

The Qualifications of Jesus

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[0 : 00] Now let's come to God in prayer as we look to him to teach us from his word. Our dear God and Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to meet with your people, but most of all to meet with you, our God, our Saviour, our Lord.

And we ask that as we come now, you who gave us this wonderful word, precious as it is to us, that you by your spirit might teach us.

Our Father, we are slow to understand. We like to do things our way. We go astray very often. But we thank you that your word is our guide, is a lamb to our feet.

And we ask, O our God, that this might be so and be true for us this morning, so that as we understand your word, we may see before us your presence going before us, that we might follow you.

Our God, we have to confess that we do find it difficult to follow you very often. But we pray that as we leave this place this morning, having heard your word, that we may do so more closely and that we might follow you more dearly.

[1 : 28] And so as we come now, we ask you to bless your word to us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Now, if you were with us yesterday at the seminar on the incarnation of Jesus Christ, you will know that the teaching of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, that means Jesus Christ who is God the Son becoming man, becoming a human being like you and me, now you will know that this is an indispensable part of the teaching of the Bible and the Church down through the centuries.

Such is its importance that God had become man, that those who claim to be Christians but do not believe it or approve of it or if they deny it, have had their faith questioned by the Church.

Indeed, the Apostle John goes so far as to call such people who deny the incarnation the Antichrist in 1 John 4, verse 3 and again in 2 John 1, verse 7.

And you will agree that this is a very, very serious charge. Am I right? To say that somebody is the Antichrist. Now, why does the Bible take such a strong position on the doctrine of the incarnation, God become man?

Well, obviously because it's the truth. But how do we know for sure that it's the truth? Because it actually happened. But how do we know it actually happened? Because certain people claim to be eyewitnesses of the fact of Jesus' incarnation.

[3 : 10] Now, a good instance of this is found in 1 John 1, verses 1 to 3. The Apostle John writes this. And let me read it for you. 1 John 1, verses 1 to 3.

If you have your Bible, please refer to that. And John writes this. And he was one of the disciples of Jesus. He saw Jesus. He lived with him for three and a half years.

Now, this is what he wrote. He says, That which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.

That which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

So, because John the Apostle and his fellow Apostles have seen and heard and touched Jesus while he was here on earth, God manifested in the flesh.

[4 : 26] They knew for an absolute certainty that he was no phantom, that he was no apparition, no ghost, alright? Jesus was genuinely human, just like you and me.

That's the truth, and that's an undeniable fact of their experience. Now, in a sense, when we come to Luke chapter 3, as we, our text this morning is, well, Luke actually makes almost the same claim about the gospel he has written.

He begins in Luke chapter 1, verses 1 to 4, and let me read this to you as well. He says, So, what Luke claims is this, he says that whatever he has written in his gospel, and we are looking at part of it this morning, is a compilation of eyewitness accounts of Jesus Christ.

And he tells Teophilus, to whom he has addressed this gospel, that he has taken pains to provide an orderly account, alright?

What for? So that Teophilus will be certain, reassured of what he has been taught about Jesus Christ. Now, while we don't know who is Teophilus, we have reason to believe that he is a Christian, and that he himself had not been an eyewitness of Jesus Christ.

[6 : 20] Jesus Christ would have died by the time he became a Christian. And Luke has written this gospel to reassure him, Teophilus, that whatever he has learned about Jesus Christ, his Savior and his Lord through the apostles, is the truth and nothing but the truth.

And when we read the gospel of Luke, we must keep that purpose of Luke in mind. Whatever epistles in Jesus' life he has chosen to include inside his gospel, whatever Jesus had taught, which he included in his gospel, actually are eyewitness accounts of Jesus Christ.

And they have been included so that you and I, like Teophilus, we who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, will be reassured that what we read in the gospel is the real Jesus, not some other Jesus.

I hope you realize that there are people who claim to be Christians out there who will tell you about Jesus and sometimes you soon realize, hey, this Jesus they are talking about is not the Jesus I read in the gospels.

That was crucial in the first century AD. Reason because there were false teachers in the churches who promoted a different Jesus. It was there when the apostle John wrote his letters.

[7 : 46] That's why he calls these people false apostles, false teachers, and called them the antichrist. It was there in Corinth when Paul wrote 2 Corinthians.

He told them this in chapter 11 verse 4, or if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed. And as you and I know, we are not immune to that, are we?

The seminar yesterday highlighted people who claim to be Christians but who don't believe in the Jesus of the gospels. And so we do well to listen to Luke this morning.

So to our text, Luke chapter 3 verse 21 to chapter 4 verse 13. Now if you look at the text carefully, the one thing you will notice is the repetition of this particular phrase.

Son of God. That's a description of Jesus. It is there in chapter 3 verse 23 when God the Father called Jesus my beloved son.

[8 : 59] At his baptism, in chapter 3 verse 38, Luke ends Jesus' genealogy, surprisingly, with son of God.

Do you notice that? Then twice during Jesus' temptation by the devil, the devil challenges Jesus, if you are the son of God.

It's there in chapter 4 verse 3 and chapter 4 verse 9. So if nothing else, what Luke is keen to tell us in our text this morning is just this, Jesus is the son of God.

That this is his focus is evident by the fact that of the six occurrences of the phrase son of God in the whole gospel, four of them are found in our text this morning.

Now why is Luke so keen to tell us who Jesus is and why he insists that Jesus is the son of God?

Well, part of the reason is because he has already introduced Jesus as the son of God way back in chapter 1 verse 35.

[10 : 07] We are going to celebrate Christmas soon and when the angel Gabriel announced to marry the mother of Jesus about the birth of Jesus, this was what the angel Gabriel said to marry.

Therefore, the child to be born in chapter 1 verse 35 will be called wholly the son of God. Now in our text, Luke spells out what son of God means as Jesus begins his public ministry.

In chapter 3 verse 21 to verse 22, very short, Jesus is uniquely the son of God. In a way, no one else is. In chapter 3 verse 23 to verse 38, he is not only uniquely the son of God, he is genealogically the son of God.

In a way, none of his illustrious ancestors were. Finally, in chapter 4 verses 1 to 13, Jesus is demonstrably, he is demonstrated as the son of God as he overcomes the devil's temptation.

So if you want the sermons, points, it would be very simple. Jesus is uniquely the son of God. He is actually genealogically the son of God. And thirdly, Jesus is demonstrably the son of God.

[11 : 31] Now let's take each at a time. And we begin with chapter 3 verses 21 to 22. Unlike the parallel account in Matthew's gospel and also in Mark's gospel about Jesus' baptism, Luke doesn't mention anything about the conversation John the Baptist had with Jesus at the baptism.

He doesn't even mention John baptizing Jesus, which Mark and Matthew does. Rather, he focuses on two key elements which highlights Jesus' unique sonship, the descent of the Holy Spirit like a dove, we are told, upon Jesus at Jesus' baptism, and God's declaration from heaven that Jesus is his beloved son.

So those two elements are key to our understanding of Jesus as the son of God here. Luke is keen to highlight the unique relationship Jesus has with both the Holy Spirit and God the Father in heaven.

Now it has to be said that this is not the first time Luke mentions the role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life and ministry. Already in chapter 1 verse 35, we saw earlier on the angel Gabriel had pointed out to Mary, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, Mary, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. So what makes Jesus' conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary so very, very unique and special, unlike yours and mine, is just this.

[13 : 11] He was conceived of the Holy Spirit as the Apostle's Creed puts it. But how different is that from the other people we are told in Luke chapter 1 and Luke chapter 2 who were filled with the Holy Spirit?

Did you notice that in your reading? Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit in chapter 1 verse 41. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, who was filled with the Holy Spirit in chapter 1 verse 67. Simeon, who actually came to the temple and saw the baby Jesus after his circumcision, was filled with the Holy Spirit in chapter 2 verses 25 to 27. And how different is all that from John the Baptist whom we are told in Luke chapter 1 verse 15, will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb.

What's the difference between Jesus, having the Holy Spirit, and all these other people? Well, the answer actually is supplied by none other than John the Baptist himself.

In chapter 3 verse 16, he says, I baptize you with water, but he, that is Jesus, who is mightier than I, is coming, the straps of whose sandals are not worthy to untie, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

[14 : 38] So even though John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, John was very, very conscious that Jesus was of a different order from himself.

Not only was Jesus conceived by the Holy Spirit, he actually is the dispenser, the one who is going to bestow the Holy Spirit on everybody else.

Alright? Something which John the Baptist couldn't do. And what you might not have noticed is that time and again, Luke will remind us that Jesus was so Spirit-filled that no other people was like him. He will say so again in chapter 4 as Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Who led him there? The Holy Spirit.

And when Jesus began his ministry in the synagogue of his hometown in Nazareth, Jesus read from Isaiah chapter 61 verses 1 and 2 and claimed this for himself.

[15 : 46] Jesus said, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor and so on. So it's not just his relationship to the Holy Spirit that it is unique, alright?

Because Luke also highlights at Jesus' baptism that God spoke from heaven and declared, by the way, declared to Jesus directly.

He spoke to Jesus at Jesus' baptism. You are my beloved son. With you, I am very pleased. And so Jesus is related to God the Father as father and son and there is God's verdict of Jesus that he is well pleased with him.

Well pleased because in all those quiet years that Jesus lived in Nazareth until he started his public ministry. 30 years. That is what actually Luke tells us, alright?

He was 30 years old when he began his public ministry. For all those 30 years that he lived in Nazareth as a carpenter, from birth to boyhood to adulthood, Jesus never failed to please God in his life.

[17:04] He did what was pleasing to God. That is the meaning of God's verdict here. I am well pleased with you.

Furthermore, if these words of God the Father recall Psalm 2 verse 7 and Isaiah chapter 42 verse 1, as commentators claim, then God is saying no less that Jesus is also the promised Messiah and the promised servant of the Lord.

Now why do I say that? Just so you know, turn to Psalm 2. In Psalm 2, God depicts the nations of the world rebelling against him.

Notice who they were rebelling against. Not just against God. Verse 2, Psalm 2 verse 2, they were rebelling against his anointed, which literally means Christ, the Messiah.

Messiah. And look at what God says about his anointed in verse 7 of Psalm 2. You are my son, today I have forgotten you.

[18:20] So God's you are my beloved son actually recalls the Messiah that is promised by God way back in Psalm 2. But not only so, in Isaiah 42, we have actually the beginning of an extended treatment of the Messiah as the servant of the Lord.

And that theme runs right through from Isaiah 42 all the way to Isaiah 55. Isaiah 42 verse 1 says this, Behold my servant whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights, may I put it another way, with whom I am well pleased.

I have put my spirit upon him and he will bring forth justice to the nations. So what we have here is God himself employing language that recalls this Old Testament text.

And God was saying this Jesus who is my beloved son and in whom I am well pleased. He is the promised Messiah. He is the promised servant of the Lord.

Lord. And if Theophilus was at all acquainted with the Old Testament, he would know Luke is claiming that Jesus is the unique son of God, the one who will save his people from their sins as their Messiah and the one who will do so by serving them as their servant rather than being served.

[19:56] All right? And then think about Jesus' willingness forgiveness to be baptized. You know, that answers the point of what God is saying right here.

What was John's baptism? Can I ask? Well, according to chapter 3, verse 3, John's baptism is the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Why would Jesus undergo John's baptism? Given his perfect righteousness, given that God is well pleased with him, given the fact that he never ever sinned at all, given the fact therefore that there is no need for him to repent, no need for him to actually be forgiven, why undergo the baptism of John?

Well, it tells you that the readiness with which he underwent the baptism is because that is what God wills for him. and it marks him out as unique among mankind.

How? In his total obedience to his father, even though he didn't have to do it. But because as we read in Matthew's account of Jesus' baptism, he told John the Baptist, I know you're reluctant to baptize me because I don't need it, but I want you to do this to fulfill all righteousness.

[21:24] And what Jesus means is this, I want you to do this because this is what God intended me to undergo. So Jesus did it in order to obey God fully.

Something else about his baptism, in undergoing it, Jesus also identified himself with sinful humanity. Why do I say that?

Well, he became one with those who were baptized along with him. And all these people were baptized because they needed to repent, they were sinners, they needed forgiveness of sins. Jesus didn't need that, but Jesus identified with them. And not only so, we also told Jesus was praying after he was baptized.

You can imagine how much he squeezed into two verses, isn't it? By nature, does the Son of God need to pray, can I ask? Can I ask, does God pray?

[22:28] Isn't he the one to whom we all pray, rather than he pray? But Jesus prays here, doesn't he? Marking him out as one of us, like one of us, a human being who needs to pray.

You know, all that can be missed in our reading of the Gospels. As I said yesterday, the Gospels unapologetically portray Jesus as genuinely human, just like you and me, and that's what Luke reminds us here.

He was baptized because he wanted to identify with us as a human being, and he prayed. He's just like one of us. So here is the great paradox, or should I say the grand mystery of the person called Jesus, the Son of God.

At his baptism, he declared both his solidarity with us as human beings, that we and him are one, but also his distinction from us as seen by his unique relationship with the Holy Spirit and with God the Father, which you and I don't have.

And we, like Theophilus, will do well to remember that. We are not to dumb down this. We are not to trivialize the truth about Jesus as the Son of God who became human.

[23 : 52] No. We must hold this with our dear life. Jesus incarnate. God became man. All seen here as his baptism.

And just to get to the point of what Luke is saying, he goes on to provide us with Jesus genealogy. In chapter 3, verse 23 to verse 38. Why is the genealogy important?

Because it tells us he is human. But what about his genealogy? Now, if you were to compare it with the other genealogy in Matthew's gospel, you will notice some differences between Matthew's genealogy and Luke's genealogy about Jesus.

Differences which until today, scholars have not been able to resolve satisfactorily. Some people say Luke provides the lineage of Mary and Matthew provides the lineage of Joseph, his father.

Others say Matthew provides the legal line of Jesus' genealogy and Luke provides the actual physical line. Now, as I said, there is no satisfactory solution to this.

[25 : 06] What we do know is this. if you trace the names from Abraham to David in the genealogy, they are the same in both Matthew and Luke.

That's the interesting thing. There's a difference only in terms of two names being different, but in my estimation, the two persons are the same even though the names are different.

I would suggest this when you're reading Luke's genealogy. short-circuit the genealogy. What do I mean is this? Join verse 23 right away with verse 38.

You will see that Luke's point is simply the same one that he has made about Jesus at his baptism. The long list of almost unpronounceable names, I have to say credit to the sister who read it just now.

I was trying to practice this because I wasn't sure that I was reading it or not. Credit to her that she ran through it as if there wasn't any difficulty, but you know, when you think about it, that long list reveals just one simple truth, what Son of God actually means.

[26 : 27] Luke begins by telling us, first of all, and he's the only gospel writer who tells us this, that Jesus was 30 years old when he began his public ministry, right?

Similarly, Luke is the only one who tells us what happened to Jesus when he was 12 years old in Luke chapter 2. So as you can see, Luke is a very, very exact historian, isn't he?

Accurate. You can say the same about his mention of the Holy Spirit coming down in bodily form. You don't read that in the other gospels. He's the only one who mentions that.

Well, he wanted to be sure he got his facts right, didn't he say right at the beginning of his gospel.

And if Luke hadn't told us all of this, you and I would never have known how old Jesus was when he began his public ministry.

So we ought really to be thankful to Luke for telling us exactly how old Jesus was when he began his public ministry. Now, having started his list with Jesus' legal father, Joseph, he goes on to trace Jesus' genealogy first to David, very important, because that's something the angel Gabriel has spoken to Mary about in chapter 1 verse 32, where Mary was told, and the Lord will give to him, Jesus, the throne of his father David.

[27 : 52] David. That was why Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea, because Bethlehem was the city of David. So nothing is by chance.

All that happened at Christmas is not by chance, it's a fulfillment of God's plan, actually, for the Messiah. That wasn't all. Then Luke traces Jesus' ancestry to another key figure.

Who was that? Abraham. And so Jesus was a true Israelite, a true Jew, a fellow Jew among the Jews he lived with in Nazareth, where he grew up.

And so that confirms Jesus' solidarity with Jews of all ages. Now Matthew stops his genealogy with Abraham.

But Luke doesn't. does he? He takes us further back, all the way to Adam. Who is Adam? The first man God ever created.

[29 : 04] And thus, Luke is telling us Jesus is not merely one with the whole Jewish race, he is actually one with the whole human race as well.

So Jesus is indeed one with the rest of humanity. He belongs to the human race and to a particular nation and tribe called Israel, and even to an actual human family in an actual Galilean village called Nazareth.

Jesus. I hope you're getting the feel of what Luke is trying to do. To trace his genealogy, to locate where he actually resides and stays, and which family he belongs to, and what race Jesus is, and which nation he hails from.

Now, all these facts tell you, wouldn't they, that Jesus was no make-believe human being. No, no, no, no. All these details would be normally sufficient to prove that you and I are human beings as much as Jesus was.

Am I right? What do you ask people over the first time you meet someone you don't know, apart from the name? So where's your hometown?

[30 : 26] Correct? You want to know all these details about a person. Are you Hokkien? Are you Iban? Are you Bidayu? No, that's exactly what Luke is doing here, just telling us that Jesus is human, just like you and me, because he's got all these facts.

But then having traced Jesus' human ancestry, Luke again points out a paradox about this Jesus. For while Jesus is fully and truly human, he's at the same time different from all of us.

That's why he traces Jesus' ancestry not just to the son of Adam, but also the son of God. Now, of course, that reference there to the son of God is a reference to Adam being the son of God because he was the first human being ever created by God.

In that sense, Adam was the only person who is the true offspring of God, the creator. But the point of Luke is this, isn't it?

Why Adam is the son of God by virtue of his being made in the image of God? We are told it in Genesis chapter 2. Well, Jesus is the son of God because he actually is the image of God himself, not just made in the image of God.

[31 : 50] Or as Paul so emphatically puts it in Colossians chapter 1 verses 15 to 17. Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

The firstborn of all creation. By him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through Jesus and for Jesus.

And Jesus is before all things and in Jesus all things hold together. So now you can see, isn't it, that you just cannot avoid the point of Luke's genealogy of Jesus Christ here.

He's still reminding us of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Though Jesus is one with us in his humanity, yet he is distinct and different from us in that like Adam, he was the firstborn, not of all humanity alone, but actually he is the firstborn of all creation.

The first Adam was made in the image of God. The last Adam, as Paul calls Jesus, the last Adam, in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 45, you can see it there.

[33 : 13] Jesus is not so much created in the image of God, he is the image of God himself. So, same as us, but different, distinct from us.

That this is Luke's intention to highlight that we and Jesus are different, though same, comes out actually at Jesus' temptation.

Now, think about it, temptation. Who were the first human beings to be tempted? The first Adam, right?

So, it recalls the devil's temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and unfortunately, we are told they succumbed to the temptation. The first Adam failed to obey God.

Now, what about the last Adam, Jesus Christ? Well, as Luke is going to tell us here, where the first Adam failed, the last didn't, as can be seen by Jesus' triumphs over the devil here in chapter 4.

[34 : 23] Not to be overlooked as this, we already say that Jesus is one of us, all humanity. But Jesus' solidarity is not just with us, remember? In the genealogy we saw just now, his solidarity is also with his own people, the people of Israel.

And the mention of Jesus fasting for 40 days in the wilderness would recall the 40 years of his forefathers sojourned in the wilderness during the exodus, as they came out with Moses from Egypt.

And what was God's verdict of the conduct of the people of Israel during those 40 years in the wilderness? Well, you have to read Hebrews chapter 3, verses 7 to 19.

Let me tell you briefly what it really says about the people of Israel. This is God's verdict about the people of Israel. In Hebrews chapter 3, four words sum up their conduct. Rebellion, sinned, disobedient, failed. If you were in school and you read all this in your report card, not very nice, isn't it?

[35 : 43] Unbelief. What about Jesus, the new Israel? Where Israel failed, Jesus triumphed. By the way, it is no mere coincidence that in response to the devil's temptations, Jesus actually cited from the book of Deuteronomy, chapters 6 and 8, only those two chapters.

And in those two chapters, God not only recalled the failure of his people to obey him during the time of the Exodus, those 40 years, he recalled them to a fresh commitment to obey him as they were being prepared to enter the promised land.

Now, if you know your Old Testament, you will know that Deuteronomy chapter 6 is where the Shema is recorded. You know the Shema?

Here, O Israel, the Lord your God is one, and so on, and so on, and so on. Here is God recalling the failures of these people, but at the same time, recalling them to a fresh commitment to him.

Now, Luke's account of Jesus' temptation is not, as we often suppose, primarily a lesson on how you and I should resist the devil's temptation. I'm not saying we can't learn from him, we can, but within its context, Luke has recorded this to show Teophilus, and therefore to show you and me, that number one, Jesus was tempted like we are, as a human being, but number two, that where Adam and you and I and Israel failed, Jesus didn't fail.

[37 : 28] And together, these two facts demonstrate to us who Jesus really is as the Son of God. Alright? I'm sorry. That shouldn't be on.

Sorry. So, what we have shown here is this is who the Son of God is. Incidentally, temptation would show us that the challenge that the devil threw at Jesus was precisely there.

Twice, he said to Jesus, if you are the Son of God, didn't he? Verse 3 and verse 9. So, Jesus, you are the Son of God. Prove it now.

That's what he said. Prove it. Mind you, Jesus could easily have acquiesced to his request. Couldn't he? Unlike Adam and the Israelites, who had no inherent power in themselves to turn stone into bread.

I'm sure you couldn't do that, just like me. I can't do it. But don't forget, as the Son of God, Jesus had inherent power to do it. And he was hungry, remember?

[38 : 43] You would be if you were a human being having fasted for 40 days. But that's precisely the temptation. The temptation is just because he's human and therefore hungry, and he had the power to actually turn stone into bread, to soothe his hunger.

Question, should I do it? Must I do it? Do I have to do it just to prove to the devil that I am the Son of God?

But then, if I actually do it, what am I doing? Now, Jesus would have been thinking like this. Am I actually obeying God in doing it, or am I actually obeying the devil?

If I acquiesce to the devil's demand, isn't it that I'm actually obeying the devil? Isn't it that I'm pleasing the devil? Therefore, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone.

I hope you can see the temptation for Jesus here. Again, Jesus has come to claim David's throne, as we said earlier on, to reign over Israel, to establish an everlasting kingdom.

[40 : 08] Now, Luke chapter 1, verse 32 to verse 33 reminds us, this is what Gabriel said to Mary about Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the Mosai, and the Lord God will give to him what?

The throne of his father David and more, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. If so, Jesus, why don't you claim it now?

you are the son of God. I have all the kingdoms in my hands, the devil say. It can be yours in no time.

All you've got to do, Jesus, just worship me, and I will give all this to you. Mind you, the devil is not making an empty claim here. When he says, all his authority and glory have been delivered to me, in verse 6, didn't Jesus himself refer to the devil as the ruler of this world.

In John chapter, let me just check, chapter 12, verse 31, if you want it, chapter 14, verse 30, chapter 16, verse 11.

[41 : 21] Three times in the gospel of John, he calls the devil the ruler of this world. In 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 4, Paul calls him the devil, the God of this world.

In Revelation chapter 13, verse 4, the dragon, meaning the devil, gave his authority to the beast that arose from the sea. And so, not only has he got authority, he can actually pass on the authority, delegate it to somebody else.

So, in a real sense, the devil had a great degree of authority and could give it to others. But note that even he knows the devil, that whatever authority he has actually is delivered to him.

You know that the devil is the father of lies. I find it astonishing, for once he's telling the truth. It is delivered to me, he says.

Alright? And that's what we know, isn't it, from the book of Job. Did you remember how the devil came and said, well, if you let me do to Job what I want to do, you will know that Job doesn't trust you as much as he does.

[42 : 38] He told God. And God told him, okay, you try Job. Test him out. But, God says, within these limits, no more.

So much, no more. So he tells you the devil has authority, but only as much as God permits him to have. No more. And that is where the danger actually is for Jesus in this temptation.

Being the son of God, and therefore God himself, he actually has all authority, doesn't he? He even has authority over the devil. After all, he's God.

He, as a human being, however, has not yet attained all authority. Not yet, till he has died and risen from the dead. That is what the rest of the gospel of Luke will tell us.

Will Jesus exercise his divine authority here, short circuit the process that God wants him to go through, in order to attain his human authority?

[43 : 44] He has divine authority. He has the right to exercise it, as we used to do. But would he short circuit it in order that he might attain human authority? Will he do so at the expense of his divine authority?

Did the devil tell him, if you worship me, all this can be yours? So much more really is at stake here for Jesus. If Jesus gave in to this temptation of the devil, his divine authority as a son of God actually would be called into question.

How? how can he give his divine authority and let it be way below the devil? It would mean abdicating his divine authority, right?

And he wouldn't be God then if he abdicated it. Instead, he would be Satan's lucky, you know the name, lucky? He would be Satan's pawn, he would be Satan's tool.

And who would actually be God if he gave in? Satan himself. Thus, Jesus says, it is returned, you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.

[45 : 05] I trust you are able to see how these temptations are being worked out in Jesus' life here. The third and final temptation. Sensing how Jesus has responded in each temptation, in the first two, with the Bible.

The devil decided to take a leaf out of Jesus' playbook in the third temptation. In the hope that since Jesus always wants to obey the Bible, well, what does he do?

He tells Jesus this, doesn't he, in the third temptation. Doesn't Psalm 91, verse 11 and verse 12, teach you, Jesus, for he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

On their hands they will bear you up unless you strike your foot against a stone. Jesus, since your only desire is to obey God's word, well, here is God's word, do what it says, jump, and God will protect you.

Mind you, this is more subtle than we think. For heaven, we know of times when we have actually been challenged by a fellow Christian to trust God's word. You might be going through a difficulty, you might be having alternatives that he had to decide upon, you don't know which one to go to, and sometimes your Christian friends tell you, hey, step up in faith, step up in faith, trust God.

[46 : 37] And when you don't do that, you feel a bit guilty, don't you? And when you can't do it, you feel even worse because maybe I don't have faith. You know, the devil's ploy is very simple.

He actually attracted Jesus with this ploy that as the son of God, why would God the father want you to actually suffer at the end of the day?

You jump down, God the father would have to protect you because you have got the son. A father will protect his son no matter what. Jesus saw through this, recognizing that this is not a challenge to trust God so much as to tempt God.

The difference. This is to force God's hand to act on his behalf. If Jesus had jumped off the temple, he would be forcing God into a situation where God had no choice but to act to avert a disaster that

would happen to his dear son.

That would happen to reverse the role of man and God. It would mean God the son as a human being forcing the hand of God the father to act.

[48 : 00] In which case, how can God be God? How can he be God when he can be manipulated by God the son who is a human being? And how can God the son be the son if he can force the hand of his father?

And that's why Jesus replied to the devil is, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test. I hope you can see now the temptation was very real for Jesus in each of these.

Largely because he was God the son who had all divine authority, who could do anything, nothing is impossible with God, and yet he chose not to act on the devil's recommendations.

As we close, two truths about Jesus as a son of God have become plain to us. Number one, the son of God as employed by Luke here, doesn't only refer to Jesus deity, that he is God himself. it does, and we are right to suppose that it does, but as Luke has so clearly shown us here this morning, the son of God also embraces Jesus' humanity.

[49 : 19] That is obvious by Jesus undergoing water baptism as everyone else did, even though he didn't have to. That is obvious by his genealogy. Last but not least, by the fact that he could be tempted by the devil, I was tempted by the devil.

In every instance here, Jesus' humanity is plainly displayed to us. Indeed, my impression is that his humanity is more on display here in our text than his deity, really.

And yet his deity is never ever far from Luke's account. It's there in God's declaration to Jesus at his baptism. Jesus' name, this is my beloved son.

Is there even in the very human genealogy because Jesus is like Adam, the son of Adam, son of God? Is there even in Jesus' temptation as he receives the devil's attempt to lure him to exercise his powers as the son of God, if you are the son of God?

God, if the rest of the New Testament insists upon the two natures of Christ in the one person, that is both divine and so human, if the early church fathers and the church down through the centuries should follow suit as the New Testament, it is only because that is the truth about our Lord Jesus Christ.

[50 : 49] just because you and I can't fathom its mystery, just because you and I cannot explain it, how can it be both God and man?

How can it be God come in the flesh? How can it be God become man? Just because we can't explain all of that doesn't make it untrue.

Can I emphasize that? In the face of such a mystery, you and I should not only humbly believe it, but actually embrace it because it is God's way of salvation for you and me.

There is no other way by which God will save you and me except through God the Son becoming man. There can be no salvation for sinners in the like of you and me, without Jesus becoming man so that he can die and rise from the dead and therefore give you the life you and I need.

That's one. Secondly, Luke points out that being the Son of God, being the Son of God, Jesus' supreme and highest duty really is to obey God the Father unreservedly.

[52 : 14] That means undergoing John's baptism, you see, because that's the will of the Father. He didn't have to, but he did it to fulfill all righteousness, he says. That also means that Jesus must be born as a human being and live among us as a fellow human being, enduring all that means as a human being, even though he need not have to do it, but he did.

It also means being tempted like we are and being willing to subject himself to God's word and not actually exercising his divine prerogative to overcome the temptations that he faced.

As Luke would tell us in the rest of his gospel, that wasn't all Jesus did in obedience to his Father. His final act of obedience is seen in his willingness to go to the cross so that by this one act of what we call perfect obedience, you and I may be saved as sinners.

Or as Jesus himself put it, isn't it? As he came nearer and nearer to his death, in Luke chapter 22 verse 42, he said this to his Father, Father, if you are willing, remove this cup of suffering from me, nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

Do you see what Jesus is doing there? That was just like him, you know, as the Son of God, in obedience to God the Father.

[54 : 06] If there's one characteristic of Jesus which Luke emphasizes about the Son of God, it would be this. perfect, unflinching, unwavering obedience to God the Father, nothing and no one

could deflect Jesus from that.

Who, though he was in the form of God, we read in Philippians chapter 2, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Although he was a son, we read in Hebrews chapter 5, verses 8 and 9, he learned obedience to what he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

Let us ever be thankful that our Lord Jesus Christ came 2,000 years ago at that first Christmas as a baby born in Bethlehem.

The Son of God is not just about his deity, the Son of God is also about his humanity, his willingness to submit himself to the Father to become like us in order that he might serve us and die on our behalf.

[55 : 45] May the Lord bless that to you. Let's pray together. Our dear Heavenly Father, as we come to you, we thank you again for the wonderful good news that we hear Christmas after Christmas.

Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, who came into our world in order that his name, Jesus, will be fulfilled. He will save his people from their sins.

We thank you that he is Emmanuel, reminding us that in order to be God with us, he literally came among us and lived among us and showed us what it is to have God in our company.

We thank you, therefore, God, for our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for his willing submission to his Father. May you help us to follow in his footsteps, that we too might willingly submit ourselves to you and give to you all the glory that you deserve.

May our lives reflect that perfect obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ. we thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.