

# **The Believers (at LSU)**

## **Campus Meeting**

**September 3, 2009**

### **Crucial Points of the Truth in Romans**

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#### **The Designation of Jesus Christ to be the Son of God—Romans 1: 3—4**

The gospel of God is the subject of the book of Romans (1:1). Christians are accustomed to saying that there are four gospels, the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. However, Paul also refers to his epistle to the Romans as a gospel. The gospel in the first four books of the New Testament concerns Christ in the flesh as He lived among His disciples before His death and resurrection. After His incarnation and before His death and resurrection, He was among His disciples, but not yet in them. The gospel in Romans concerns Christ as the Spirit, not Christ in the flesh. In Romans 8 we see that the Spirit of life who indwells us is simply Christ Himself. Christ is in us. The Christ in the four gospels was among the disciples; the Christ in Romans is within us. The Christ in the four gospels is the Christ after incarnation and before death and resurrection. As such, He is a Christ outside of us. The Christ in Romans is the Christ after His resurrection. As such, He is the Christ within us. This is something deeper and more subjective than the Christ in the gospels. Keep this one point in mind: that the gospel in Romans concerns Christ as the Spirit in us after His resurrection.

If we only have the gospel concerning Christ as in the first four books of the New Testament, our gospel is too objective. We need the fifth gospel, the book of Romans, to reveal the subjective gospel of Christ. Our Christ is not merely the Christ in the flesh after incarnation and before resurrection, the Christ who was among His disciples. Our Christ is higher and more subjective. He is the Spirit of life within us. He is such a subjective One. Though John chapters 14 and 15 revealed that Christ will be in His believers, yet that was not fulfilled before His resurrection. The book of Romans is the gospel of Christ after His resurrection, showing also that He is now the subjective Savior in His believers. So, this gospel is deeper and more subjective.

#### **I. PROMISED IN THE SCRIPTURES**

This gospel was promised by God through the prophets in the Scriptures. This means that the gospel of God was not an accident; it was planned and prepared by God. The Bible shows us that this gospel was planned by God in eternity past. Before the foundation of the world, God planned to have this gospel. So, numerous times in the Holy Scriptures, from Genesis through Malachi, God spoke in promise through the prophets regarding the gospel of God.

## **II. CONCERNING CHRIST**

This gospel of God concerns a Person, Christ. Of course, forgiveness, salvation, etc. are included in the gospel, but they are not the central point. The gospel of God concerns the Person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. This wonderful Person has two natures—the divine nature and the human nature, divinity and humanity.

### **A. Come Out of the Seed of David**

Paul mentions Christ's humanity first, not His divinity, saying that He was born out of the seed of David according to the flesh (1:3). This is His human nature, His humanity.

### **B. Designated the Son of God out of Resurrection**

Then Paul says that He was “designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead” (1:4). This is a clear reference to Christ's divinity. Why is His humanity mentioned first and His divinity last?

Paul mentions Christ's humanity first because he maintains the sequence of Christ's process. Firstly, Christ passed through the process of incarnation to become flesh. Then He passed through the process of death and resurrection. By means of the second step of His process He became the Son of God out of resurrection. Christ has been processed in two steps: the first step—incarnation; the second step—death and resurrection. By these two steps Christ became two different things. He became flesh by incarnation and He became the Son of God through death and resurrection. His first step brought God into humanity. His second step brought man into divinity. Before His incarnation, Christ, as a divine Person, already was the Son of God (John 1:18). He was the Son of God before His incarnation, and even Romans 8:3 says, “God sent His Son.” Since Christ already was the Son of God before the incarnation, why did He need to be designated the Son of God out of resurrection? Because by incarnation He had put on an element, the flesh, the human nature, that had nothing to do with divinity. As a divine Person Christ was the Son of God before His incarnation, but that part of Him which was Jesus with the flesh, the human nature, born of Mary, was not the Son of God. That part of Him was human. By His resurrection Christ has sanctified and uplifted that part of His human nature, His humanity, and He was designated out of this resurrection as the Son of God with this human nature. So, in this sense, the Bible says that He was begotten the Son of God in His resurrection (Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5).

Let us consider the example of a small carnation seed. When this seed is sown into the earth, it grows and blossoms, a process which we may label its designation. When we behold a little carnation seed before it is sown into the ground, we may be unable to determine what kind of seed it is. However, once it has been sown, has grown, and has blossomed, it is designated. Its blossom is its designation. Therefore, everyone can say, “This is a carnation.” Both the seed and the blossom are the carnation, but the blossom is very different in form from the seed. If the seed should remain as a seed without

blossoming, it is difficult for most people to realize that it is a carnation. But after it has grown and blossomed, it is designated as a carnation for all to see.

When Christ was in the flesh during His 33½ years on the earth, He was exactly like the carnation seed. Although the Son of God was in Him, no one could recognize this easily. By being sown into death and growing up in resurrection, He blossomed. By this process He was designated the Son of God, and by this process He uplifted the flesh, the human nature. He did not put off the flesh, He did not put off humanity. He sanctified it, uplifted it and transformed it, and had Himself designated with this transformed humanity the Son of God with the divine power. When He was the Son of God before His incarnation, He had no human nature. After His resurrection He is the Son of God with humanity uplifted, sanctified, and transformed out of resurrection. He is now both of humanity and divinity. He is both the seed of David and the Son of God. He is a wonderful Person!

Christ became flesh to accomplish the work of redemption. Redemption requires blood. It is certain that divinity has no blood; only humanity has blood. Nevertheless, redemption demands blood, for without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Heb. 9:22). Thus, Christ became flesh for the work of redemption. Redemption, however, is not God's goal. Redemption opens the way for life to be given. In the Gospel of John, Christ was first introduced as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). That was for redemption. Following this, John presents Him with the Dove who gives life (John 1:32-33). Firstly, Christ accomplished redemption for us; then He became our life. Christ became flesh to accomplish the work of redemption for us, and He was designated the Son of God out of resurrection that He may impart Himself to us as our life. The first step of His process was for redemption, and the second step was for imparting life. Now we have the resurrected Christ within us as our life. The resurrected Christ as the Son of God is life to us. Whoever has the Son of God has life (1 John 5:12).

The first section of the book of Romans deals with redemption accomplished by Christ in the flesh. Romans 8:3 says that God sent His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and condemned sin in the flesh. The second part of Romans deals with the imparting of life. Romans first reveals Christ as the Redeemer in the flesh and then reveals Him as the life-giving Spirit. In Romans 8:2 we find the term "the Spirit of life." This is the indwelling Spirit. The indwelling Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ is actually Christ Himself within us (8:9-10).

Why does the book of Romans open the way it does? Every book of the Bible opens in a particular way, each one different from the others. Paul opens the book of Romans in the way he does because Romans has a goal, as seen in chapter 8, verses 29 and 30. This goal is to produce many sons of God. This goal of producing the many sons of God requires redemption, the imparting of life, and the living by this life. As fallen men and as sinners, we need redemption, we need the divine life, and we need to live by the divine life that we may be regenerated, transformed, and fully glorified as the sons of God. Eventually, we all shall be the sons of God in full.

God had only one Son, His only begotten Son. However, God was not satisfied to have just one Son. He wanted many sons to be brought into glory. Therefore, God used His only begotten Son as a model, as a pattern, to produce many sons. Do you realize that Christ has passed through the process to be designated the Son of God and that we also are passing through the same process to be designated the sons of God? Originally, Christ was the only Son of God. At a certain time, this Son of God came into the flesh by the name of Jesus. The Son of God in the flesh was named Jesus. After 33½ years, Jesus was designated out of resurrection to be the Son of God. By this time, God had a Son with both divinity and humanity. Before His incarnation God's Son only possessed divinity; after His resurrection this Son of God had both divinity and humanity. Hallelujah! Now humanity has a part in God's Son. The Son of God today has both humanity and divinity.

What about us? We were born the sons of man, but we have been reborn the sons of God. Whether we are male or female, we are all sons of God. In a sense, God has no daughters. Although the Lord Jesus has many brothers, He has no sisters. In this sense, every sister is a brother. We are all brothers and we are all sons of God. We are sons of God because the Spirit of the Son of God has come into us (Gal. 4:6). Just as the Son of God came into the flesh by incarnation, so now the Spirit of the Son of God has come into so many of us who are flesh. Therefore, in a sense, each one of us is the same as Jesus. Jesus was a man in the flesh with the Son of God in Him. We also are men of flesh with the Son of God in us. Are you not a man of flesh with the Son of God in you? Certainly you are. But we should not remain as we are, should we? We are waiting to be designated. Oh, this man of flesh is going to be designated by sanctification, transformation, and glorification. Hallelujah! This man of flesh with the Son of God in him is under the process of sanctification, transformation, and glorification. The time will come when we will all declare, "We are designated to be sons of God out of resurrection!" If you tell the people in the street that you are the son of God, they will think you are crazy. Remember how they treated Jesus when He confessed that He was the Son of God: they put Him to death. But by death and resurrection He was designated as the Son of God. After His resurrection, it was needless for Jesus to claim to be the Son of God, since He had been designated. Today if we tell people that we are the sons of God, they will think we are mentally disturbed. Nevertheless, the day is coming—the book of Romans refers to this day as the revelation or the manifestation of the glory of the sons of God—in which we will be designated in glory as the sons of God. There will be no need for us to make a declaration. Spontaneously, we will be designated as sons of God.

Romans 1:3-4 give us Jesus as the prototype. In Romans 8:29-30 we have the many sons as the mass production. In this message we are considering the prototype. With the prototype there is the Spirit of holiness, the flesh, and the designation as the Son of God. Praise the Lord! We also have the Spirit of holiness within, the human flesh without, and we shall be designated in full as sons of God. (*Life Study of Romans*, Chapter 2, Living Stream Ministry, Anaheim, California)