

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 #2

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As stated in the previous issue, 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 must have many sons if He is going to achieve His purpose of being all in all new.

Technically, a male born in a family is a son, even when he is a mere infant. However, he must grow up or mature to become a son that can be trusted with his father's business or estate. Also, since males and females can be children of God, when we see the word *son* in the context of bringing many sons to glory, we need to keep in mind that males and females are included in this sonship, for **there is neither male nor female in Christ** (Galatians 3:28).

When one is given the faith of the Son of God to believe on Him (Jesus), the person becomes a child of God, born from above with the seed of God (1 John 3:9). John wrote: that those who receive Him, that is, believe in His name, are given the right to become children of God, **born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God** (John 1:12-13). John also wrote: **Beloved, now we are children [teknon] of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is** (1 John 3:2 NASB).

This is a promise to all that believe, and it cannot be lost or taken away. However, this promise is not attained by all at the same time; some will come into it with the **first resurrection**, and others will come into it with the **second resurrection, saved, yet so as through fire** (1 Corinthians 3:15).

It seems that some groups of Christians believe that once one is a child of God, one is automatically a son of God and all come into sonship at the same time. Of course, this assumes that all become fully matured sons at the same time. In real life, this is not the case, for some children mature sooner than others; others seem to mature so slowly that they remain babes most of their lives. Consider how Paul evaluated the Corinthian believers.

(1) And I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly—as to babes in Christ; (2) with milk I fed you, and not with meat, for ye were not yet able, but not even yet are ye now able.... (1 Corinthians 3:1-2 YLT)

Even in the natural, vegetative world, which is used metaphorically throughout Scripture, all crops do not mature at the same time but at different seasons, and even within the same type of crop, some mature or ripen before others. Scripture speaks of first fruits, as well as barley, wheat, and grape harvests. Thus, there is a natural order of maturity throughout God's creation that includes mankind.

It is no different in the family of God, that is, among His children. Some mature quickly, some mature very slowly, and others may never come to maturity while they occupy mortal bodies; it may take the Great White Throne judgment of God's fiery law to mature them. Again, saved, yet so as through fire.

I would liken this maturation to how certain fruit is brought to maturity quickly so it can go to market. The fruit is picked while it is unripe and then subjected to certain environments (e.g., gases) that cause it to ripen quickly. Perhaps, the Great White Throne judgment might function in a similar manner.

The problem comes in when a proper distinction is not made between the millennial kingdom coming in the next eon (age) that is called by various names (i.e., the day of Christ, Lord's Day, day of the Lord, Kingdom Age, and Tabernacles Ages) and the eon that follows called God's Day or the day of God, when New Jerusalem comes into view. Every child of God will enter New Jerusalem as a son, but this is not

true of the Lord's Day. The Kingdom Age is reserved for the first fruits; the children of God that have matured to be trusted as sons to reign with Christ and do the Father's will. Not everyone that believes in this day will be counted worthy of being a son of the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ that will take root among the nations of our present earth over a thousand-year period, starting very soon.

According to Paul, children of God are to be adopted or placed as sons.

(4) But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, (5) so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons [huiiothesia]. (Galatians 4:4-5 NASB)

(4) ... In love (5) He predestined us to adoption as sons [huiiothesia] through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, (6) to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:4-6 NASB)

(14) For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons [huios] 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 [huiiothesia] by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (16) The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children [teknon] of God, (17) and if children [teknon], 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)

In these verses, we discover the Greek word *teknon*, which means "children"; the word *huios*, which means "son"; and the word *huiiothesia*, which is comprised of the words *huios* (son) and *thesia* (placement or establishment), and which conveys the thought of "adopting or placing a son."

The adoption as a son is not the same as an orphan being adopted by someone unknown to him. Adoption as a son means that the child knows the Father and is placed as a son in His kingdom. In other words, it is about the right to act on behalf of the Father, that is, to have authority in the affairs of the Father's house or kingdom. To be given such authority requires maturity in the son so that the Father can trust him to faithfully carry out His will. A child that does not know his Father and has not been trained and disciplined to know His will cannot be entrusted with the affairs of the kingdom.

Being an heir of God and with Christ is all about receiving an inheritance in the kingdom of God, something that was in the forefront of Paul's ministry (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 15:50; Galatians 3:18; 5:21; Ephesians 1:11, 14, 18; 5:5; Colossians 1:12; 3:24; Hebrews 1:14; 6:12; 9:15; 11:18; 12:17).

The ones growing up to be sons are led by the spirit of God. Obviously, they first must be justified by faith; believing on the Son, experiencing Passover by applying the blood of the Lamb to their heart and receiving an earnest of the spirit. The spirit of God tells one he is a child of God, but a child of God must be led by the Holy Spirit in order to be a son. The proof that one is maturing as a son is that the fruit of the spirit is manifested in the person's life (Galatians 5:22-25). A child must walk by the spirit if he expects to grow up to be a son worthy of the Father's inheritance in the oncoming eon. Children of God have been set free to know God as their Father, and they have a knowing within them that says their destiny is to be adopted as a son of God. For this reason, they cry out, "Abba! Father!"

However, there is a maturing process to being placed as a son, and that process requires suffering. Passover is a one-time experience on the journey from child to son. But maturing is a Pentecostal experience through which the child learns to obey the Father, often by denying self. Part of the suffering is the result of the Father's discipline of the child. This is a suffering within, but there are also sufferings without, such as the type the Lord Jesus and the apostles experienced at the hands of their countrymen; this might involve rejection and persecution. All of these things lead to suffering in the flesh of the child. But be encouraged; it is all for glory, the glory of being a son of God in the oncoming eon.

Nothing can be compared to the glory that will be revealed to the sons of God in the next eon.