

GOD'S FIRSTBORN SONS

REDEMPTION, ADOPTION, FIRSTBORN SONS, REGALITY

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.

For as many as are led [‘are being led’] by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

For the current expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:13-19).

Creation, Birth

God has many “Sons.” First and foremost would be God’s Son from eternity, *Jesus*, God’s

“only begotten Son” following the incarnation and birth.

Angels, because of their special and individual creation, are viewed as “sons of God” (Gen. 6:4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).

And the first man, the first Adam, for the same reason as seen in the angelic realm — a special and individual creation — was also viewed as God’s “son” (Luke 3:38b).

Adam’s descendants though, following the fall, were not viewed in this same manner. Rather, they were viewed as sons of Adam, or *sons of his progeny*. They were revealed to be *sons of a fallen individual, or sons of his fallen descendants* (cf. Gen. 5:3ff; 11:10ff; Luke 3:23-38).

(The word “son” only appears once in the Greek text throughout the genealogy in Luke 3:23-38 — at the very beginning, in v. 23b [“... being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph...”).

The structure of the Greek text though [a list of articular genitives, beginning in v. 23] necessitates that the thought of *son*, though not shown in each succeeding generation, be continued from its introductory usage and understood throughout the genealogy. This is why translators have shown the word in italics in each generation, following its introductory usage, all the way back to Adam, “the *son* of God.”)

In the Divine realm, *the one created* (whether an angel or a man) is viewed as a “son.” In the human realm, *the one begotten* is viewed as a “son.” In the former realm, “sons of God” are in view; in the latter realm, “sons of fallen creatures” are in view.

Within God’s economy, “sonship” (sons of God) is inseparably connected with *regality*, in both the angelic and the human realms. *Angels*, “sons of God,” were created to have a part in God’s government of the universe. And *man*, beginning with Adam, a “son of God,”

was created for *exactly the same purpose* — to first replace the incumbent ruler of this earth (Satan, a disqualified ruler), and then to subsequently occupy regal positions beyond the earth, in God’s universal kingdom.

“Sonship” implies *rulership*. But “sonship” among Adam’s descendants following the fall is another matter, which *cannot be connected with regality in this same respect*. Descendants of Adam, following the fall, could no longer be looked upon as “sons of God.” Rather, they could only be looked upon as *sons of a fallen individual, possessing the same fallen nature as their father* (cf. Gen. 5:3ff).

Redemption, Adoption

Following man’s fall, redemption became necessary if man was to ever realize the purpose for his prior creation. This was something which God brought to pass immediately following man’s sin, something involving *death and shed blood*. And once God had established matters in this respect, *no change could ever occur*. Redemption at any subsequent point in Scripture would *always be the same* — that brought to pass on the basis of *death and shed blood*.

But redemption itself has nothing to do with “sonship.” Adam, as Satan, was a “son of God” before his fall; and he, as Satan, remained a “son of God” following the fall. Adam’s fall wrought no change in his position as *God’s son* (though he was no longer in a position to move into and exercise that portended by sonship — *regality* — as Satan, following his fall, was no longer qualified to continue exercising that portended by sonship).

And, relative to Adam’s descendants, who are not “sons of God,” the converse of matters pertaining to redemption and sonship are equally true. The redemption of Adam’s

descendants does not restore the sonship standing possessed by Adam. *One (redemption, or even the fall itself, necessitating redemption) has nothing to do with the other (with sonship).*

“Sonship” results from *creation alone*, not redemption. This was something originally established in the angelic realm and then subsequently seen in the human realm in Genesis chapters one and two. And, as the established means for “redemption” *never changes* throughout Scripture, the established means for bringing into existence “a son of God” *never changes* throughout Scripture as well.

Thus, in order for God to place Adam’s progeny back into the position for which man was created — to rule and to reign — fallen man must not only be *redeemed* but *creation* must again be involved, for only *sons of God* can rule in God’s kingdom.

That is to say, God must not only redeem fallen man but He must also perform a special creation of a nature which would place man back in the position of “God’s son.” Apart from this dual act, man would *forever be estranged from the reason God brought him into existence.*

Then, because of the rights of primogeniture (rights of the firstborn) which God established in the human realm (seen in the position which Christ holds as God’s Son — that of *Firstborn*, through being begotten by the Father), the one who holds the sceptre must be more than just God’s son to realize *these established rights.* He, as Christ, must be *a firstborn son of God.*

And God accomplished/will accomplish this through the process of adoption (Gk., *huiiothesia*, “son-placing”). Adoption in Scripture is connected with *sons*, not with children. The process has to do with *taking one who is already a son (because of creation) and placing that son in a firstborn status (through adoption).*

Viewing the entire matter from the beginning, man is saved through a work of the Spirit on the basis of death and shed blood. *The Spirit breathes life into the one having no life, on the basis of death and shed blood*, allowing man to pass “from death unto life” (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1). This has been God’s *only means* of salvation for fallen man since the matter was introduced in the opening four chapters of Genesis.

Only then can matters having to do with *sonship*, or *a subsequent firstborn status within sonship*, enter into the matter. *Creation* must be involved in the former and *adoption* in the latter. And neither creation nor adoption enters into matters surrounding man’s eternal salvation. Both are always subsequent to the Spirit’s work effecting this salvation.

Creation, Adoption — Past, Present

Creation during the past dispensation had to do with Jacob and his descendants through his twelve sons. God took Jacob (a saved individual) and performed a special creative act — one which, as the Adamic creation *preceding the fall*, had to do with *the physical man* and could be passed on from father to son (Isa. 43:1-10).

Creation during the present dispensation has to do with *an individual’s positional standing “in Christ.”* God takes a saved individual and places him “in Christ,” resulting in *an entirely new creation* (II Cor. 5:17) — something which occurs at the time that individual is saved, though subsequent to his salvation. And because this has to do with *the spiritual man* rather than the natural man (the physical man), these things cannot be passed on from father to son. Rather, an individual has to himself believe and experience these things personally.

And *adoption* then followed/will follow these two creative acts:

Israel has already been adopted and is presently *God’s firstborn son* (Ex. 4:22, 23).

The adoption of *Christians* though is future and will occur at the conclusion of the present dispensation following the appearance of Christians before the judgment seat of Christ (*cf.* Rom. 8:15, 23; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5).

Thus, because of “creation,” Christians can presently be viewed as sons (*cf.* Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:5-8 [the Greek word *huios*, “son,” is used in all these passages]); but, because the “adoption” is still future, Christians cannot presently be viewed as firstborn sons.

(The preceding briefly introduces the material dealing with “God’s Firstborn Sons,” showing the why and the necessity, following redemption, of *sonship* and *adoption*.)

As previously shown, God presently has two firstborn Sons [*Christ* and *Israel*] and will one day have a third firstborn son [*the Church*, following the adoption, as seen in Heb. 12:23]. And only when God’s third firstborn son has been brought into existence can man realize *the regal purpose* for his creation, revealed at the beginning in Gen. 1:26-28.

For additional information on God’s firstborn Sons, refer to the author’s book, *GOD’S FIRSTBORN SONS*. Also see the Author’s pamphlets, “God’s Firstborn Son, ‘Christ,’” “God’s Firstborn Son, ‘Israel,’” and “God’s Firstborn Son, ‘the Church.’”

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