messiah-designated, destined by faithful endurance of suffering to reign with his followers in a restored Israel on earth (Sutherland eds. 1988, 97), According to Kung (1992, 377), as present-day historical-critical exegesis of both Jewish and Christian provenance agrees that he did not use the title "Son of God" of himself.

The word Father is also used for God in Judaism, in the Hebrew Bible, The Jews had called their God "Father"

Is this the way you should treat the Lord, you foolish, senseless people? He is your Father, your Creator, he made into a nation. (OT, Deuteronomy, 32:6).

And now you say to me, You are my father, and you have loved me ever since I was a child. (OT, Jeremiah, 3:4. See also OT, Isaiah, 64:8; OT, Malachi, 2:10).

Accordingly, God had used the word Father, to show that He is the Father of all the nation. Jesus was one part of the nation, so it is not strange that the term son of God is used for Jesus because all of us are sons of God. Even Jesus called himself the son of man. The words *ben adam* in Hebrew are literally translated by the phrase "son of man". Because of that some biblical scholars have proposed that the term "son of man" is a generic term for human beings, that is, the son or daughter of Adam. Jesus uses the name "son of man" to communicate his purpose to the people. As such, the term "son of man" is widely understood to refer to the humanity of Jesus and in Hebrew the term could simply refer to a human being.

## Conclusion

The word Son of God does not show Jesus' divinity but is rather evidence of his humanity. The title Son of God was bestowed on him on account of his righteousness and it is a synonym of the servant of God. It should be clearly realized that Jesus did not claim to be the Son of God in a metaphysical sense, such as was required by the Nicene theology. He claimed to be God's son in a metaphorical sense, in the sense in which all human beings are sons of God, as standing in a filial and moral relationship to God and being capable of acting on those moral principles on which God acts.

The term "Son of God" in the OT and the NT clearly cannot be understood in the literal sense and does not give the idea of the divinity of Jesus. Even the fact that Jesus was fully a human being was understood by the early Church. The Church proclaimed him as prophet and teacher and beyond that as the coming son of man, but not as the "divine man" (Θεος ανερ) of the Hellenistic world, who was a numinous figure. Not before the growth of the legend of Hellenistic soil was the figure of Jesus assimilated to that of divine man. The Old Testament-Jewish world knew neither "heroes" in the Greek sense nor *homines religiosi* in the Hellenistic sense" (Bultmann 1962, 35). The fact is that throughout the Bible many prophets were given the title of Son of God. However, it cannot be concluded from this that Jesus is, as Christian doctrine holds, the literal son of God which makes him the third person of the Trinity. The term should rather be understood in its metaphorical sense.

## **Bibliography**

### **a. The Holy Book:**

*The Bible*

*The Holy Qur'an*

### **b. Book:**

Armstrong, Karen. 1994. *A History of God*. New York: Alfred A. Knop.

Bainton, Ronald H. 1964. *Christianity*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Barton, George A. 1990. *The Religions of the World*. New Delhi: Olympia Publication.

Bultmann, Rudolf. 1951. *Jesus and the World*. New York: Charles Scribner's Son.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1962. *Theology of New Testament*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Douglas J.D., et. al. 1990. *New Commentary on the Whole Bible Old Testament Volume*. U.S.A.: Tyndale House Publisher. Inc.

Earle, Ralf, eds. 1977. *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary*. Michigan: Baker Book House.

Freed, Edwin D. 1990. *The New Testament: A Critical Introduction*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Fitzmyer, J.A. 1989. *Paul and His Theology*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid 2020. *Ar-Rad al-Jamil Li Ilahiyat Isa Bi Sharih al-Injil*, Istanbul : Hakikat Kitabevi.

Ibn Hazm 1982, *Al-Fisal fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa wa al-Nihl*, Riyadh : Ukaz li al-Nasr wa at-Tawzi.

Ibn Taymiyyah 1994. *Al-Jawab al-Ṣaḥīḥ Liman Baddala Dīn al-Masiḥ*, Riyadh : Dar Al-'Aṣimah.

International Student Association (ISA). 1989. *Should You Believe in the Trinity*. New York: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York.

J.D.N. Kelly. 1960. *Early Christianity*. U.K.: Longman.

Kannengiesser, Charles. 1991. *Aris and Athanasius*. Great Britain: Variorum.

Kee, H.C. 1990. *What Can We Know About Jesus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1993. *Understanding the New Testament*. New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs.

Keresztes, Paul. 1984. *Imperial Rome*. Boston: University Press of America.

Kung, Hans. 1980. *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today* New York: Crossroad Publishing.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1994. *Great Christian Thinkers*. London: SMC Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1992. *Judaism: Between Yesterday and Tomorrow*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company.

Maccoby, Hyam. 1986. *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Melton, J. Gordon, ed. 1988. *Religious Creeds*. Michigan: Gale Research Company.

Niswonger, R.L. 1988. *New Testament History*. Michigan: Academic.

Noll. M.A. 1992. *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Noss, David S. and John S. 1990. *A History of the World's Religions*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. 1985. *Jesus Through the Centuries*. Yale: Yale University Press.

Peterson, R. Dean. 1993. *A Concise History of Christianity*. California: Wadsworth Publisher Company.

Phillips, J.B. 1957. *The Gospels Translated into Modern English*. London: Butler & Tanner Ltd. Frome and London for Geoffrey Bles Ltd.

Rienecker, Fritz.1980. *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*. Michigan: Zondervan House.

Rochards, LO. 1931. *Zondervan Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*. Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.

Sutherland, Stewart. eds. 1988. *The World's Religion*. London: Routledge.

Tanner, Obert C. 1990. *Toward Understanding the New Testament*. USA: Signature Books.

Wells, G.A. 1989. *Who was Jesus? A Critique of the New Testament Record*. Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company.

Winter, David. ed. 1975. *Matthew Henry's Commentary the New Testament*. London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.

Witherington, Ben. 1990. *The Christology of Jesus*. New York: Fortress Press.

Zaifuddin Md Rasip. 2020. *Perbandingan Agama Islam dan Kristian Menurut Al-Quran dan Bible Ada Persamaan Tetapi Ajaran Gereja Berlawanan*. Kuala Lumpur: Telaga Biru.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2002. *Unitarianism in Christianity: An Historical and Textual Analysis*, Kuala Lumpur: Ph.D Thesis. IIUM.

Zeitlin, Irving M. 1990. *Jesus and the Judaism of His Time*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

#### **d. Offline Journal Article**

Ungaran @ Rashid. 2019. Jesus (pbuh) as "son of God": A Biblical Study Based on the Jewish Scriptures and the Gospel of Matthew. *Al-Itqan*. IIUM Press, Vol 3, Issue No 2.