

LESSON 11: THE FAMILY OF GOD

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

The Family's Everlasting Nature

- I. Consisting of *all true Christians*.
 - a. Not of our earthly associations.
 - b. But of our heavenly association. (Jn. 1:13)
- II. Having *one heavenly Father*. (2 Co. 6:18)
 - a. All *born* of him by the Spirit of adoption through faith in Christ Jesus. (Ga. 3:26; cf. Jn 3:8)
 - b. All *belong* to him as dearly beloved sons and daughters. (Ro. 8:15)
- III. Rejoicing in *one name, Jesus Christ*. (Ac. 4:12; Co. 3:11)
 - a. As our tender elder brother and governing head.
 - i. In whom we enjoy union with God.
 - ii. From whom we receive our charge from God.
 - b. As the sole object of all our hope and praise.
 - i. By whom we enjoy the myriad blessings and comforts of God.
 - ii. Through whom we render praise, thanks, confession, and petitions to God. (Ps. 145:10)
- IV. Sharing *one spiritual likeness*. (Ep. 4:4-6; 2 Co. 5:14, 15)
 - a. One body—diverse persons yet united in heart by the Head, our one Lord Christ.
 - b. One Spirit—diverse opinions yet united in mind to the Heart of our one Lord Christ.
 - c. One faith—diverse experiences yet united by simple faith in our one Lord Christ.
 - d. One baptism—diverse expressions yet united as participants with our one Lord Christ.

The Family's Current Position

- I. The division of the family only by place: *some in heaven, some on earth*.
 - a. Those in heaven are at rest yet incomplete.
 - i. Resting in the bosom of Christ in glory from their cross, work, battles, lessons, and thus matchlessly happy, fearless, untroubled, untempted, unworried. (Ph. 1:23)
 - ii. Lacking only the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of their bodies, and the ingathering together of all the saints to be complete—yet sure of these things.
 - b. Those on earth are at labor yet persevering. (2 Co. 5:4)
 - i. Laboring in the hope of glory, yet scattered, striving against sin, struggling with the world, carrying their cross, resisting the devil, crucifying the flesh, and beset with heavy thoughts that no cross is so heavy, no work so toilsome, and no heart so hard as his own, both unknown to and tempted by the world which shall be the least part of their inheritance.
 - ii. Persevering according to the measure of grace given each one until the coming of the Lord, and longing for that heavenly reunion of all the saints in glory.
- II. The difference of the family only by degree: *some imperfect, some perfect*.
 - a. Both parts of the family *love the same Savior*.
 - b. Both parts of the family are *saints*. (Ga. 5:17; cf. Hb. 12:23)
 - c. Both parts of the family are alike *God's children*.

- d. Both parts of the family are alike *God's soldiers*. (cf. Ne. 4:17)
- e. Both parts of the family are alike *safe and secure*. (cf. Ge. 15; 1 Pt. 1:5).
- f. **Note:** *We see the imperfect part, but not the whole*. We must never measure our family's everlasting, unfading privileges by the present condition of God's family. We see but the shadow of the Church, not the fullness. There shall be on the last day a "*multitude which no man can number*" united, triumphant, perfect, safe, spotless, *glorious!* (Rv. 7:9)

The Family's Future Prospects

- I. The whole family of God shall all be *brought safely home* one day. (Jn. 10:28)
- II. The whole family of God shall all have *glorious bodies* one day. (1 Co. 15:51-53; Rv. 21:5)
- III. The whole family of God shall all be *perfected in holiness* one day. (So. 6:10; Ep. 5:25-27; Co. 2:10)
- IV. The whole family of God shall all be *gathered together* one day. (Rv. 7:9)
- V. The whole family of God shall all be *united in heart and mind* one day. (Ph. 2:5-11)
- VI. The whole family of God shall all be *eternally satisfied* one day. (Ps. 17:15)

Concluding Applications

- I. What merely earthly family is *better, safer, or sweeter* than the family of God?
 - a. Our *blood relations* fail, even mistreat, and soon leave us, but our *heavenly relations* will stand by our side at the Last Judgement, and we shall enjoy such fellowship from the first greeting as we *never knew* among the closest relatives on Earth.
 - b. Our *voluntary communities* mutate into things from which we are soon excluded, but our *heavenly community* shall never change but from one degree of glory to the next.
 - c. Our *closest friends* neglect us, but our *heart-friends* know what it means to struggle with sin, to long for Christ, and to live in the fear of the Lord.
 - d. Our *employers* can and will replace us, but our *beloved colaborers* in heaven and on earth know full well that each of God's children are of infinite significance and irreplaceable.
 - e. This *nation* may not survive the century, but the *Israel of God* has a citizenship that is kept in heaven, one nation under God never again to be moved.
 - f. Our *denomination* may fall into error, but the *Church of Christ* is established in righteousness forever even as its King is established in righteousness.
 - g. When Christ returns, the book will close on every earthly family, but the family of God will be united at last.