

What You Confess

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After Philip “preached Jesus” to the eunuch, the Ethiopian was ready to obey and asked what he needed to do. The preacher’s answer was simple, “If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God’” (Acts 8:37).

Have you ever wondered why he said it that way? Why did he have to believe that with all of his heart? Why not “I believe that Jesus died for my sins.” Or “I believe that Jesus is the hope of the world.”

We understand the importance of confession, being essential for salvation (Rom. 10:10). But why this confession? And why do we ask those who are about to be baptized, “Do believe with all your heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?”

Just as in Hebrew and Greek, confession is used in two ways in English. One is confession of sin: “to acknowledge or to declare.” We confess our sins to God (1 Jn. 1:9) and our faults to one another (Jam. 5:16). But we also confess our faith; we “speak the same thing.” At the baptism and the transfiguration of Jesus, God said, “This is My beloved Son.” We are saying the same thing.

What do you confess about Jesus when you confess Him as the Son of God?

He is the Messiah of the Old Testament. The eunuch was reading from Isaiah 53. At first, he didn’t know who Isaiah was writing about. Who is this sheep led to slaughter, this lamb silent before His shearers? Messiah is Hebrew; Christ is Greek. They both mean “anointed one.” In Luke’s account of the transfiguration, the voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him” (Luke 9:38)!

When you confess Jesus as the Son of God, you are confessing your belief that the Bible is the inspired word of God. All of it! If Jesus is not the Messiah, we are still looking for Him. We are still under the Old Testament. If He is the Messiah, He is in agreement with what the prophets predicted about Him. As Philip confessed, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote” (John 1:45).

He is the Son of Man who lived and died. Why is Jesus’ genealogy in two gospels? Because He was born. He was the son of David, the son of Abraham, the son of Adam. He was the son of Joseph and Mary. The King of Kings was a baby boy who put on flesh. He could be touched and beheld, seen and heard. But that also means He had blood to be shed.

When you confess Jesus as the Son of God, you are saying that He lived and died for

you. He who was tempted in all things like we are, but without sin, was put to death for our sins. He who put on flesh and blood, felt the pains of nails piercing his flesh and shed His blood for the ransom of many. The Son who cried, “Abba, Father” also said, “Father forgive them.”

He is God Almighty to be obeyed. The opposite extreme is to say that Jesus was JUST a man. But the Scriptures do not allow that. Nicodemus confessed, “no one can do these signs unless God is with him” (Jn. 3:2). Jesus said things only God could say: “I AM”. He did things only God could do: “your sins are forgiven.” You don’t confess that He was the Son of Joseph, or Abraham, or David, though He was all of those. You confess Him as the Son of God, “the only begotten God” (Jn. 1:18).

When you confess Jesus as the Son of God, you confess His authority as the risen Lord. That was the conclusion Peter reached at the end of His sermon on Pentecost. “God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36). The thief on the cross is often used as an example of why you don’t have to be baptized to be saved. If he is the standard for salvation, you don’t have to believe or confess either. “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved” (Rom. 10:9). Thomas could reach no other conclusion, seeing the evidence of the resurrection: “my Lord and my God” (Jn. 20:28).

Confession is not something you do once before you are baptized. It is a way of life. You “hold fast” your confession “without wavering” (Heb. 4:14, 10:23). But you do so with the promise of Jesus that He will confess you before His Father’s throne in heaven (Matt. 10:32-33). On that day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess.