

190710-1 Doctrine Series, The Sons of God-CThurman

29. The Sons of God*

All believers are by Christ united to God; by which union, God is one with them, and they are one with Him. All believers are the sons of God and joint heirs with Christ, to whom are made the promises of this life and that which is to come.

1Th.1:1; Jn.17:21, 20:17; He.2:11; 1Jn.4:16; Gal.2:19, 20; Ro.8:17.

**Formerly Article 27 of 1644 COF*

The first statement, 'All believers are by Christ united to God; by which union, God is one with them, and they are one with Him,' is union by reconciliation because it is attributed to what Jesus Christ did at the cross. But before this all believers were united to Christ by the Heavenly Father because He elected them before the foundation of the world. So, we are united to Christ by the Father's election of grace, and we are united to the Father by the Son's reconciliatory death.

He.2.11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren ...

This is the fourth of four reasons (cf. vss.2, 5, 10, 11) cited in this chapter why we should give the more earnest heed to the things which God has spoken *to us*, lest we should at any time *let them slip*. This 4th reason is because we have been brought into union with God.

In the Bible there three different groups identified by the phrase *sons of God*. This lesson takes into consideration each group. They are:

- The sons of God (in the book of Genesis, the descendants of Seth);
 - The sons of God (in the book of Job, the angels); and,
 - The sons of God (in the N.T., the children of God).
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- **The sons of God refer to the natural descendants of Seth, which distinguishes them from the natural descendants of Cain.**

Ge 4:25 ¶ And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth (שֵׁת, Sheth): For God, said she, hath appointed (root שֵׁת, sheeth) me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

Though Cain murdered Abel, God raised up Seth in Abel's stead, and as it were the *seed of the woman* (Ge.3.15) was raised to stand in the place of the dead.

26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD. (marg., to call themselves by the name of the LORD; these sons began to be distinguished from the sons of Cain.)

...

6.1 ¶ And it came to pass, when men (a general reference to both Seth & Cain's lineage.) began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

2 That the sons of God (the lineage of Seth) saw the daughters of men (those of the lineage of Cain) that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

So there began to be a merging of what used to be two separated societies. The result of this merging was was a one-world, antediluvian society which became corrupt.

Ge 6:6 ¶ And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

...

12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

The notion that the phrase, *the sons of God*, in Genesis chapter 6 refers to angels should be rejected for three reasons:

1. Jesus said that the angels which are in heaven do not marry. (Mt.22.30) While that is not enough for some to conclude that no angel, elect or fallen, marries, there is even a greater consideration than this for rejecting that these are angels.

2. There is nothing in Scripture suggesting that angels procreate. Add to this an even greater difficulty, which is;
3. Proposing that angels might procreate with humans. This stands against the Biblical law of procreation, which says *like begets like*, which is found in these words: *after their kind*. (cf. Ge.1.11, 12, 21, 24, 25; 6.19, 20; 7.14, 23b; Le.19.19; 1Co.15.39)

So, in the Book of Genesis the sons of God refer to the descendants of Seth.

- **The sons of God refer to the elect angels which are in an heavenly or spiritual principality.**

Job uses the phrase *sons of God* three times. It always refers to the elect angels.

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves (see definition in 2.1, below) before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

Does this refer to a time when the elect of God among mankind presented themselves before the LORD for worship? Is this suggesting that at this occasion of their worship Satan came among them to be a disrupting or corrupting influence? While I do not doubt that Satan might come among the assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ during their worship services to do an evil work (Lk.22.21, of Judas) is this anything like to what Job refers? Will this interpretation hold true in the next instance cited in the book of Job?

Job 2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

to present themselves, 16; 2.1 (twice), לְהִתְיַצֵּב, l^e-hith-yatz-tzav, prefixed preposition לְ, to, and the verb in Hithpael (reflexive)

infin. of יָצַב, which is always in Hithpael; KJV tss. *to stand, resort, remain, withstand, present themselves, to stand still, to set themselves, stand fast, stand forth.*

Now both the sons of God and Satan presented themselves before the LORD. To be consistent, whatever may be said about the presentation of the sons of God before the Lord in the first instance should be said of Satan also. Few would deny that the text is hard to understand. But to interpret it to say that Satan joined with the sons of God, the elect, for the purposes of worship adds more difficulty than it does clarity. But if the *sons of God* refer to the elect angels, and if we remember their sphere of operation the text might become clearer. Angels are called *ministering spirits* of the LORD.

Heb 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for (διά, because of) them who shall be heirs of salvation?

It is my opinion that this occasion of the presentation of the *sons of God* and Satan before the Lord was because God had summoned them to appear before Him. These had been ministering in things about the life of this man named Job. And at this moment there is about to be a change in the way that they should continue to minister to Job because the Lord would have him *enter into temptation*. (Mt.6.13)

The model prayer concerns this matter:

Mt 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Ge 32:1 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. (as he headed back to his homeland, and in preparation of meeting his brother, Esau.

2Chr.18.18 Again he said, Therefore hear the word of the LORD; I saw the LORD sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left.

19 And the LORD said, Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one spake saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner.

20 Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith?

21 And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the LORD said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do even so.

Ps 34:7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

(Consider the episode of the false prophet Balaam & the ass speaking, how the angel of the LORD was as an adversary to Balaam; Nu.22.22-34)

Again, in the last instance of the use of the phrase *sons of God*, both by Job and in the O.T., it is my opinion that it refers to the angels.

Job 38:6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof (of the earth) fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The LORD demanded that Job answer him concerning where he was when the LORD essentially created the earth, and when the *sons of God shouted for joy*. Obviously, concerning Job's physical experience, he didn't yet exist except in the eternal mind of God. The LORD revealed to Job that these spirits witnessed the establishment of the earth.

- **The sons of God refer to the chosen/elected in Christ before the foundation of the world.**

The phrase, *the Son of God*, which is in the singular number, is only once found in the Old Testament. It is in the book of the prophet Daniel. It refers to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Da 3:25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

This phrase in the plural, *sons of God*, in the N.T. only refers to all that shall come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Explain what it means to have faith in Christ:

Faith in Christ has reference to one's understanding that Jesus Christ is the Son of God come in human flesh to die for *my* sins, and that He raised from the dead to give eternal life. Having this understanding concerning Christ is evidence of the genuine fruit of the Spirit which is called faith. Such a person as this has found relief from the guiltiness of sin in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross for him. Apart from this, good feelings are not an evidence of faith at all. Drunkards feel good when they can finally put away the bottle, but it has nothing to do with a faith that is received as a gift of God in the new birth. A fornicator might feel good because he or she has married, because he knows that God's law condemns fornication. But that has nothing to do with faith in Christ. A smoker can feel good that he has put away a terrible, self-destructive habit. But many quit smoking who have no knowledge of Jesus Christ's death for them. A murderer feels a sense of relief from a guilty conscience and still dies as every other sinner because he has not believed in the only begotten Son of God. The truth is as the Lord Jesus said it, *Lu 13:3 I tell you, Nay (suffering tragedy doesn't mean one is a sinner above another): but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* No matter how one feels, to die in unbelief is to perish forever and ever, and to die in faith is to awaken in the presence of the Lord.

The phrase, *sons of God*, is translated from essentially two Greek phrases; each phrase is translated interchangeably the *sons of God* and the *children of God*, τέκνα & υἱοί. The first seems to stress *certain* children; and the second, *relationship*.

τέκνα, τέκνω τοῦ, & τένων του ... Θεοῦ,

- *sons of God*, Jn.1.12; Phl.2.15; 1Jn.3.1, 2;
- *children of God*, Ro.8.21; 9.8; Jn.11.52; 1Jn.3.10; 5.2.

τέκνον, refers to particular or specific children and is tss. in the singular as *child, son, Son, & daughter*; τέκνα, the plural, as *children, sons*.

υἱοὶ & υἱῶν τοῦ ... Θεοῦ,

- *sons of God*, Ro.8.14, 19; Mt.5.9;
- *children of God*, Ro.9.26; Gal.3.26;
υἱός is singular and tss. *child, foal, son, Son*; υἱοί, plural, *children, sons*; emphasizing relationship.

The first place that the phrase *the sons of God* is found in the New Testament is in John's gospel. In John 1.12 God grants to those which receive the Son and believe on His name the right to become the sons of God. For one to become a son of God He, God, must grant the right.

Joh 1:12 But as many as received him (who was in the beginning the Word, and was with God, and was God, Jn.1.1), to them gave he

received, ἔλαβον, 3ppl. aor. ind. act. of λαμβάνω, to receive.

gave he, ἔδωκεν, 3ps. aor. ind. act. of δίδωμι, to give, grant;
the issue is not the time, but the fact that He gave.

power (ἐξουσία, the authority or right) to become the sons of God (τέκνα Θεοῦ),

to become, γένησθαι, aor. infin. of γίνομαι, to become.

even to them that believe (part. pres, are believing) on his name:

13 Which were born (ἐγεννήθησαν, 3ppl. aor. ind. pass. of γεννάω), not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

A good example which parallel's the idea contained in verse 12 is to consider how one becomes a U.S. citizen. Which comes first, the grant to the right of citizenship or citizenship? Obviously, one must first be *granted* (ἔδωκεν) *the right* (ἐξουσία), and then one may become a citizen of the United States of America. Following God's grant to be a son of God is one's receiving and believing on His name.

The same apostle wrote years later that we are called the sons of God because He freely *granted* His love upon us.

1Jo 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed

hath bestowed, δέδωκεν, perf. ind. act. of δίδωμι, to give, grant; a perfected, completed act

upon us, that (ἵνα, hina, in order that) we should be called

we should be called, κληθῆμεν, 1ppl. aor. subj. pass. of καλέω, to call.

the sons of God (τέκνα Θεοῦ): therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

The Father has given or granted His love to us, in order that we should be called His sons ...

Few would disagree that there first must be a grant to the right of sonship from God before there can be any sons of God; that there must be a grant of His love before any may be called His sons. God's act to *bestow, give, or grant* the right to be the sons of God guarantees that they shall receive and believe on Christ just as God's act to elect some guarantees that they shall be saved, be holy, and believe on Christ. It is essentially predestination to reach a certain end.

*Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
2Th 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth ...*

So, the sons of God are predestinated through life to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Ro 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

And they are predestinated in the resurrection to stand as sons to the fullest extent.

*Eph.1.5 Having predestinated us unto the **adoption of children** (or, standing as sons) by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

adoption of children, υἱοθεσία, acc. sing. of υἱοθεσία, υἱός a son + τίθημι KJV tss. to be appointed, set, purposed, set forth, conceived, committed, laid down, given; υἱοθεσία, is tss. adoption (Ro.8.15, 23; 9.4), adoption of sins (Gal.4.5), adoption of children (Eph.1.5)

Ro 8:23 And not only they (referring to creation groaning and travailing to be delivered from the bondage of corruption), but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit,

firstfruits of the Spirit, ‘And the “first-fruits of the Spirit” must be either what he first worketh in us, or all his fruits in us with respect unto the full harvest that is to come, or the Spirit himself as the

beginning and pledge of future glory.' *The Works of John Owen*, vol.4, p.411

My opinion is that this phrase, *the firstfruits of the Spirit*, refers to that first work of the Spirit of God which causes us to cry out 'Abba, Father.' (Ro.8.15) Isn't this the first thing that the Spirit witnesses to our Spirit?

Ro.8.16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God ... (He assures me that I am His, and He is mine!)

even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for (looking for, expecting) the adoption (υἰοθεσία, the standing as sons), to wit, the redemption of our body. (our body's redemption)

The idea today in the word *adoption* is not what the Bible means. Biblical adoption is the moment that the sons of God finally stand in their Christ-like, glorified forms. The *adoption* is a future event. Adoption isn't the initiation of the relationship of the sons to the Father, but it is the time when the sons receive the inheritance, standing in their rightful places. Those that receive and believe in Christ are sons already.

Ro.8.14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

...

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

1Jo 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God (the experience of the relationship in Christ began at the new birth), and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

But it is at the second coming of Christ that the sons of God should come into the present & eternal form of the Son of God. As He is now in a body incorruptible,

glorious, powerful, immortal, and spiritual, so should also the sons of God be at His coming.

1Co.15.42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Let me make a short remark to close the subject concerning the sons of God.

In eternity past, God the Father chose some from all of humanity and gave them to His only begotten Son for the purpose of bringing many sons to glory. (Jn.6.39; Ro.9.21; Eph.1.4; He.2.10) These He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son in life, and at the resurrection to be raised into the same form as Christ's glorious body. (Ro.8.29; Eph.1.5; Phl.3.21) The elect of God shall become the sons of God when they receive and believe in Christ, and they shall one day come into that final standing as sons at the resurrection.

How do I know that I am one of the sons of God? Are you one of those that has received the One who was in the beginning the Word of God, who was with God, and is God? Genuine faith understands who this Man is: He is Jesus, the Christ & Son of God. Have you believed on His name? Do you believe that this is the One that God the Father sent to die for your sins? It doesn't matter what we think or what we feel, apart from this there can be no true sons of God. If you understand that Christ died for you and you haven't said so; why haven't you said so? The very firstfruits of the Spirit works within us to cry, *Abba, Father*. Let the brethren know that you know Him. Make a public declaration of your faith in Christ. Identify with Him by baptism, and join with this church, or a church like this one and walk with Christ and His people until the time of the *adoption of sons*.