

“¹ Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; ² But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. ³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: ⁴ But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. ⁶ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. ⁷ Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. ⁸ Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. ⁹ But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?”
(Ga 4:1-9)

The prophets announced that when Messiah came, there would be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is one of the fundamental differences between the Old Testament and the New. There are two mistakes that are made about the work of the Spirit. Some make too much of Him and obscure the Person and the Work of Jesus Christ. Some make too little of Him and think that they must bring forth good works by their own power and strength. Both are deadly to the Christian faith. In the first case, the Person and work of Christ is minimized as if it were not enough and that there is more for the Christian than can be found in Jesus Christ. Often this results in excesses in the flesh, the minimizing of doctrine and the commandments of Christ, as though we have moved on, beyond the precepts of Scripture. In the second case, the result is empty moralism and vain profession in which there is a form of godliness, but a denial of the power thereof.

Although Israel had many privileges and promises, yet the national covenant that was theirs did not give them the chief blessings, which are reserved for the elect. This is the reason that God was not pleased with many of them, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness. Because of this the nation was ultimately overthrown and their privileges were given to others, according to the words of Christ.

The words “Sons of God” are used in several ways in the Scriptures. Adam is called a son of God, because he was created in the image of God and God loved him and gave him dominion over the things that were created. But God did not give him the gift of eternal life and blessing, but placed him in a state of suspension, as it were, until he was tested. As we all know, Adam fell from that blessing, and was driven from Paradise. But what man lost in Adam, we gained in Christ. Just as Adam was made from the dust of the ground by God, so the Last Adam was formed in the body of the Virgin Mary by a special miracle, to redeem us from the sin and guilt that came upon the world through the disobedience of the First Adam. Though in Adam we are children of wrath, yet in Christ we are restored to the family of God, and Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren.

Angels are also called the sons of God, because they are in the image of God and are in the family of God in heaven. Magistrates and judges are also called sons of God because they have some of the dignity of God granted to them in order to govern the world and the church.

But there are wonderful distinctions that raise the elect of God to a much higher dignity than any of these. I would like to speak of these today.

- I. We are children of God by a special spiritual regeneration.
 - a. John 1:12,13: But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
 - i. He denies that this birth is of natural means: “not of blood”
 - ii. He denies that this birth is of the human desire: “nor of the will of the flesh” [Hagar and Abraham]
 - iii. He denies it is of human preference: “nor of the will of man” as Isaac seeking to promote Esau.
 - iv. It is a regeneration from God—by the power and the will of God, than men are renewed.
 - b. Those born again have the right to become the Sons of God: “Right and power” a legal right that is also an energized legal right. “a right to the tree of life” Rev. 22:14
 - i. Either to “enjoy the privileges”
 - ii. Or to “act as a Son of God” as in Matt. 5:45
 - iii. Or to “wait for the glorious future of the children of God” Romans 8:23 Wait in hope.
- II. We are children of God because we are married to Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. This is a very pleasing figure of speech, but we will pass on to the third thing.
- III. We are children of God by adoption.
 - a. Romans 8:15-17 *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.

- b. This is in Christ alone: Being in the image of God does not confer a right in itself to eternal life, for Adam fell as did many of the Angels.
 - i. Heb. 1:1,2 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
 - ii. We become joint heirs with Christ, as we saw above. We cannot inherit the blessing through Adam, for He fell; we cannot inherit in our own right, for we are under the curse; we can only inherit in Christ, the last Adam, and through Him we are adopted into the family of God.

The mysteries of God are set before us with the use of figures of speech and metaphors, in such a way that the words actually are used by God to convey meaning which is from the words, but words used with a special spiritual significance. The meaning is derived from the words, so we are not at liberty to make them mean whatever we want them to mean. As Witsius says: *“In order to express the original of spiritual life, and of the image of God in man, it says, that he was born of God: to set forth our most delightful union with Christ, which is full of mutual affection, it calls it marriage: to show the ground and firmness of our inheritance, it declares that we are adopted in Christ.”* It is with this third figure that we are concerned with today.

- IV. What does it mean to be adopted into God’s family, to be an heir of God?
 - a. We are admitted into the inner fellowship of the family of God. We are not servants but children and God tells us the things that He will do. The Spirit searches the deep things of God, and has revealed them to His children through the Scriptures, according to I Cor. 2. We are taught of God Himself to love one another and to be partakers of His holiness, for as children we receive the direct attention of our Father, to discipline us and to prepare us for heaven.
 - b. Our inheritance is a spiritual one: what a curse an earthly inheritance can be. Israel believes even today that her inheritance is the land of Palestine, and the whole world is now involved in the wrangling over that earthly inheritance. No wonder Jesus said, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth...” As Christians we do not have inordinate care over earthly things, for we know that our inheritance is in heaven. The earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof; there is no “holy land” for the Christian, but our inheritance is God, just as He was for Abraham. “Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” Note these verses:
 - i. Luke 6:30-35 *Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*
 - ii. I Cor. 9:24-26 *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*
 - c. What is this inheritance, which we inherit as the sons of God in Jesus Christ:
 - i. We are sons of the eternal king—no royalty on earth can trump this. Behave with dignity: you are a child of the King.
 - ii. We are made partakers of the divine nature: 2Pet.1:4. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, where we are made like Christ.
 - iii. We are married to Jesus Christ: He is the fairest of Ten Thousand, the Bright and Morning Star. Never did a bride have such a husband as this one.
 - iv. The gifts that He brings to us are great beyond measure, though despised by the world.
 - 1. The whole world belongs to the sons of God. I Cor. 3:21-23 *Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*
 - a. All your needs will be supplied from this bountiful world. This is the physical meaning of the Sabbath day. You can rest in the assurance of God’s provision. The ungodly is never full, but constantly thirsts after more of that which can never satisfy.
 - b. The whole world reveals the glory of God and would lead each of us to praise and glorify God who made us and who is our Father. This is His world—his house.

- c. All things work together for my good, to prepare me for heaven and eternal life.
 - d. This present world, though ours, yet is subject to vanity, and we look for a new heaven and a new earth.
2. A spiritual kingdom. James 2:5 *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?* Luke 22:29: And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; Romans 8:17 *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. We cannot escape the cross, for the present world is vanity, and our true inheritance is in that which is to come. But we overcome all things now through the blood of Jesus Christ.
3. God himself: “I am thy shield and exceeding great reward.” If God be for us, who can be against us!!
- a. Victory over all evil. Ps. 91:2 *I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.* And many other passages. This does not mean sinlessness or the removal of the corruption of our nature, but much more; we overcome even in the presence of corruption and evil within and without.
 - b. Psalm 73:23-28 *Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.*
If God gives us Himself, what shall we lack that is for our good and comfort and pleasure.
 - c. Everything in heaven and in earth is the inheritance of Jesus Christ because of His perfect obedience, and because we belong to Him, we inherit along with Him in the glory of the New Heaven and the New Earth.

May God bless you.