

Joy Has Dawned: 'Take Heed' to what you sing!

Last December I was in a situation where a song by Keith Getty was sung called '**Joy Has Dawned**'. As carols go it was very pleasing to the ear and all went well until the opening lines of the fourth verse. They read as follows –

**Son of Adam, Son of heaven
Given as a ransom.**

As soon as I heard the phrase '**Son of Adam**' my theological alarm bells started ringing loud and clear. In consequence I sent an email to the ministry of Keith Getty on 7th January 2009 and in that email I wrote –

I 'choked' theologically on the phrase '**Son of Adam**' - the whole point of the virgin birth was so that the Lord would not be a '**Son of Adam**' for "**as in Adam all die**" [1st Corinthians 15:22] - all humans born since Adam by natural pro-creation enter this world condemned and unrighteous in the sight of God because the sin and disobedience of Adam is imputed to all such. Christ was not procreated He was incarnated by the power of the Holy Spirit and so did not enter the world as a '**Son of Adam**' and so by the unique nature of His birth and His subsequent sinless life He was qualified to offer an acceptable atoning sacrifice for sin. A simple change... would correct what is a serious theological error in an otherwise beautiful carol

I received a swift and polite response as follows –

Dear Cecil,

Thank you for your feedback.

I have passed this on to our team.

Best Regards,
Arlene Crymble
Gettymusic.com

On 11th January 2009 I sent a further email in which I put forward the following suggested change to the lyrics –

It is clear in the line in which '**Son of Adam**' appears that Keith is seeking to highlight both the true humanity and the true deity of Christ – that being the case I would now suggest an alternative line of '**Son of Man and Son of Heaven**'. I should be most grateful if you would pass this further thought to 'the team'.

Again I received a swift acknowledgement from Arlene that this suggestion would be passed on to the 'team' [Keith and Kristyn]. Subsequently having heard nothing from the 'team' I sent a further inquiry to Arlene on 21st March 2009. Once more this was speedily acknowledged (25th) to say that my inquiry had been passed to the 'operations manager' for him to raise with Keith and Kristyn. It is now 27th April and sadly I have received no serious feedback to the important theological issue raised by myself. Perhaps you may be saying to yourself – '**is the use of the phrase "Son of Adam", when applied to Christ, really all that important?**' To answer that I want to quote here a section from an article I wrote last year. Although it was written in the context of a different error concerning the Person of Christ it does nevertheless address this issue of the error of someone referring to Christ as "**Son of Adam**". I wrote –

Unlike all humanity that has been born since God created Adam and Eve and who have entered this world by natural procreation through the union of a man and a woman, the Lord Jesus Christ was conceived as a result of the Holy Spirit overshadowing a virgin called Mary [see Luke 1:35] and so the Lord Jesus was not born in the 'natural' lineage of Adam. Because of this He was not a 'fallen son' of Adam and was not subject to Adam's legacy namely "death" – **"as in Adam ALL die" [1st Corinthians 15:22]** and **"as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world and death by sin and so death passed upon all men (in the lineage of Adam) for all have sinned" [Romans 5:12]**.

The Lord Jesus had to **"become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" [Philippians 2:8]**. Every individual from Adam [except for Enoch and Elijah who were taken from this earth by God before experiencing death] has because of 'the fall' eventually died physically – human beings don't have to do anything or 'obey' anything for death to finally overcome them – the truth is as quoted earlier **"in Adam all die"**. However, the sinless Christ who was not **"in Adam"** would never have died physically if He had not willingly and in obedience to His Father's will [see Matthew 26:39 and Acts 2:23] allowed Himself to be crucified on the cross

Pastor John MacArthur commenting on Romans 5:12 writes – 'Adam passed to all his descendants the inherent sinful nature he possessed because of his first disobedience. That nature is present from the moment of conception (Psalm 51:5 *describes it as* **"shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin"**) making it impossible for man to live in a way that pleases God'.

By nature those who are **"in Adam"** and who have been **"shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin"** CANNOT please God [see Romans 8:8] yet twice we read of God the Father declaring from heaven concerning the Lord Jesus Christ **"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" [Matthew 3:17 and Matthew 17:5]**. Why was Christ able to naturally **"please"** God the Father? Because He was not **"shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin"** but rather He was **"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"**[Hebrews 7:26].

Referring to Christ **"being nailed to the cross"** He was a 'sacrificial lamb' bearing away the sins of His people [see John 1:36; Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 9:26; 1st Peter 1:18-19]. This last reference from 1st Peter speaks of the sacrifice of Christ in these terms **"as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"** – if Christ had been a **Son of Adam "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin"** He would not have been **"without blemish and without spot"** and so His sacrifice on behalf of His people would not have been acceptable to God the Father but His glorious resurrection from the grave demonstrates that it was acceptable to His Father and affirms the truth of **2nd Peter 3:18** where we read **"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just (sinless) for the unjust (sinners) that he might bring us to God"**.

From what I have read it would appear that Keith and Kristyn Getty do take seriously the theological accuracy and implications of the lyrics they compose and so from my perspective it is very disappointing that they have not apparently taken time to address what is a very serious error in their lyrics for **'Joy Has Dawned'** concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. I hope sincerely in the very near future that they will recognise the error and change the lyrics to agree with what the Holy Scriptures testify concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity.

On 27th April I sent the following email to the ministry of Keith Getty –

Subject: Joy Has Dawned
Date: 27/04/2009 12:16:14 GMT Standard Time
From: Takeheed
To: info@gettymusic.com

Dear Arlene,

Be assured that it brings me no pleasure to have to contact you again but sadly I have heard nothing following your email to me of 25th March. In consequence I have drafted a short article for posting to our ministry website but I want to send the text of it herewith in the hope that it may spur some reaction from Keith and Kristyn on the theological error in the lyrics of **'Joy Has Dawned'**.

If I have had no response from them on this matter by Monday 11th May [2 weeks from now] I shall sadly be left with no alternative but to post the article publicly to our website.

Yours in Christ

Cecil Andrews

Sadly I have to report that to date I have received neither an acknowledgment nor a response to that email and so this article has now been posted to our website. If, when you have read this article, you like myself are convinced that the sinless Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His perfect sacrifice for sin have been impugned by the application to Him of the phrase **'Son of Adam'** **could I invite you to send an email to that effect to the ministry of Keith Getty?** Set out now are the email contact details and a suggestion for the **'Subject Matter'** and **'Content'** of any email.

info@gettymusic.com

Subject: Joy Has Dawned

Dear Mr Getty,

I have read the article on the 'Take Heed' Ministries web site expressing concern about your use in your song "Joy Has Dawned" of the phrase "Son of Adam" in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. I agree with Mr Andrews that this represents a serious theological error that does damage to both the sinless Person and the sacrificial perfection of the Lord Jesus and I would ask you to urgently rephrase your song along the lines suggested by Mr Andrews.

Yours in Christ

...

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 14th May 2009

APPENDIX

When I sent my first email on 7th January 2009 to Getty Music expressing my concern about their use in the song **'Joy Has Dawned'** of the expression **'Son of Adam'** in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ I never imagined or desired that almost 5 months later this matter would still be ongoing and would regrettably now be being 'played out' in public but for the sake and honour of the Lord Jesus Christ that is how events have had to turn out.

As my original article showed, 'the team' at Getty Music did not themselves respond to the concerns that I had raised, and so I felt it was necessary to issue a warning about

the theological implications and damage that the use of this expression does to both the sinless Person and the sacrificial perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A number of readers of the article did, as invited, make contact with Getty Music to express their solidarity with my concerns and they have now received a 'standardised' reply, although I myself did not personally receive any such communication.

I want to first reproduce this 'standardised' reply exactly as the various folks received it and then I will reproduce it again and intersperse into it, mostly **in red**, my response to their comments. So firstly, this was the 'standardised' reply –

Dear ...,

Although we respect the fervour with which Mr Andrews is keen to root out and expose anything he sees as heresy in the Christian church, on this point we feel he has jumped to a heretical conclusion that is not there in our text.

The line “Son of Adam, Son of heaven” points to the uniqueness of Christ – His full humanity and His full deity - a cornerstone of the Christian faith. Jesus wasn't half-man, half-God; He wasn't ‘God in human form’; He was fully human, while remaining fully God. That's why the Bible can state, for example, that He was “tempted in every way we are, yet without sin”.

But acknowledging Christ's humanity as a ‘son of Adam’ does not automatically imply Jesus had a fallen sinful nature. Jesus refers to Himself as the “son of man” - which can of course be translated “son of Adam”, as “Adam” means “man”. The early chapters of two of the gospels go to great lengths to list Jesus' human lineage as a ‘son of...’, going all the way back to Adam in Luke's gospel.

“Son of Adam” therefore implies humanity in the same way as “Son of David” implies kingship; to conclude that either implies a genetic inheritance of a sinful nature we feel is a misapplication of the phrase.

Of course we recognise that in Rom 5 and 1 Cor 15 Paul draws the contrast of being “in” Adam or “in” Christ, but that is a particular application Paul uses for us to understand the redemptive work of the man Christ Jesus as the ‘second Adam’, and does not negate the use of the reference to Adam as the father of the human race.

In conclusion, then, we stand by the line in the song as being true and reliable. We acknowledge that there is room for individuals to misinterpret this and any other line we have written. And no doubt Mr Andrews will continue to interpret the line in any way he chooses for publication on his website - but that is something beyond our control, and engaging in dialogue with him on this we feel will generate more heat than light.

**Best Regards,
Arlene Crymble**

Before proceeding to my analysis of this reply I would state that I would surmise that this reply was formulated by ‘the team’ [Keith & Kristyn Getty] and not by Arlene Crymble,

who I would assume should simply to be viewed as the 'post woman'. I base this assumption on the courteous exchanges I myself had with Arlene when she was passing on my emails to 'the team' in the expectation that they would compose a reply. Now for my analysis -

Dear ...,

Although we respect the fervour with which Mr Andrews is keen to root out and expose anything he sees as heresy in the Christian church, on this point we feel he has jumped to a heretical conclusion that is not there in our text.

I would simply reaffirm that I view the expression 'Son of Adam', when applied to the Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, to be injurious to both His sinless Person and the perfection of His atoning sacrifice. In scripture this title is never applied by or to Him nor for that matter is the title 'Son of Heaven'.

The line "Son of Adam, Son of heaven" points to the uniqueness of Christ – His full humanity and His full deity - a cornerstone of the Christian faith. Jesus wasn't half-man, half-God; He wasn't 'God in human form'; He was fully human, while remaining fully God. That's why the Bible can state, for example, that He was "tempted in every way we are, yet without sin".

I must confess that I find this paragraph somewhat confusing and indeed contradictory when in the midst of statements about Christ's humanity and His deity, about Christ being human and remaining God, statements that I would agree with, we then read - He wasn't 'God in human form' - surely this expression totally contradicts the expressions that immediately precede and then follow this phrase!. From my understanding of scripture this is precisely what Jesus Christ was – 'God in human form'. This statement 'He wasn't God in human form' undermines precisely what for example the apostle Paul affirms in Philippians chapter two as you will read shortly. Paul also wrote to the Colossians concerning the Incarnate Lord Jesus that 'it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell' [chapter 1 :19] and 'in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily' [chapter 2 :9].

As Trinitarians we believe that The Father is God, The Son is God and The Spirit is God and so with the birth of Jesus Christ we do have 'Immanuel, which being interpreted is God with us' [Matthew 1 :23] - Consider also these scriptures –

'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God [Cecil - His divine pre-existence] ...took upon him the form of a servant [Cecil - added humanity to His person at the Incarnation] and was made in the likeness of men' [Philippians 2 :5-7]

'Wherefore when he [Cecil – the pre-existent divine Son of God] cometh into the world, he saith...a body hast thou prepared for me[Cecil – the added human dimension of Christ through His Incarnation]' [Hebrews 10 :5]

'Jesus saith unto him...He that hath seen me hath seen the Father' [John 14 :9]

[Cecil - Jesus is obviously not here referring to His physical appearance when He stated this but rather is referring to His attributes such as for example complete Godliness and miraculous powers that mirror some of the attributes of God The Father – this lines up with how Christ is referred to in Hebrews 1 :3 as being 'the express image' of 'God' (verse 1)]

'Great is the mystery of godliness ; God was manifest in the flesh' [1st Timothy 3 :16]

When tempted by Satan to fall down and worship him, the Lord replied 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God' [Matthew 4 :10]. Keeping that in mind we see Thomas, when confronted by the risen Christ, declaring. 'My Lord and my God' [John 20 :28] and I could cite other instances when people clearly 'worshipped' Christ and He did not rebuke them for doing so.

But acknowledging Christ's humanity as a 'son of Adam' does not automatically imply Jesus had a fallen sinful nature. Jesus refers to Himself as the "son of man" - which can of course be translated "son of Adam", as "Adam" means "man".

Whilst the Hebrew for man is 'adam' its roots are from the Hebrew 'adamah' meaning 'ground' and that of course is where the 'material' that God used to create the first man Adam came from. I think it would be good to gather our thinking on this issue and 'take stock' of humanity. (1) Adam was formed from the dust of the ground (2) Eve was formed using a rib from Adam's body (3) Although Luke in Acts 17:26 does identify that 'all nations of men' trace their pro-creational bloodline back to 'one' (Adam) because they have all entered into this world BY this process of PROCREATION we must also bear the following in mind (4) The Lord Jesus Christ did not enter this world by pro-creation which would have made him of the pro-creational bloodline of Adam, [and keep in mind the principle of federal headship] but He entered by INCARNATION (only someone who pre-existed can incarnate) – He did not enter through pro-creation and so although being fully human this kept Him separate from the pro-creational bloodline of Adam.

We must never forget that Mary conceived the Lord Jesus when she was overshadowed by the power of the Holy Spirit – the conception of Christ did not arise as the result of a fallen Son of Adam impregnating her. In all the Bible translations that I have looked at not one, for example in Matthew 16:13, uses the expression 'Son of Adam' – they ALL translate the phrase as 'Son of Man' and this title 'Son of Man' appears in numerous other passages of Scripture but NEVER, in relation to Christ, do we find the expression 'Son of Adam' used in scripture.

I believe it is absolutely vital NOT to refer to Christ as a 'Son of Adam'. Unlike all the pro-created, bloodline, genuine sons of Adam, including you and me who were "born in sin and shapen in iniquity"[Psalm 51:5] the Lord Jesus Christ was and is in His humanity, because of the Incarnation, "holy, harmless, undefiled, SEPARATE from sinners" (He was not tainted with original or any actual sin, unlike all true sons of Adam) see Hebrews 7:26.

Although Christ grew up in a family situation with a married couple, Mary and Joseph and the offspring they produced, they all, without exception, entered this world by the process of pro-creation, as sons and daughters of the federal head of the human race, Adam, and so they entered as condemned sinners in need of a Saviour, UNLIKE the Lord Jesus. ("The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me" John 14:30 - Satan, 'the accuser of the brethren' [Revelation 12:10] had absolutely no grounds for making any accusation against the Lord Jesus). Bearing in mind that our exchanges have been triggered by what I consider to be a serious theological error in an otherwise fine hymn perhaps I could quote some lines from another great hymn this time by Charles Wesley that sum up well the essence of what I'm trying to say. In verse 3 of 'And can it be' Wesley wrote of Christ that 'He left His Father's throne above' and a few lines later, referring to Calvary he writes of how Christ 'bled for Adam's helpless race'.

Some, perhaps may think that I'm 'straining at gnats' over this phrase 'Son of Adam' but I don't believe that I am and the Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy, and so by implication all who would publicly proclaim the truths of the Word of God, to "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" 2nd Timothy 2:15. 'Rightly dividing' could also be translated 'accurately handling' and it implies a degree of TOTAL accuracy as in the case of a carpenter who must make sure that something is cut with total precision otherwise whatever he is making will not fit together or also in the case of a stonemason who must cut stone with

total precision otherwise a building will be 'off plumb'. So it is with God's Word, if we wrongly, as I believe, apply the unbiblical term, Son of Adam to Christ then we do damage to His sinless perfection as a person and we would also render His sacrifice for sin as being unacceptable as such a sacrifice had to be without blemish and without spot [1st Peter 1:18].

In the Marshall Pickering 'Evangelical Dictionary of Theology', in their section on 'Adam' we read the following on page 11 'Adam was the head of the race and brought death to everyone in it; Christ is the head of the new humanity and brought life to all within it...The scriptural use of Adam, then, stresses the solidarity of the human race, a solidarity in sin. It reminds us that the human race had a beginning and that all its history from the very first is marked by sin. But 'the last Adam' has altered all that. He has replaced sin with righteousness and death with life'.

Question 22 of The Larger Catechism of The Westminster Assembly reads as follows: 'Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?' And the answer given reads: 'The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation (Acts 17:26), sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression' (Genesis 2:16-17 compared with Romans 5:12-20 and with 1st Corinthians 15:21-22). 'Sons of Adam' are those who 'descend from him by ordinary generation' and the Virgin Birth thus rules Christ out as being designated a 'Son of Adam'.

Louis Berkhof in his book 'Systematic Theology' makes these important points (p 334) – 'The Incarnation constituted Christ one of the human race' and he goes on to say 'Christ assumed His human nature from the substance of His mother...If the human nature of Christ was not derived from the same stock as ours but merely resembled it, there exists no such relation between us and Him as is necessary to render His mediation available for our good'. Keeping these thoughts in mind perhaps we get a better understanding of God's Words back in Genesis 3:15 where, in the wake of sin entering into the world through the sin of Adam, God in grace makes this promise when addressing the serpent "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and HER SEED; HE SHALL bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel".

Keeping in mind the importance of the virgin birth, in that for the birth of Christ, Mary was not impregnated by a fallen Son of Adam, Berkhoff wrote on page 336 'If Christ had been generated by a man, He would have been a human person, included in the covenant of works, and as such would have shared the common guilt of mankind. But now that His subject, His ego, His person, IS NOT OUT OF ADAM, He is not in the covenant of works and is free from the guilt of sin. And being free from the guilt of sin, His human nature could also be kept free, both before and after His birth, from the pollution of sin'.

The early chapters of two of the gospels go to great lengths to list Jesus' human lineage as a 'son of...', going all the way back to Adam in Luke's gospel.

The genealogy listed in Matthew's gospel is that of the 'legal' or 'foster' father of the Lord, namely Joseph, and is there to validate Christ's Kingly and Messianic credentials, beginning as it does with Abraham.

John MacArthur, in his bible study notes in the introduction to Matthew writes, 'Matthew is concerned with setting forth Jesus as Messiah, the King of the Jews... The opening genealogy is designed to document Christ's credentials as Israel's king... Matthew shows that Christ is heir of the kingly line... All other historical and theological themes in the book revolve around this one'.

Matthew Henry in his commentary writes, 'Concerning this genealogy of our Saviour, observe the chief intention. It is not a needless genealogy. It is not a vain-glorious one, as those of great men often are. It proves that our Lord Jesus is of the nation and family out of which the Messiah was to arise. The promise of the blessing was made to Abraham and his seed; of the dominion, to David and his seed. It was promised to Abraham that

Christ should descend from him, [Genesis 12:3; 22:18] and to David that he should descend from him, 2 Samuel 7:12; Psalm 89:3 & 132:11 and, therefore, unless Jesus is a son of David, and a son of Abraham, he is not the Messiah. Now this is here proved from well-known records.

The purpose of this genealogy was not to trace Christ back to the first man, Adam but to confirm His Messianic credentials through the line of his 'legal', 'foster' father Joseph.

When we turn to the genealogy in Luke's gospel we find that although it does make reference in Luke 3:23 to Joseph, the genealogical line then traced is that of Mary and it does go back to Adam and for the reason already stated ('Christ assumed His human nature from the substance of His mother') - this established His right to truly be our 'kinsman redeemer' - if someone sold himself into slavery, he could be 'redeemed' [bought back into freedom through an acceptable payment] by one of near kin. When Adam sinned he sold all of humanity into slavery to sin and its condemnation and so only one who truly possessed human credentials could pay God's price to set people free from their slavery to sin and from His just condemnation and Peter tells us clearly who our gracious kinsman redeemer is in 1st Peter 1:18-19 "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"

It is theologically untenable to insist on a physical bloodline from Adam directly to the birth of Christ in order to preserve the full humanity of Jesus Christ. It is also theologically untenable to express in song or word the idea that God incarnate can still be fully God and yet born of the bloodline of Adam as one of the sons of Adam. To say that Jesus is a 'Son of Adam' undoes His true and full humanity and undoes His full deity. This is why this terminology is inappropriate and not used when referring to Jesus in the Bible. It is absolutely foreign in both concept (idea) and word usage (terminology) in the Scriptures.

"Son of Adam" therefore implies humanity in the same way as "Son of David" implies kingship; to conclude that either implies a genetic inheritance of a sinful nature we feel is a misapplication of the phrase.

The condemnation that Adam's original sin brought was imputed to ALL his pro-creational, bloodline descendants both male and female for "as in Adam ALL die". All such sons and daughters of Adam are subject to the effects of the fall one of them being 'Human depravity'. W H Molland in his little booklet on 'Salvation wrote, 'To understand the relationship between Adam and his posterity is essential to a right understanding of Holy Scripture. The depravity of the human heart stems from the original offence committed in Eden's garden...Adam acted, not for himself as a private individual, but he transacted for all who would issue from him. (Cecil - This is why it was crucial that Mary was not impregnated by any fallen Son of Adam but was instead overshadowed by the power of the Holy Spirit) Adam stood as federal head and as such legally represented the whole human race (Cecil - this is why Christ is referred to as 'the last Adam' as He represents a new 'redeemed' human race)... The sentence passed upon Adam is upon all the race. If this was not the case no infant would ever die for they have neither capacity nor opportunity to commit actual sin (Cecil - a hypothetical question - if the Lord Jesus had not been sent into this world to die an atoning death by voluntarily allowing Himself to be taken by cruel hands and crucified, would He have died - unlike all true 'Sons of Adam the answer surely is 'no' for He was overall sinless and "the wages of sin is death").

Of course we recognise that in Rom 5 and 1 Cor 15 Paul draws the contrast of being "in" Adam or "in" Christ, but that is a particular application Paul uses for us to understand the redemptive work of the man Christ Jesus as the 'second Adam', and does not negate the use of the reference to Adam as the father of the human race.

Without wishing to appear to be overly 'nit picking' again we see the use of an unscriptural term – just as Christ is never referred to in Scripture as 'Son of Adam' so He is not referred to as the 'second Adam' – He is referred to as 'the last Adam' and Paul goes on to contrast how this 'last Adam' differs in many ways from 'The first man, Adam' [see 1st Corinthians 15 :45-49].

In conclusion, then, we stand by the line in the song as being true and reliable. We acknowledge that there is room for individuals to misinterpret this and any other line we have written. And no doubt Mr Andrews will continue to interpret the line in any way he chooses for publication on his website - but that is something beyond our control, and engaging in dialogue with him on this we feel will generate more heat than light.

I have sought to show from God's Word, and the comments of gifted Bible commentators, why I am fully persuaded that the line in Mr Getty's song that reads, 'Son of Adam', is from a Biblical perspective not 'true and reliable' – I believe it crosses the boundary from 'poetic licence' into 'heretical quicksand' and ends up misrepresenting the Word of God. In doing so I have sought ONLY to preserve and highlight what God's Word teaches about the sinless Person and the sacrificial perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Best Regards,
Arlene Crymble

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries - 2nd June 2009