

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

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Sons of God #1

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Adam was formed from the soil of the earth and the breath of life was breathed into him. He was the son of God, for he came into being by a direct act of the Lord God (Genesis 2:7; Luke 3:38). No man born after Adam, except the second Man, the last Adam, Jesus, has ever been called a son of God. As the firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15), Jesus came to this earth and took on the form of man (Philippians 2:5-8) through a direct act of God (Luke 1:35). Jesus is the Son of God.

With the formation of Adam as the first son of God among his race, we are given a glimpse of God's plan for mankind, and that is to bring forth many sons of God. When John was caught up in spirit to see and hear mighty things, especially about New Jerusalem, he heard the loud voice of the One sitting on the throne declare: "**He who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son**" (Revelation 21:7).

The Lord has **declared the end from the beginning** (Isaiah 46:10), and He has expressed His heart to have sons, in fact, to **bring many sons to glory** (Hebrews 2:10). God's purpose of being all in all new will be achieved through bringing mankind into sonship.

In fact, the second coming of Christ is all about sonship. When the Son of God came to this earth the first time to die for the sin of the world, He came as the legitimate leader of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5). Judah's father, Israel (Jacob), blessed his son: "**The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples**" (Genesis 49:10 NASB). When the Son of God came to the earth over 2,000 years ago, He rightfully took the scepter of Judah to become the King of Judah. The Father has declared: "**I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain**" (Psalm 2:6), and all who believe on Jesus have been grafted into His kingdom as a true Judahite [Jew] (Romans 2:29), the good fig tree (nation) bearing the fruit of the kingdom (Matthew 21:43).

But this is only half of the equation, so to speak, for Jesus must come a second time, but this time, not in reference to the scepter but in reference to the birthright promised to Joseph and passed on to his sons (1 Chronicles 5:1-2). He comes as the antitype of Joseph. Israel (Jacob) blessed his son: "**Joseph is a fruitful bough** [literally, son], **a fruitful bough by a spring; its branches run over a wall**" (Genesis 49:22 NASB). In Hebrew, the word translated as *bough* is *ben*, which means "a son, as a builder of the family name." In this case, the family name is associated with **Israel**, not Jacob the supplanter but Israel, the one who came to acknowledge that **God rules**.

Scripture tells us that **Christ will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin**; however, there is a part B to His appearing, and it is **to those who eagerly await Him** (Hebrews 9:28). But who are the ones who eagerly await Him? Is it the entire church of our day? Are all His people eagerly looking for Him to come? Are all like the Thessalonians that were **waiting for His Son from heaven** (1 Thessalonians 1:10)? Or, are some indifferent to His coming or even mockers who say: "**Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation**" (2 Peter 3:4 NASB)? Surely, it cannot be this last group, for they have no eager heart to see the Lord. In fact, they would rather not see Him come and disrupt their lives, just like a host of religious leaders 2,000 years ago with His first appearing.

This issue of the hour, which is getting very late, pertains to this matter of sons of God. When He comes the second time, Jesus is coming to bring forth sons of God who will rule and reign with Him during the

millennial Kingdom or Tabernacles Age. He is coming for the heirs of the kingdom of God, the ones counted worthy to inherit the kingdom, the ones who have been trained to be placed as sons that can be entrusted with the Father's business, not only in the oncoming eon but in all subsequent ones, *the eons of the eons*. He is coming for those who eagerly await Him, even long to see Him, the love of their life.

In chapter eight of his Romans epistle, Paul expresses the very heart of the matter.

(14) For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (15) For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (16) The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, (17) and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. (18) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:14-18 NASB)

Becoming a son of God is about reigning with Christ as a son. Sonship and rulership go hand-in hand.

To become a son, one must first become a child of God through justification by faith and receiving an earnest of the spirit. All who believe on Jesus are grafted into the good fig tree of Judah and come under the reign of the King of Judah, not on the basis of works or genealogy but on the basis of faith and receiving a new life from above. As John declared: **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God** (John 1:12-13 NASB). God alone gives life to His children, just as He did to Adam. He has planted His seed in all of His children. John tells us that God's seed abides in one born of God (1 John 3:9).

But notice that sonship is about suffering while occupying bodies of death (mortal, corrupt). We start as children, but a child cannot be an heir of the Father's kingdom, entrusted to carry out the Father's business. Training of a child of God comes through suffering and, we need to add, discipline (Hebrews 12:4-11; Revelation 3:19). Our carnal flesh must be disciplined. It must die daily, which was Paul's testimony (1 Corinthians 15:31). But it is even more than this, for there are the sufferings of Christ.

After all, Paul sought **to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I (he) may attain to the resurrection [out-resurrection] from the dead** (Philippians 3:10-11 NASB). As I have written often, Paul sought to rise from among the dead in the out-resurrection or first resurrection that is reserved for the troop of the anointed first fruits (1 Corinthians 15:23), which speaks of the sons of God.

But, Paul was not alone, for Peter wrote of the sufferings of Christ as well.

(12) Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; (13) but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. (1 Peter 4:12-13 NASB)

A child growing up to be a son is one who follows the spirit of God and brings glory to God. Such a one will be reviled for the name of Christ in a world that is increasingly antichrist. But the suffering and reviling is worth it.

The sufferings of today might seem painful and, at times, overwhelming, but we need to be encouraged through Paul's word that **the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us**. Sonship is about coming to glory. Again, as Paul wrote: **For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison** (2 Corinthians 4:17 NASB). Let us grow up to be sons!