

SHORT STUDIES in
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

THE SON OF GOD **AND THE NEW CREATION**

GRAEME GOLDSWORTHY

EDITED BY DANE C. ORTLUND
AND MILES V. VAN PELT

“At last, biblical theology made accessible to the wider church! Goldsworthy gets this much-needed new series of mercifully shorter books on biblical theology off to a wonderful start with an instructive and edifying exploration of the Son of God through the Scriptures. This book cannot but produce greater love of the Bible, greater worship of the Son, and greater anticipation of the new creation.”

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“Goldsworthy has provided serious Bible students an excellent treatment of why and how God the Son took on flesh to save the children of God for the kingdom of God. Linking New Testament themes to their Old Testament sources, Goldsworthy demonstrates the importance of the unity of the Bible, union with Christ, and hope based in God’s coming kingdom. This is a solid beginning to an important series.”

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“A thought-provoking, careful, and engaging study of an important, and often misunderstood, notion. A great resource for further thinking!”

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“The resurgence of interest in biblical theology owes much, perhaps most, to Graeme Goldsworthy. Who better, then, to inaugurate Crossway’s Short Studies in Biblical Theology? And there is no better way for such a series to start than with the Son of God, in whom all the promises are yes and amen.”

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“Goldsworthy writes with a clarity that is possible only for someone who has reflected deeply on the issues and is a master of his subject. This is not just a fine study of a biblical theme, but an excellent example of sound biblical-theological method. Don’t miss the last few pages, which show just how pastorally significant this book is.”

Barry G. Webb, Senior Research Fellow Emeritus in Old Testament, Moore Theological College

“There are many rich and vibrant themes that course throughout the Bible, and Goldsworthy has traced the idea of the Son of God with clarity, precision, and discernment. The Scriptures are massive, but with this little book we have a clear line of sight to learn more about the significance of this idea, whether as sons of God or as we contemplate the glory of the one and only Son of God, Jesus Christ. Anyone can profit from reading this study from one of today’s insightful biblical theologians.”

J. V. Fesko, Academic Dean and Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology, Westminster Seminary California

“In this worshipful book, Goldsworthy focuses on the incarnate Son of God as the climax of redemptive history and considers how his role relates to his also being God the Son as part of the Trinity. This book is for all who treasure Jesus and want to understand better how the whole Bible testifies about him. I delightfully recommend this book.”

Jason S. DeRouchie, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Bethlehem College and Seminary

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DANE C. ORTLUND AND MILES V. VAN PELT,
SERIES EDITORS

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To my grandchildren:

Jake Goldsworthy

Ethan Goldsworthy

Keira Goldsworthy

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SERIES PREFACE

Most of us tend to approach the Bible early on in our Christian lives as a vast, cavernous, and largely impenetrable book. We read the text piecemeal, finding golden nuggets of inspiration here and there, but remain unable to plug any given text meaningfully into the overarching storyline. Yet one of the great advances in evangelical biblical scholarship over the past few generations has been the recovery of biblical theology—that is, a renewed appreciation for the Bible as a theologically unified, historically rooted, progressively unfolding, and ultimately Christ-centered narrative of God’s covenantal work in our world to redeem sinful humanity.

This renaissance of biblical theology is a blessing, yet little of it has been made available to the general Christian population. The purpose of *Short Studies in Biblical Theology* is to connect the resurgence of biblical theology at the academic level with everyday believers. Each volume is written by a capable scholar or churchman who is consciously writing in a way that requires no prerequisite theological training of the reader. Instead, any thoughtful Christian disciple can track with and benefit from these books.

Each volume in this series takes a whole-Bible theme and traces it through Scripture. In this way readers not only learn

about a given theme but also are given a model for how to read the Bible as a coherent whole.

We are launching this series because we love the Bible, we love the church, and we long for the renewal of biblical theology in the academy to enliven the hearts and minds of Christ's disciples all around the world. As editors, we have found few discoveries more thrilling in life than that of seeing the whole Bible as a unified story of God's gracious acts of redemption, and indeed of seeing the whole Bible as ultimately about Jesus, as he himself testified (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).

The ultimate goal of *Short Studies in Biblical Theology* is to magnify the Savior and to build up his church—magnifying the Savior through showing how the whole Bible points to him and his gracious rescue of helpless sinners; and building up the church by strengthening believers in their grasp of these life-giving truths.

Dane C. Ortlund and Miles V. Van Pelt

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this study of *The Son of God and the New Creation*. In the pages that follow we will journey through the whole Bible to see how the theme of “Son of God” develops from Genesis to Revelation and also how Jesus as God’s Son launches the new creation that we all deeply long for—and, by grace, can be part of here and now.

I consider it a great privilege to contribute the first in Crossway’s new series Short Studies in Biblical Theology. The discipline of biblical theology has been a passion of mine since I was introduced to the concept during my initial theological training at Moore College in the mid-1950s. I have preached it, taught it, and written about it for over fifty years. And I find, now as ever, that I continually discover new and exciting insights and ideas relating to the great overall plan of God for salvation revealed in Scripture. The Bible embraces a magnificent unity of God’s revelation. But it is also complex and diverse with many important ideas and themes running through the single storyline from creation to new creation.

The unity of the Bible means that all parts or texts relate to all other parts. Biblical theology is the way we investigate these internal relationships within the “big picture.” At the heart of

this diversity is the great unifying factor of the person of Jesus Christ himself.

As a student, and in my early days of teaching, I was introduced to significant works in biblical theology by Geerhardus Vos, Edmund Clowney, John Bright, Oscar Cullmann, C. H. Dodd, and many others. It did not take long for me to realize the importance of having a grasp of the big picture of biblical revelation. The more I got into this study, the more I perceived how little it was taught or understood in the churches. I found it hard to understand the neglect of this important subject. I became convinced that biblical theology should be taught not only in the seminary but also in the local church, to equip all Christians to read and understand the Bible on the Bible's own terms. I was also convinced that a sound biblical theology should inform the way we teach our children to know and understand the message of salvation in the Bible.

I am confident that *Short Studies in Biblical Theology* will make a valuable contribution to the formation of Christ-centered biblical interpretation on the part of those who may not have had the benefit of formal theological training. But I have no wish to exclude those who have been to seminary! Biblical theology is really only a formal title for what should be, for all Christians, a normal approach to the Scriptures that is informed by the nature of the Bible itself. Sunday school and discipleship curricula should be developed with the goal of instructing Christians of any age in the way the entire progressive revelation of the Bible testifies to Christ and his kingdom.

This series will, I trust, make an important contribution to the nontechnical literature of biblical theology. There are many books written by academic theologians for other academic theologians. And that is as it should be. But I believe there is a big gap between what is written for academic discussion and

what is written for the edification of ordinary Christians. I am confident that this series can address that gap with sound biblical studies on important themes. If the Bible is, as we claim, a grand unity governed by the oversight of the Holy Spirit, then no concept or theme stands alone. Evangelical and Reformed biblical theology proceeds on the conviction that all parts of the Bible have an organic relationship to all other parts. It also asserts that all parts testify ultimately to Christ and the gracious salvation he brings.

I am grateful to Crossway for the opportunity to engage in this study of the theme “the Son of God.” I am indebted to the editors, Dr. Dane Ortlund and Dr. Miles Van Pelt, for their careful vetting of the manuscript and many helpful suggestions. I have dissented from some of their suggestions, and, therefore, I must bear the responsibility for any blemishes in the finished product. If I ask readers occasionally to move outside their comfort zones, I hope they will appreciate why I do so. When I consider it necessary, I occasionally go into areas of systematic theology and the history of doctrine. But this is all for the goal of building up my fellow believers in the truths of the gospel.

I know there are many others behind the scenes at Crossway who have worked hard to bring this volume to light, and to them I am most grateful. Also, in my retirement I continue to have the loving support of Miriam, my wife of fifty years, who quietly sees to my needs and has always supported my ministry. To her I am most indebted.

But my greatest debt is to almighty God, who called me in my youth, lovingly made me his own, and gave me this ministry of biblical theology. At least half of my working life has been within the context of local churches. There I have been concerned for the teaching of all ages, especially that of

children and younger Christians. I dedicate this volume to my grandchildren, Jake Goldsworthy, Ethan Goldsworthy, and Keira Goldsworthy, with the prayer that they will grow to be ever more confident and competent in their reading and applying the biblical message, and that they will always rejoice in the gospel of our salvation.

THEMATIC STUDIES

A Biblical-Theological Approach

The Bible begins in Genesis 1 and 2 with creation and ends in Revelation 21 and 22 with the new creation. That is the simple and direct way of describing the two ends of the biblical story. Between these “bookends,” in the story from Genesis 3 through to Revelation 20, we have the account of the fall of mankind, the consequent corruption of the universe, and the gracious work of God to redeem the situation.

Alpha and Omega: Christ and Creation

At the heart of this redemptive history is the towering figure of Jesus and his saving work through his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. It is remarkable that one of the last words from the ascended Jesus himself is this self-description:

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star. (Rev. 22:16)

The testimony for the churches in these last days concerns Jesus as the Son of David. Why? After all, Scripture also testifies to the fact that Jesus our Savior is God from all eternity, the second person of the Trinity. Why, then, does Jesus focus on his human lineage as one of his last words in the great narrative of salvation?

A little before this, in Revelation 22:13, he has taken to himself the title of “Alpha and Omega,” previously applied to God in Revelation 1:8 and 21:6. Clearly, these two perspectives mean that we cannot avoid the fact that Jesus is true man *and* true God. Nor can we avoid the fact that we can never separate these two realities: Jesus goes on being identified as the God-man right through the redemptive story and into its eternal conclusion. In this study we will see this truth as it is revealed in the progress of the story from creation to new creation. At the heart of this story is Jesus, who is called the “Son of God.” In this study we shall see specifically how the Son of God is *the author and mediator of a new creation*.

There is a tendency among evangelical Christians to understand new creation in terms of individual regeneration, or new birth, as a purely personal experience relating to our conversion to Christ.¹ If the broader new creation is thought of at all, it is often as something quite separated from our new birth. We think of new birth as a present reality and new creation as a future one. This separation is, I believe, a mistake. We may distinguish the two events, but we should not separate them. This, I trust, will become clearer as we pursue our study of “son of God.”

Words and Meanings

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). Peter’s confession received commendation from Jesus as hav-

¹2 Cor. 5:17, e.g.—“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation”—is often understood to be referring to the individual becoming a new creation rather than to an individual being swept up into the broader new creation Christ brings. We will return to the text in chapter 4.

ing been revealed to him by “my Father who is in heaven” (v. 17).

Many Christians have formed some ideas about the meaning of the title “Christ.” It is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word for “messiah,”² yet for many people it is just a label. But the title “son of God” seems to convey the idea that Jesus has a special relationship to God and that he may even be God himself. What should the title “Son of God” mean to you and me as it is applied to Jesus in the New Testament? What did Peter understand by “the Son of the living God,” and what was revealed to him by the Father in heaven? Did he mean by it the same as “son of God”?

The title “Son of God” clearly indicates a special relationship between Jesus and God the Father. At first it might seem reasonable to take this title as an indication of the Son’s deity, the more so when we reflect on the fact that another title Jesus frequently applied to himself was “Son of Man.” On the surface the latter would seem most obviously to mean simply that he was human, since that is the literal meaning of the term.

But things are not always what they seem to be on first sight. This understandable assigning of meanings to the two titles at least has this to commend it: it seems to provide a way of engaging with the historic confession of the Christian church that Jesus is both truly God and truly man. Yet, for many, this understanding of Jesus having two seemingly incompatible natures is a difficulty and even a stumbling block. It seems to fly in the face of simple, rational logic to say that one and the same person can embrace two such complete but different natures in a way that compromises neither of them. The problem doesn’t stop there. A school chaplain was once asked by a student, “If Jesus is God, who looked after things up there while he was down here?” Once we

²The Hebrew word for *messiah* occurs only twice in the Bible, in Daniel 9:25–26 (ESV “anointed one”), although the verbal forms of the root *mişh*, to anoint, occur in a number of texts.

start to investigate the two natures of Jesus, the doctrine of the Trinity also comes into view. In fact, we could say that the gospel drives us toward the confession that God is triune. We confess that God is one, yet the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. Then we compound the problem by including the Holy Spirit, who is neither the Father nor the Son. Yet we are talking about the one indivisible God.

Investigating the title “son of God,” then, may seem to be a straightforward task involving the examination of each occurrence of the phrase in turn. But this would leave any possible synonyms untapped. For example, do the Father’s words “this is my Son” as applied to Jesus mean the same as calling him “son of God”? Luke suggests that it does, when he links the baptismal words of heavenly approval with the human genealogy of Jesus that goes back to “Adam, the [Son] of God” (Luke 3:21–38).³

Furthermore, sonship is expressed by more than one Greek word in the New Testament, including *huios*, *teknon*, and *pais*. *Pais* is often translated as “servant,” and its application to Jesus does not appear to emphasize sonship but rather his role as obedient servant. The sonship word most frequently used of Jesus is *huios*. John uses *teknon* to refer to believers as sons of God, but this is surely not completely identical to the relationship that Jesus has with the Father (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1–2). Yet it certainly raises the question about the link between the sonship of Jesus and our sonship. We will reflect on the nature of our sonship in chapter 4 of this study.

The aim of this volume is to investigate the title “Son of God” and other related sonship titles in order to deepen our appreciation of the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. We will see that we cannot study these titles of Jesus without becoming

³The Greek has “son” only in Luke 3:23; thereafter it is implied in the sequence thus: “of Heli, of Matthat, of Levi,” etc.

deeply and personally involved since we, as believers, are defined by our relationship to Jesus. But there are some pitfalls we must avoid. Studies that take up a particular biblical theme can either help us to focus on the sense of the overall unity of the Bible or, unfortunately, serve to isolate the chosen theme from that unity and thus undermine the very thing we want to understand. This mistake can result from an approach to word studies that suffers from the mistaken belief that a particular word or phrase is always used consistently and uniformly throughout Scripture, so that all we need to do is establish a kind of uniform dictionary definition. Focusing on a word or phrase also may easily overlook the same concept expressed by other words or phrases.

There are multiple mistakes, then, to avoid in a study such as this one. First is the notion that the chosen word or phrase always has the same meaning; second, that this meaning is only ever expressed by that one word or phrase. The matter is complicated by the variety of ways that words and phrases have come to be translated in the various English versions of the Bible. Sometimes important words or phrases used in earlier documents are picked up and repeated in later documents to make a significant link. A particular title, for example, may appear to be preserved in the actual words for a purpose.

So, for instance, “son of man” literally translates both the Hebrew and Aramaic expressions that mean “human being.” But translating the phrase as “human being” or “mortal” in Daniel 7:13 arguably obscures the reason for Jesus calling himself “the Son of Man” in many places in the Gospels (in which Jesus appears to be picking up the specific language of Daniel 7). The way he uses the term suggests that he is claiming to be the figure referred to by Daniel. And in Daniel, the son of man is not any mere mortal but a uniquely majestic figure. And yet in Ezekiel there are a number of references to “son of man” that designate

the prophet himself as a human being (e.g., Ezek. 2:1, 3, 6, 8; 3:1). These are not references to the visionary man in heaven as they are in Daniel.

How, then, do we avoid errors of this kind? First, let it be said that there is nothing wrong with beginning with a preliminary investigation of the way in which a significant phrase, in this case “son of God,”⁴ is used throughout Scripture. There is a well-known adage that applies here: A text without its context is a pretext.⁵ In other words, it is possible to prove anything from the Bible by taking a verse out of context. Therefore the question that demands an answer is this: What is the context of any biblical text that discourages its use as a pretext? We are challenged in this to consider our views on the unity of the Bible. The wider context of a word or phrase is what helps us determine its meaning. Usage is more revealing than some static dictionary definition.

The Unity of the Bible

Is the Bible, as some would assert, a collection of sixty-six books so loosely related that their unity is not a real consideration? Or is it a collection displaying diversity within an inescapable organic unity?

If we take the latter view, we still have to decide on the nature of the unity. Why did the Christian church come to receive these various books, and not others, as Scripture? If there is a real organic unity to the contents of the biblical books, it follows that the broadest context of any given text is the whole Bible. This, of course, does not mean that the place of a text within smaller units is unimportant. Immediate literary units (e.g., a parable or a pro-

⁴Where the reference is to Jesus, I use the capitalized form “Son,” and where not referring to Jesus, I use “son.”

⁵An isolated text does not necessarily become a pretext, but it is easily used as one.

phetic oracle), whole pericopes⁶ (e.g., the Noah narrative, Luke's birth narrative, the Sermon on the Mount), the book in which our text occurs, and the entire canon of Scripture are aspects of the ever-widening context that shapes the meaning of a text.⁷

This is not the place to give a detailed treatment of how the Bible can be regarded as a unity. Still, it is one of the functions of biblical theology to help us articulate the nature of this unity. The canonical process (that is, the way in which the Bible came to be composed of certain books and not others), which took some time to complete, must surely have involved certain assumptions about why these sixty-six books should be regarded as the Scriptures of the Christian church. And yet the diversity within the canon of Scripture is more obvious: the various books were written in three different languages over a period of more than fifteen hundred years. The biblical books also display a large variety of literary genres or types, all of which have their own characteristics that affect the way we read and understand them. Some three-quarters of the total bulk of the Bible—what we call the “Old Testament”—deal with a religion that predates the coming of Jesus. Therefore only the final quarter of the Bible, the New Testament, is distinctly and transparently Christian.

But the New Testament is full of quotes and allusions that show that the two Testaments are intimately connected. Indeed, it is clear that Jesus, the apostles, and the early church regarded the Old Testament itself as Christian Scripture. In addition to the general historical continuity, *the heart of this unity of the Testaments is the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth*. He is not only the central character and principal concern of the New Testament, but

⁶ A pericope is a more or less self-contained portion of the text.

⁷ Kevin Vanhoozer refers to “a series of expanding interpretative frameworks.” K. J. Vanhoozer, “Exegesis and Hermeneutics,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 62.

he is also regarded by the New Testament as the fulfillment of, and even the reason for, the Old Testament. In a very important way, Jesus is regarded as what the Old Testament is about (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39–46).

Investigating words and their meanings, whether in the Old or the New Testament, is therefore an exercise in understanding their relationship to the person and work of Jesus Christ. In this study we will examine something of the momentum in the Old Testament that leads us to Jesus Christ in the Gospels, as we reflect together on the whole-Bible theme “son of God.”

A Strategy for a Thematic Biblical Theology

For the investigation of any biblical theme, I favor what I would describe as a gospel-driven or gospel-centered approach to biblical theology. Since we begin our Christian journey by coming to faith in the person and work of Jesus, it makes sense to begin with him. Who and what is it that we put our trust in for our salvation and our Christian growth to maturity?

If we start here, we are in a better position to link our investigation with our own personal relationship to God through Christ. Furthermore, since the object of our faith is the person and work of Jesus—his living, dying, and rising for us and our salvation—then explicitly connecting our investigation to our own faith in him renders our study all the more personally meaningful.

This does not mean we are motivated primarily by our personal interest in the matter, for we seek the glory of God in all this. Our personal participation should not be corrupted to become a self-serving, subjectivistic, and wholly introspective exercise. And yet we are intimately, personally involved through our own faith in Christ. The way forward, here, is to ask this question

above all others: How does this text testify to Jesus? rather than: What does this text say about us? The latter question is valid but is secondary to the former.

The approach I am proposing and intend to follow in this study is as follows:⁸

- 1) Make preliminary contact with the chosen theme in the New Testament as it relates to Jesus and his ministry. As Christian believers we are thus personally linked with our investigations from the outset.
- 2) Identify any ways that Jesus, the apostles, and the New Testament authors relate this theme to its beginnings and its developing background in the Old Testament. We thus begin to engage with the person of Jesus on the Bible's own terms, that is, as the fulfiller of the Old Testament.
- 3) Trace the development of the theme along the lines of redemptive history in the Old Testament. We may find other related themes that illuminate our central theme and that contribute to the richness of its meaning in the context of the progressive revelation. It is important that we understand how God's plans for his people and the world are progressively revealed. I suggest a basic structure to redemptive-historical revelation as follows:⁹
 - i) Revelation of the structure of redemption in the historical events of the people of God in the Old Testament. This is the source of "typology," that is, how people, events, and institutions create patterns that ultimately foreshadow and are fulfilled in Christ.

⁸See Diagram 1.

⁹See Table 1. I have expanded on this approach and explained something of its origins for me in my book *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012).

- ii) Revelation of the structure of redemption in the prophetic eschatology¹⁰ as it comments on the past history of God's people and recapitulates (that is, repeats, but with heightened intensity) its redemptive structure in the projected future day of the Lord in which all God's plans are envisaged as being finally worked out. This provides confirmation of the typology within redemptive history.
- iii) Revelation of the structure of redemption in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The revelation of God's kingdom and of salvation that had its typological expression in (i) above, and is confirmed in the prophetic eschatology in (ii) above, is now declared to be fulfilled in Christ. (This fulfillment of the type is referred to as the "antitype.")

According to the nature of the theme under investigation, the study of its use in the New Testament may require a further distinction being made between the three stages or modes of fulfillment in Christ. These are concerned respectively with:

- a) what Jesus did *for* us in the past, historical gospel event in fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament;
- b) what the word of Jesus and his Spirit go on doing *in* us as we live in the present our life of faith and in the world as the gospel is proclaimed; and
- c) what the end-time consummation *with* us will be when Jesus returns in glory to judge the living and the dead and to bring in the fullness of his kingdom.

This way of distinguishing the work of Jesus as "for us," "in us," and "with us" is simply another way of distinguishing our justi-

¹⁰ Eschatology (Gk. *eschatos*, "last") refers to the end times and, more broadly, the future events in redemptive history.

fication (in the past), our sanctification (in the present), and our glorification (in the future). It is what we express when we say, "I have been saved, I am being saved, and I will be saved."

The structure of the biblical metanarrative,¹¹ then, is important for any biblical-theological investigation. The Bible's timeline involves a progression from the remote past event of the creation, through the early history leading to Abraham's call, and then through the history of Israel. We reach the end of the Old Testament period, however, without a resolution to the prophetic expectations of the coming of the kingdom of God.

The New Testament continues the progression with the account of Jesus: his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. The New Testament presents Jesus as the fulfillment of all the expectations of the Old Testament (the Gospels). Then come the apostolic witness and ministry to the first churches (the Epistles) and the final visions of the end (Revelation). There is clearly a dynamic not merely of historical events but of progressive revelation of God's plan and purposes. This dynamic means that we must always consider the words and phrases that are the objects of our examination not in static, abstract terms but within a progressive redemptive revelation¹² that may indicate a developing understanding of these words and phrases. This means that not all parts of the Bible bear the same exact relationship to us in our Christian walk.

As we examine our subject and related themes, we bear in mind the structure of redemptive revelation. While we will start with the gospel as it is presented in the New Testament, we then go back to the Old Testament to try to understand the foundations of our theme

¹¹ *Metanarrative* is a technical term used to refer to the big picture or overall narrative of the Bible. It includes more than a historian would include since it takes in the whole story from creation to the new creation as the Bible presents it. It is thus the framework for all the biblical books, including those that are not specifically narrative in terms of genre.

¹² I am using *redemptive revelation* as synonymous with the term *salvation history*. Texts from different parts of this progressive revelation will bear different relationships to the person of Christ and to us.

as we now find it in the New Testament. Then we return to the New Testament with an enhanced understanding of the depth and many-sided nature of our theme. This enhanced understanding then forms the basis for a renewed study using the same basic process. And so on!

Summary and Conclusion

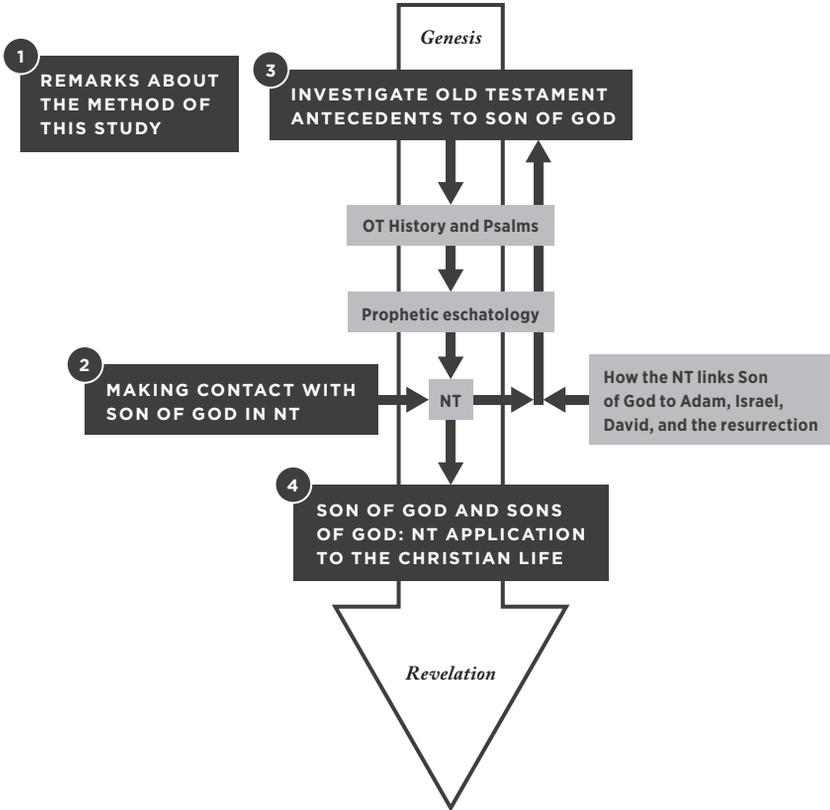
Words and phrases that may form the basis of a biblical theme are not necessarily used uniformly throughout Scripture. Usage is an elastic thing, and how one writer uses a particular word or phrase can depend on many things.

For example, the meaning of words or phrases that are the subject of such a study as this may be affected by the developing redemptive-historical context of the biblical metanarrative. Consequently, where the words or phrases occur in the biblical story will affect their significance and meaning. We also recognize that other words and phrases may carry the same or closely related concepts as the principal ones under investigation. In addition, there may be related themes that need to be considered as enriching our understanding of the chosen theme.

Our ideas about the nature and unity of Scripture may need adjustment in the light of our ongoing examination of the text. The redemptive-historical structure of the biblical witness demands that we take account of both the historical story from Genesis to Revelation and the revelation of God and his kingdom that is contained in the story. At the heart of both is the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, whom we seek to understand better by means of this thematic examination. This is primarily so that our own faith response to Jesus will be strengthened through a maturing understanding of his person, his ministry, and the consequent nature of our relationship to him, to the Father, and to eternity. The ultimate purpose of this study, therefore, is worship.

DIAGRAM 1: HOW THIS STUDY IS PLANNED¹³

- Ch. 1. Remarks about the method of this study
- Ch. 2. Making contact with the theme in the New Testament
- Ch. 3. Old Testament antecedents of the theme
- Ch. 4. New Testament application to the Christian life



¹³I do not wish to imply that the method I have outlined in this chapter is the only way a biblical-theological investigation can be carried out. I have defended this approach in *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, but I recognize that there are other ways to undertake such a thematic study.

TABLE 1: THE THREE STAGES OF REVELATION

1. Revelation in biblical history, Old Testament	2. Revelation in prophetic eschatology	3. Revelation in Christ
Creation Covenant Captivity Exodus redemption Entry to the land King Jerusalem (Zion) Temple	New creation New covenant New captivity and exodus redemption Entry into the new land New Davidic king New Jerusalem New temple	Jesus is new creation New covenant in his blood Jesus is the Passover lamb and new exodus Jesus: where God and man dwell Jesus is Son of David Jesus is the new temple, the new Jerusalem

TABLE 2: TEXTS RELATING TO JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD

Son of God	His (God's) Son	"My [God's] Son"	The Son (of the Father)
Matt. 4:3, 6 Matt. 8:29 Matt. 14:33 Matt. 16:16 Matt. 26:63 Matt. 27:40, 43, 54 Mark 1:1 Mark 3:11 Mark 5:7 Mark 15:39 Luke 1:32, 35 Luke 4:3, 9, 41 Luke 8:28 Luke 22:70 John 1:34, 49 John 3:18 John 10:36 John 11:4, 27 John 19:7 John 20:31 Acts 8:37 Acts 9:20 Rom. 1:4 2 Cor. 1:19 Gal. 2:20 Eph. 4:13 Heb. 4:14 Heb. 6:6 Heb. 7:3 Heb. 10:29 1 John 3:8 1 John 4:15 1 John 5:5, 12, 13, 20 2 John 3, 9 Rev. 2:18	John 3:16, 17 Rom. 1:3 Rom. 5:10 Rom. 8:3, 29, 32 1 Cor. 1:9 Gal. 1:16 Gal. 4:4, 6 Col. 1:13 1 Thess. 1:10 1 John 1:3, 7 1 John 3:23 1 John 4:9, 10, 14	Matt. 2:15 Matt. 3:17 Matt. 17:5 Mark 1:11 Mark 9:7 Luke 3:22 Luke 9:35 Acts 13:33 Heb. 1:5 Heb. 5:5 2 Pet. 1:17 Rev. 21:7	Matt. 11:27 Matt. 28:19 Luke 10:22 John 3:35, 36 John 5:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26 John 8:36 John 14:13 John 17:1 1 Cor. 15:28 Heb. 1:2, 8 Heb. 3:6 Heb. 5:8 Heb. 7:28 1 John 2:22, 23, 24 1 John 5:9, 10, 11, 12

“TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD!” —MATTHEW 27:54

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