

God's Firstborn Sons

A Study About Sons, First-
born Sons, Adoption, and
Inheritance

Arlen L. Chitwood

**God's
Firstborn Sons**

“For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth
for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:19).

Cover Photograph: Atlas Mountains, French Morocco, 1955

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By the Same Author —

THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE
HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES
THE MOST HIGH RULETH
RUN TO WIN
SO GREAT SALVATION
SALVATION OF THE SOUL
FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES
IN THE LORD'S DAY
FOCUS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
LET US GO ON
REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST
MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM
THE BRIDE IN GENESIS
SEARCH FOR THE BRIDE
THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE
SEVEN, TEN GENERATIONS
JUDE
RUTH
ESTHER

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FOREWORD

When referring to firstborn sons in the human realm, *only one son* can be in view through the natural process of procreation. But, in the Divine realm, the whole of the matter is seen from a different perspective.

Though God possesses *only one firstborn Son* through procreation (Jesus), as in the human realm (cf. John 3:16; Heb. 1:6), He can possess *other firstborn sons* through adoption (i.e., God taking a son and adopting that son into a firstborn status).

And this is exactly what God has done with one son and will do yet future with another son.

The nation of Israel is *God's son because of creation* (Isa. 43:1, 7), and this nation is *God's firstborn son because of a subsequent adoption* (Rom. 9:4):

“Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son [because of creation], even my firstborn [because of a subsequent adoption]” (Ex. 4:22b).

Then God is about to bring *another firstborn son* into existence. God, through His Spirit, is presently leading Christians from immaturity to maturity through what is seen in Heb. 12:5-8 as “child-training” (the Greek word, used in both noun and verb forms in this passage, is from a form of a word referring to a *young child* — thus, the translation, “child-training”). And this word, contextually, has to do with “instruction” or “teaching,” which is the manner in which the translators of the KJV, NASB, and NIV translated the word in a similar context in II Tim. 3:16.

And those Christians who allow “child-training” (or “instruction,” “teaching”) are referred to in *a present sense as sons*, something possible because of *a prior creation* (II Cor. 5:17; cf. Eph. 2:10).

Then, *the present child-training of sons* is with a view to *adoption yet future*, in order that these *sons* (through this future adoption) might be placed in the position of *firstborn sons*, allowing them to exercise *the rights of the firstborn* (Heb. 12:16, 17, 23).

And the preceding is with a view to God, in that day, having *three firstborn Sons (Christ, Israel, and the Church) to occupy positions of power and authority in His kingdom*.

Only *Sons* can rule in God's kingdom. And, within the human realm, only *firstborn Sons* can rule.

Sons rule the earth today (“angels” — *sons* because of creation), but God is about to remove the present order of sons and give the kingdom to a new order of Sons — *three firstborn Sons* — from the human realm.

Those forming *the nation of Israel*, presently God's firstborn son but also a disobedient son, will, following the nation being brought to the place of repentance, occupy positions of power and authority over the nations from the earthly land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Those forming *the Church*, following the adoption into a firstborn status (as seen in Heb. 12:23), will occupy positions of power and authority over the nations from a heavenly sphere, that heavenly sphere presently occupied by Satan and his angels.

And *Christ*, God's only begotten firstborn Son, will rule the nations from both spheres of the kingdom. He will rule from David's throne in the midst of His people, Israel (God's firstborn son), *on the earth*; and He will rule from His Own throne with His co-heirs (God's firstborn son) *in the heavens*.

The whole of Scripture moves in this direction, beginning in the Book of Genesis and ending in the Book of Revelation. And that is what this book, GOD'S FIRSTBORN SONS, is about.

1

Christ

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;

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.

And again when he bringeth in [*lit.*, ‘And when He shall again bring in’] the firstbegotten into the world [‘the inhabited world’], he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him (Heb. 1:1-6).

God has many “Sons.” *Angels*, because of their special and individual creation, are viewed as “sons of God” (Gen. 6:4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). *The first man, the first Adam*, for the same reason as seen in the angelic realm — a special and individual creation — was

also viewed as God's "son" (Luke 3:38b). Adam's descendants though, following the fall, were not viewed in this same manner. Rather, they were viewed as *sons of Adam*, or *sons of his progeny*. They were revealed to be *sons of a fallen individual, or sons of his descendants* (cf. Gen. 5:3ff; 11:10ff; Luke 3:23-38).

(The word "son" only appears once in the Greek text throughout the genealogy in Luke 3:23-38 — at the very beginning, in v. 23a ["the son of Joseph"]). The structure of the Greek text though [a list of articular genitives, beginning in v. 23b] necessitates that the thought of *son*, though not shown in each succeeding generation, be continued from its introductory usage and understood throughout the genealogy. This is why translators have shown the word in italics in each generation, following its introductory usage, all the way back to Adam, "the *son of God*.")

In the Divine realm, *the one created* (whether an angel or a man) is viewed as a "son." In the human realm, *the one begotten* is viewed as a "son." In the former realm, "sons of God" are in view; in the latter realm, "sons of a fallen creature" are in view.

Within God's economy, "sonship" is inseparably connected with *regality*, in both the angelic and the human realms. *Angels*, "sons of God," were created to have a part in God's government of the universe. And *man*, a "son of God," was created for exactly the same purpose — to *first* replace the incumbent ruler of this earth (Satan, a disqualified ruler), and *then* to subsequently occupy regal positions beyond the earth, in God's universal kingdom. "Sonship," in this respect, implies *rulership*.

But "sonship" among Adam's descendants following the fall is another matter, which *cannot be connected with regality in this same respect*. Descendants of Adam, following the fall, could no longer be looked upon as "sons of God." Rather, they could only be looked upon as *sons of a fallen individual, possessing the same fallen nature as their father* (cf. Gen. 5:3ff).

Thus, following man's fall, *redemption* became necessary if man was to ever realize the purpose for his prior creation. This was something which God brought to pass immediately following man's sin, something involving *death* and *shed blood*. And once

God had established matters in this respect, *no change* could ever occur. *Redemption* at any subsequent point in Scripture would *always be the same* — that brought to pass on the basis of *death and shed blood*.

But *redemption* itself has nothing to do with “sonship.” Adam, as Satan, was a “son of God” before his fall; and he remained a “son of God” following the fall. Adam’s fall wrought no change in his position as *God’s son* (though he was no longer in a position to exercise that portended by sonship — *regality*).

And, relative to Adam’s descendants, who are not “sons of God,” the converse of matters pertaining to redemption and sonship are equally true. The redemption of Adam’s descendants does not restore the sonship standing possessed by Adam. *One (redemption, or even the fall itself, necessitating redemption) has nothing to do with the other (with sonship)*.

“Sonship” results from *creation alone*, not redemption. This was something originally established in the angelic realm and then subsequently seen in the human realm in Genesis chapters one and two. And, as the established means for “redemption” *never changes* throughout Scripture, the established means for bringing into existence “a son of God” *never changes* throughout Scripture as well.

Thus, in order for God to place Adam’s progeny back into the position for which man was created — to rule and to reign — fallen man must not only be *redeemed* but *creation* must again be involved, for only *sons of God* can rule in God’s kingdom.

That is to say, God must not only redeem fallen man but He must also perform a special creation of a nature which would place man back in the position of “God’s son.” Apart from this dual act, man would *forever* be estranged from the reason God brought him into existence.

Then, because of the rights of primogeniture (rights of the firstborn) which God established in the human realm (seen in the position which Christ holds as God’s Son — that of *Firstborn*, through being begotten by the Father), the one to hold the sceptre must be more than just God’s son to realize *these established rights*. He, as Christ, must be a *firstborn Son of God*.

And God accomplished/will accomplish this through the process of adoption (Gk. *huiotesia*, "son-placing"). Adoption in Scripture is connected with *sons*, not with children. The process has to do with taking one who is already a son (because of creation) and placing that son in a firstborn status (through adoption).

Viewing the entire matter from the beginning, man is saved via the birth from above. *The Spirit breathes life* into the one having no life, on the basis of *death* and *shed blood*, allowing man to pass "from death unto life" (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1). This has been God's *only means* of salvation for fallen man since the matter was introduced in the opening three chapters of Genesis.

Only then do matters having to do with *sonship*, or a *subsequent firstborn status within sonship*, enter into the matter. *Creation* must be involved in the former and *adoption* in the latter. And neither creation nor adoption enters into matters surrounding the birth from above. Both are always subsequent to the birth from above.

Creation during the past dispensation had to do with Jacob and his descendants through his twelve sons, for God took Jacob and performed a special creative act — one which, as the Adamic creation *preceding the fall*, had to do with *the physical man* and could be passed on from father to son (Isa. 43:1-10).

Creation during the present dispensation has to do with an individual's positional standing "in Christ." God takes an individual who has been born from above and places him "in Christ," resulting in *an entirely new creation* (II Cor. 5:17) — something which occurs at the time of the birth from above, though subsequent to this birth. And because this has to do with *the spiritual man* rather than the physical, these things cannot be passed on from father to son. Rather, an individual has to himself believe and experience these things personally.

And *adoption* then follows these two creative acts. Israel has already been adopted and is presently *God's firstborn son* (Ex. 4:22, 23). The adoption of Christians though is future (*cf.* Rom. 8:15, 23; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5).

Thus, because of "creation," Christians can presently be viewed as *sons* (*cf.* Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:5-8 [the Gk. word *huios*, "son," is used in these passages]); but, because the "adop-

tion” is still future, Christians cannot presently be viewed as *firstborn sons*.

(The preceding briefly introduces this three-part series on “God’s Firstborn Sons,” showing the why and necessity of *sonship* and *adoption* with respect to *regality*. As previously shown, God presently has two firstborn Sons [Christ and Israel] and will one day have a third firstborn son [the Church, following the adoption]. And only when God’s third firstborn son has been brought into existence can man realize *the regal purpose* for his creation revealed at the beginning, in Gen. 1:26-28.

Both “creation” with respect to *sonship* and “adoption” with respect to a *firstborn standing*, in relation to both Israel and Christians, will be dealt with more fully in Chapters II, III. The remainder of Chapter I will deal with God’s Son from eternity, the One possessing a standing as Firstborn, *through birth*, providing Him with the rights of primogeniture within the human realm in relation to His position as the second Man, the last Adam.)

GOD’S SON FROM ETERNITY

There has never been a time when Christ was not God’s Son. He has been God’s Son from eternity, always co-existing and being co-equal with the Father.

But, though there has never been a time when the Son did not exist and occupy the position of God’s Son, being co-equal with the Father, there has been a time when the Son did not occupy the position of *Firstborn* in the human realm. God, at a point in time, took His Son and, *through birth*, placed Him in the position of *Firstborn* (God’s “only begotten Son”) — a necessary position for His Son to realize the rights of primogeniture as the second Man, the last Adam.

Thus, when dealing with the incarnation, far more is involved than Christ becoming a Man in order to redeem fallen man. Salvation which fallen man possesses today is only the beginning of the matter. Salvation is for a *revealed purpose*, which has to do *with man ultimately being placed back in the position for which he was created*. In this respect, the reason for the incarnation covers the whole panorama of the matter — *from the new birth to the adoption*

of sons.

Note what Jesus told Pilate in John 18:37 in response to the question, “Art thou a king then? [*lit.*, ‘So you are a King!’ (a statement, or a statement in the form of a question, worded in the Gk. text in a manner expecting a ‘Yes’ response)].” And Jesus responded in complete keeping with that which Pilate had stated. Rather than as in the KJV — “Thou sayest that I am a king...” — the translation should be more along the lines of “Yes! You say truly that I am a King” (*Ref. Weymouth*). Jesus then went on to say, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world...”

Christ was born *King* (Matt. 2:2), but He came into the world for purposes surrounding the complete panorama of redemption. The incarnation was for purposes foreshadowed by God’s work throughout the six days in Genesis chapter one, and the incarnation has its fulfillment in that foreshadowed by God’s rest on the seventh day in Genesis chapter two.

Then there will be a further fulfillment beyond that in the eternal ages beyond the seventh day of rest, which Scripture deals with only sparingly. Man in that day beyond the Messianic Era will exercise power of *a universal nature*, for this power will emanate from “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1, 3), a throne from which *universal rule* will emanate.

At the time Jesus appeared before Pilate, shortly after the interchange with Pilate relative to His Kingship, the Jews accused Christ of *making Himself* “the Son of God” (John 19:7b; *cf.* II Sam. 7:12-14). This resulted in Pilate becoming even “more afraid” (v. 8), for *he apparently knew*, in complete keeping with his previous conversation with Jesus, *the implications involved if Christ were truly God’s Son*.

As previously shown, “sonship” implies *rulership*; and this is clearly seen in the Jewish religious leaders’ next accusation, which immediately followed their statement relative to Christ’s claim to be *God’s Son*: “...whosoever *maketh himself a king* [*i.e.*, a statement in complete keeping with their previous accusation — Christ had ‘made himself the Son of God’ (v. 7)] speaketh against Caesar” (v. 12b).

The picture is similar to that seen in Ex. 4:22, 23. God had

instructed Moses to tell Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, even my firstborn." And Pharaoh was expected to understand from Moses' statement that God recognized this lowly nation of slaves (the Israelites) in subjection to the most powerful Gentile nation of that day (the Egyptians) as *His firstborn son, the nation in possession of the rights of primogeniture, the nation which God recognized as possessing the right to hold the sceptre.*

In John chapters eighteen and nineteen, *God's firstborn Son, Christ*, stood before Pilate and was falsely accused by *God's firstborn son, Israel*; and Pilate himself became *increasingly afraid* surrounding the entire matter. The fear which Pilate exhibited, as seen in the text, could only have been a mild description of how Pilate would possibly have responded had he known the full scope and implications of that which was transpiring on that day, for he was using his power *to subjugate one son* and *to ultimately condemn the other Son*. And both of the Sons being mistreated that day were *the Ones possessing the right to hold the sceptre*, not Pilate.

THE HEIR OF ALL THINGS

The Book of Hebrews opens through introducing Christ as the One Whom God has placed *at the center of all things* in the outworking of His plans and purposes. God spoke "in time past unto the fathers by the prophets," but, "in these last days," God has spoken "unto us by his Son." In both instances, God is the One doing the speaking. In the former instance, God spoke in the person of the prophets; in the latter instance, God has spoken in the person of His Son (vv. 1, 2a).

The record then continues with references to the Son, not to the prophets. The Son is the One Whom the Father "hath appointed heir of all things"; and the Son is the One through Whom the Father "made the worlds [*lit.*, 'made the ages']" (v. 2b). The Father designed the ages around the person and work of the One Whom He "hath appointed heir of all things," with the outworking of that seen in the Son's heirship occurring within the framework of these designed ages.

Reference is then made to Christ's person, His finished work at

Calvary, His ascension to the Father's right hand, and His position relative to the angels following His ascension (which was different than His position before His ascension [cf. Heb. 2:7, 9]). Then the thought immediately moves back to the subject previously introduced — Christ as the “appointed heir of all things” (vv. 3, 4). And this second statement surrounding Christ's heirship is used to introduce *seven Messianic quotations* from the Old Testament (vv. 5-13).

The way in which the book opens introduces the subject matter in the book — something seen in the structure of all the books in Scripture, along with Scripture as a whole in the opening verses of Genesis (Gen. 1:1-2:3). The subject matter in Hebrews, shown through the manner in which the book is introduced, is about that coming day when God's appointed “heir of all things” holds the sceptre and rules the earth with “a rod of iron” (cf. Psa. 2:9; Rev. 2:26, 27).

Through the arrangement of these *seven Messianic quotations* (a number showing *the completion of that which is in view*), “heirship” is immediately connected not only with *Sonship* but with a *firstborn status* as well. It is *God's Firstborn Son*, the appointed “heir of all things,” Whom the Father will one day “again bring into” the inhabited world (vv. 5, 6).

These seven Messianic quotations are introduced in verse five and begin with a quotation from Psa. 2:7:

“Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

This verse is quoted three times in the New Testament — once in Acts (13:33) and twice in Hebrews (1:5; 5:5). And in all three passages, as in Psa. 2:7, the verse is used in *Messianic settings*.

The reference in each of the four appearances of the verse is to the Father begetting the Son at the time of the incarnation. This was an absolute necessity if the Son was to be *God's Firstborn*, allowing the Son to hold the sceptre as the Father's appointed “heir of all things.”

Note how all of this is set forth in the second Psalm. Though a present application to Psa. 2:1-3 is made in Acts 4:25ff, the reference in these verses is more specifically to events at the end of

Man's Day, progressing into the Messianic Era.

The Gentile nations are seen at this time "raging" and imagining "a vain thing." They are seen allied "together, against the Lord, and against his anointed" (vv. 1, 2). And in their alliance, they are seen saying, "Let us break their chains...and throw off their fetters [the restraining and authoritative power of the Father and Son in v. 2]" (v. 3, NIV).

This is a picture of Gentile world power in a day not far removed from the present day. The Gentile nations at that time will be as "the sea" in Jonah, *raging*; they will imagine that which will not be possible — *to continue holding the sceptre under the present world ruler, Satan* (cf. Dan. 10:13-20; Rev. 13:2); and, under Satan's leadership, they will *counsel together concerning how they can stay God's hand and prevent the fulfillment of that foretold by the prophets centuries before this time*.

But all will be *in vain*. The One seated in the heavens will *laugh*, He will *scuff* at the puny efforts of the Gentile powers, and He will then *speak* to them in His anger and wrath (vv. 4, 5).

This will be followed by that seen in the continuing text of Psalm chapter two:

"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill [or, 'mountain' (Heb., *har*)] of Zion.

I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen ['Gentiles'] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (vv. 6-9).

The Gentile nations under Satan, in the end time, will be unable to do any more than Satan found that he could do when he sought to exalt his throne at a time in the distant past (Isa. 14:12-17; cf. Ezek. 28:14-19). Satan's prior efforts proved utterly futile, resulting in God's wrath; and exactly the same thing will result from the actions of the Gentile nations at the end of Man's Day.

Satan, seeking to exalt his throne, found himself disqualified to continue holding his appointed position, and his kingdom was reduced to a ruin (Gen. 1:2a). And, at a time yet future, with the Times of the Gentiles brought to an end, the Gentile nations will find themselves no longer qualified to hold their appointed positions. At that time, their power and kingdom will be reduced to a ruin (Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; Joel 3:9-21; Rev. 19:11-21; cf. Isa. 2:1-5).

Now, note the context on either side of Psa. 2:7. Immediately before (v. 6), God is seen placing His King on the holy mountain called Zion; and immediately after (vv. 8, 9), God is seen referring to the King's inheritance and possession. But the thought of the Father begetting the Son between these two Messianic statements is a reference to an event occurring over 2,000 years in the past, *allowing God's Son to become His Firstborn, making these events possible.*

In one frame of reference, God is saying in Psa. 2:7, Thou art my Son; this day [*i.e.*, for this day, to allow this day to be brought to pass] have I begotten thee [at a time in the past, making You *more than My Son*, making You *My Firstborn Son*]."

And this would be borne out by the structure of the Greek text in Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5. In each verse, the word "begotten" appears in the perfect tense, pointing to action completed in past time, with the results of that action continuing into the present and existing in a finished state.

In Acts 13:33, it is an action which precedes Christ's resurrection, anticipating that day when Christ comes into possession of "the sure mercies [*lit.*, 'the holy things'] of David [which are regal]" (vv. 33, 34). In Heb. 1:5, it is an action set at the beginning of seven Messianic quotations from the Old Testament. And in Heb. 5:5, it is an action anticipating Christ one day exercising the Melchizedek priesthood — as *the Great King-Priest in Jerusalem* (vv. 5-10; cf. Psa. 110:1-4).

This is that which Scripture reveals concerning *God's Firstborn Son, Jesus*, the One Who, in a coming day, will bring to pass that which continually eludes man today — *effecting peace in the troubled Middle East, a peace which can only follow that seen in Psa. 2:1-5.*

2

Israel

And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:

And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn (Ex. 4:22, 23).

But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine (Isa. 43:1).

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises (Rom. 9:4).

The nation of Israel is God's "son" because of *creation*. God performed a *special creative act* in the person of Jacob (Isa. 43:1); and, as a result, not only Jacob, but his descendants through his twelve sons — forming the nation of Israel — are viewed in Scripture as God's "son."

Then, the nation of Israel is *more than* just God's "son." This nation, because of a subsequent *adoption*, is *God's firstborn son*. That is, God, at a time following His creative activity surrounding Jacob and a nation emanating from his loins, *adopted this nation*, placing the nation of Israel in the position of *His firstborn son* (Ex. 4:22, 23).

Note Isa. 43:5-7 relative to both *creation* and *sonship*:

“Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed [the seed of Jacob in v. 1] from the east, and gather thee from the west;

I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

Even every one that is called by my name: I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”

The reference is to a future regathering of the Israelites from a worldwide dispersion. The Israelites, in connection with *creation* mentioned in verses one and seven, are referred to as God's “sons,” with “daughters” used contextually within this same thought — *i.e.*, within the thought of *creation* resulting in “sonship.”

(With respect to both males and females viewed in relation to *sonship*, the nation as a whole is almost always spoken of in the sense of *a son*, or in the sense of *sons* when referring to individuals comprising the nation [which would include both males and females].

For example, the expression used in verses such as Ex. 1:1, 7, 9 or Acts 5:21; 7:23, 37 to describe all those comprising the nation [both males and females] is “the sons of Israel” [NASB (The Hebrew word translated “sons” in Exodus 1:1, 7, 9 and other similar O.T. passages is *ben*, and the Greek word translated “sons” in Acts 5:21; 7:23, 37 and other similar N.T. passages is *huios*. These respectively are the Hebrew and Greek words for “son,” and both should be so understood and translated)].

Thus, the use of “daughters” in connection with “sons” in a verse such as Isa. 43:6 must be understood in the preceding respect. It must be understood in a similar respect to the way God's wife [Israel] is also viewed — as *God's son*. And the same would hold true relative to how Christ's wife is to be viewed yet future. His wife [to be comprised of Christians] will also be viewed the same way Israel, the wife of Jehovah, is presently viewed — as *God's son*.

The way in which the government in God's kingdom was originally established, *only sons could rule*. Then, in relation to man and the earth, two things are seen in this respect: *only firstborn sons can rule; and there has to be a husband-wife relationship within this rule, with the wife, of necessity, also being a firstborn son.*)

Isaiah 43:7 clearly states that every descendant of Jacob is himself *a special creation*, as Jacob is seen as *a special creation* back in verse one). Whether this is understood as a passing on of the sonship status through birth, or as God stepping in at the time of birth and performing an individual, creative act, is immaterial. The fact remains that, *because of creation*, Jacob is seen as *a son of God*; and, *through procreation*, all of his descendants are seen in Scripture individually as *sons of God*, with the nation as a whole seen collectively as *God's son* (Ex. 4:22, 23).

This entire thought of *creation and sonship, followed by adoption*, is what separates and sets apart both the Jewish people individually and the nation of Israel as a whole from all the Gentiles (individually, or nationally). Scripture makes a sharp distinction between *Israel* on the one hand and *the Gentile nations* on the other. The Jewish people comprise a separate and distinct nation which is *not* to be “reckoned among the nations” — the Gentile nations (*cf.* Num. 23:9; Deut. 7:6; Amos 3:1, 2).

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE EARTH

In keeping with this same line of Biblical teaching as it pertains to *regality*, Satan — positioned by God as the earth's ruler in the beginning (Ezek. 28:14) — has ruled the earth, uninterrupted, since that time. And Satan's rule has always been *under God*, though *a rebel ruler under God* following his fall.

Throughout Man's Day, Satan has carried out this rule through *the nations*. And he accomplishes this rule through a complete gradation of powers and authorities within his kingdom — *i.e.*, through angelic rulers (fallen angels), to whom power and authority has been delegated.

Particular angels have been placed over particular nations. Then, under each of these angelic princes placed over nations, there are numerous other angels assigned to occupy lesser positions of power and authority.

This is the manner in which the government under Satan, in the heavens, is revealed to presently exist; and this established government, with respect to individual nations, angelic princes,

and lesser angelic rulers assigned under these princes, apparently corresponds to a complete gradation of powers and authorities within the various nations on earth (Dan. 10:13-20).

However, there is *one exception* to Satan's rule in this respect. In Satan's kingdom, there is no angelic prince and there are no lesser angelic rulers holding positions over Israel. *Israel is a separate and distinct nation, God's firstborn son, and is not to be "reckoned among" the nations.*

The angelic prince which exercises this type power and authority over Israel during Man's Day is revealed to be *Michael*, an angel not associated with Satan's fall and his kingdom. And *any angelic rulers under Michael* would also, of necessity, be outside of Satan's domain and rule (Dan. 10:21).

Note Rev. 12:1ff in this respect. *Israel and the nations* are in view on the one hand (vv. 1-6), and *Michael and his angels, along with Satan and his angels*, are in view on the other (vv. 7-9), *with everything being regal in nature.*

(In the preceding gradation of powers and authorities, the angelic rulers — whether those consisting of Satan and his angels, or of Michael and his angels — exercise power and authority from a *heavenly sphere*. All hold their positions *under God* [though Satan and his angels are rebel rulers], and all rule *through* those whom God has placed in positions of power and authority on the earth.

"The heavens do rule" in this respect. This rule begins with *God* [in the heavens] and progresses through *angels* [also in the heavens] to *man* [on the earth]. "There is no power but of God," and "the powers that be [whether in the heavens, or on the earth] are ordained of God" [*cf.* Dan. 4:17-26; Rom. 13:1, 2].

During the present day and time, angels — both within and without Satan's kingdom — continue to hold previously appointed regal positions [appointed by God] in the preceding respect. Note that even those represented by the twenty-four elders in Rev. 4, 5 remain crowned and retain a regal connection with God's throne *until* a particular, revealed time yet future. And that future time is associated with events immediately following the present dispensation, events occurring near the conclusion of Man's Day, anticipating Christ and His co-heirs taking the kingdom [*ref.* the "Appendix," *Crowns Before the*

Throne, in the author's book, RUTH].

The things reiterated in the preceding three paragraphs form fundamental, foundational Biblical teachings surrounding the government of the earth — past, present, and future. And possessing a proper understanding of the government of the earth forms a fundamental, foundational basis for properly understanding numerous related things surrounding Israel and the nations seen occurring in the world today.)

Knowing the things surrounding how the present kingdom on this earth is established — which includes not only the nations but Israel as well — is *the key* to seeing and understanding the central and primary reason for Satan's continuous hatred of the Jewish people down through the years. And this is something which has resulted in or has had a direct bearing upon all of *the anti-Semitism* over centuries of time, as well as *the present unrest* in the Middle East.

The emanating point for all anti-Semitism is *Satan*, and he carries out his numerous anti-Semitic endeavors through the Gentile nations, over which he and his angels rule; and the basic reason for all anti-Semitism is centered in *Israel's identity and position* among the nations — *God's firstborn son, the one existing apart from Satan's present governmental rule, the one possessing the right to hold the sceptre, and the one who one day will hold the sceptre.*

Note Rom. 9:4 in this respect:

“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.”

God's “adoption” of Israel is mentioned first, which necessitated a prior *sonship* standing, for only *sons* are in a position to be placed as *firstborn sons* through adoption. Then “the glory” is mentioned, along with “the covenants,” “the giving of the law,” “the service of God,” and “the promises.” All of these together are regal in nature and have to do with *God's firstborn son, a land, and a theocracy.*

In relation to any of the six things mentioned in Rom. 9:4, all of the Gentile nations find themselves in exactly the same *alien-*

ated position. No Gentile nation can qualify to lay claim to anything in this list, for there is *no special creation* among any of the Gentile nations, allowing *sonship* and a subsequent *adoption* to exist. The only way that any Gentile nation can have any type association with the things listed in this verse is seen in Gen. 9:25-27. And this section of Scripture, early in Genesis, *shows the place which God has decreed that the Gentiles occupy in relation to Israel throughout Man's Day*, once this nation, through Jacob and his progeny, had been called into existence.

In Genesis chapter nine, of the three sons of Noah, *Shem* was the only one revealed to have a God (v. 26). And if either of the other two sons (Ham or Japheth), alienated from God in this respect, were to receive spiritual blessings, they would have to “*dwell in the tents of Shem*” (v. 27). That is to say, they would have to come to the one in possession of a God and spiritual blessings. They would have to come to and ally themselves with Shem.

And that is *exactly* the position in which *Israel and the Gentile nations* have found themselves throughout millenniums of time, find themselves today, and will always find themselves. Of all the nations on earth, *Israel, the nation descending from Shem through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the only nation having a God*; and the God Whom Israel possesses has decreed that *all spiritual blessings are to flow through the nation which He has singled out as His firstborn son*.

Thus, for *the Gentiles* to be blessed — today, or at any time yet future — they would/will have to do the same thing seen among Noah's sons in Gen. 9:25-27. They would/will have to come to the one in possession of a God and in possession of spiritual blessings. They would/will have to come to and ally themselves with *Israel*.

(Note that “the God...of the Gentiles” in Rom. 3:29 is a reference to *saved Gentiles, not to Gentile nations* [cf. Rom. 1:16; 2:5-16; Gal. 1:11-16; 2:2-15; II Tim. 1:11]. The nations have *gods*, but... [cf. Psa. 96:5].)

Exactly the opposite though is happening today. Israel, viewing matters from the vantage point of the nation's present position of disobedience and unbelief, fails to understand her God-ordained position among the nations; the Gentile nations, alien-

ated from God and His revelation to man (something which has come through Israel), have no concept at all of Israel's present position; and by large, the vast majority of Christians in the world today, because of their ignorance of Biblical teachings surrounding Israel and the nations, find themselves in a position, as it pertains to the true knowledge of God and world affairs, which is little different than that seen among Israel and the nations.

God though will shortly bring an end to and rectify the entire matter. The present dispensation has almost run its course. And when the present dispensation ends, God will resume and complete seven unfulfilled years in His dealings with Israel during Man's Day, bringing an end to Man's Day and the Times of the Gentiles.

That is to say, God will shortly once again step into the affairs of the human race, remove the Church, and then complete seven unfulfilled years of the prior dispensation. And, having brought matters to a completion in this respect, God will have finished His 6,000-year period of work comprising Man's Day, completely straightening out at that time all the things which man has often only made worse through his vain efforts to improve or to rectify matters.

In this respect, note two things: 1) the present existing situation in the Middle East, apart from Messiah; and 2) that which is about to exist, when Messiah is once again present.

ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS TODAY

In relation to that clearly taught in Scripture, a situation exists in the Middle East today which should, on the one hand, *not exist*, but, on the other hand, *has to exist*. And that situation concerns a remnant of Jews leaving their place among the Gentile nations, to which the Jewish people in time past had been driven, and returning to the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In this respect, according to the type in Num. 35:15-34 and that which has occurred in the antitype, the slayer has returned to "the land of his possession" before it was time for him to return. He has returned before "the death of the high priest," something

expressively forbidden by Scripture.

"Israel" is *the slayer*. The nation is *guilty of blood*, the blood of their Messiah (Acts 2:23, 36; 3:14, 15; 7:52), and is presently *unclean* through contact with the dead body of their Messiah. And Scripture is clear that *cleansing cannot occur until* the third or seventh day, with Israel *presently* living during the second or sixth day (Num. 19:11-22).

The slayer *cannot return until* the antitype of that seen in "the death of the high priest." *Only then can the slayer be allowed to return to the land, with atonement subsequently provided* (the word translated "satisfaction" [KJV], "ransom" [NASB] in vv. 31, 32 is a cognate form of the Heb. word for *atonement*).

"Christ" is *the High Priest* in view in the antitype. And the termination of His present ministry in the sanctuary is that seen through the termination of the high priest's ministry (occurring through death in the type). Christ's present ministry is patterned after the order of Aaron, and this ministry will one day end, which will be the antitype of that seen through the end of the high priest's ministry in Num. 35:25, 28, 32.

Only then can the slayer be allowed to return to the nation's land; *only then* can Christ come forth as the Great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek; and *only then* can cleansing be provided for the slayer (*ref. "Appendix I," The Death of the High Priest*, in the author's book, ESTHER).

God uprooted Israel from her land and drove His people out among the nations because of unbelief and disobedience. And the reason for the Jewish people being driven out in this manner was *to effect repentance, resulting in belief and obedience*. In short, the Jewish people were to remain scattered among the Gentiles and suffer at the hands of the Gentiles, under Satan, until such a time as *repentance* was effected.

Thus, in the light of the current alignment of nations in the Middle East, one central question emerges: What is the slayer doing back in the nation's land — removed from numerous Gentile lands where the Jewish people were scattered — both before *repentance* and before *Christ completes His high priestly ministry in the sanctuary?* That, of course, can have only one

answer.

God, in His sovereign control of all things *has allowed the slayer to return, for a revealed purpose*. God has *allowed* the slayer to return in order to effect the fulfillment of end-time Biblical prophecy, for, according to prophecy, a nation, must exist in the Middle East during the latter days.

But God drove the Jewish people out among the Gentile nations to effect repentance, and *He has not changed His mind concerning where He has decreed that His people will be residing when repentance occurs*. This alone should tell a person that the present remnant in the land will have to be uprooted and driven back out among the nations — something which can *never occur* once God restores the Jewish people in accord with His numerous promises (cf. Deut. 30:1-5; Ezek. 36:24-28; 37:11-28; 39:25-29; Joel 3:1-21).

An *unrepentant and unbelieving* remnant is back in the land today to set the stage for that which is about to occur. God is about to remove the Church and once again turn back to His people, Israel, dealing with the Jewish people during Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week, bringing them *to the end of themselves and to the place of repentance*.

Only then can God deal with them in relation to the Old Testament prophecies surrounding the nation's restoration.

(Note that to associate the present return of a remnant — over 5,000,000 strong, forming the present nation of Israel — with God's promise through the prophets that He would one day restore His people to their land is *an oxymoron*. That is to say, it is a contradictory statement. And God simply does not do things in a contradictory manner. Things of this nature are left for man.

God cannot presently restore His people to their land in accord with that which the prophets have foretold, for He has made matters very clear in His Word concerning both *the time* of Israel's return and *the existing conditions* surrounding the nation's return. And neither presently exists — *the time* [the termination of Christ's present ministry in the sanctuary has not occurred], or *the conditions* [according to the prophets, Israel will repent and return in belief, not in their present unrepentant and unbelieving state].

Thus, the present existence of the nation of Israel in the Middle East

can have *nothing* to do with God's promise through the prophets to one day remove the Jewish people from the nations into which He has driven them and place them back in their land. And that should be simple enough for anyone to understand, for, if the present restoration is a fulfillment of God's promise of restoration, God would be acting *contrary* to that which He has revealed in His Word — *an impossibility*.)

ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS YET FUTURE

Israel in the Middle East today is as Jonah on board the ship in the Book of Jonah. Jonah was *out of place* on the ship, *fleeing* from the Lord in a disobedient and unrepentant state, and *asleep* down in the hold of the ship (1:1-3, 5). And Israel is *out of place* in the land today, *fleeing* from the Lord in their disobedient and unrepentant state, and *asleep* in relation to the nation's calling.

As Jonah sought to flee from the Lord's presence, a great storm arose on the sea, *of a magnitude which put all those on the ship in danger, producing conditions completely beyond their control* (1:4). And, because of Israel's presence in the land, in the antitype, this is *exactly* where matters are headed in the Middle East — the Gentile nations ultimately finding themselves in a *genocidal turmoil, of a nature completely beyond their control*.

The "sea" carries a dual metaphorical meaning in Scripture — *the Gentiles*, and *the place of death* (cf. I Cor. 10:1, 2; Col. 2:12; Rev. 13:1).

In the type, *Jonah*, at the height of the storm, was cast from the ship into the sea, and *repentance ultimately resulted*; and, in the antitype, *Israel*, at the height of the turmoil about to occur, will be removed from the nation's land and be driven out among the Gentile nations, *where repentance will ultimately occur*.

It was *after two days, on the third day, in the sea*, that Jonah *repented*; and it will be *after two days, on the third day, among the nations*, that Israel will *repent*.

Scripture clearly reveals numerous details about that coming day when *the entire nation of Israel will find herself among the nations* — both those presently in the land and those still scattered among the nations (cf. Joel 3:1-8; Matt. 24:15-31; Luke 21:20-24; Rev.

11:2).

Israel, in Gentile lands in that day, will be brought into such dire straits through Gentile persecution that the nation will have no recourse other than to turn to and call upon the God of their fathers. And God, according to His promise, *will then hear and bring to pass their long-awaited deliverance* (cf. Ex. 2:23, 24; 3:7-10; 4:20-23; II Chron. 7:14).

Why have the nations, under Satan, persecuted Israel throughout history? And why will the nations, under Satan, persecute Israel, yet future, during the Tribulation, to the extent seen in Scripture? The answer is clear. It is *because of Israel's identity and destiny — God's firstborn son, destined to take the sceptre.*

Why has God allowed this persecution to occur in the past, and why will God allow the nations to persecute Israel to this extent yet future? The answer is *exactly the same* as to why the nations have persecuted and will continue to persecute Israel. It is *because of Israel's identity and destiny — God's firstborn son, destined to take the sceptre.*

God will use Satan's hatred of and efforts to destroy Israel through the Gentile nations to bring His firstborn son to *the place of repentance*. *Only then* can God's son realize *the rights of the firstborn*.

3

The Church

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God...

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:18, 19, 22, 23).

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [*lit.*, ‘creation’]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (II Cor. 5:17).

Christians, because of *creation*, are seen in Scripture as “sons” of God, with *the adoption* yet future. And following the *adoption* of Christians, God will have a *third firstborn son* — a corporate or national son, as Israel.

God presently has two firstborn Sons — *Christ* and *Israel*. And He is about to bring into existence a third firstborn son — *the Church*. Only then can God’s purpose for man’s creation, six millenniums prior to that time, be realized.

“Sonship” portends *rulership*; only “sons” can occupy *regal positions in God’s kingdom*. That’s the way it has always existed in the angelic realm, prior to, at the time of, and following man’s creation. And, once man had been brought into existence, for *the regal purpose* revealed at the time of his creation (Gen. 1:26-28), that’s the way it had to exist in the human realm as well.

In the human realm though, something additional was subsequently revealed. Not only *must* the one holding the sceptre be a *son*, but he *must*, more particularly, be a *firstborn son*. Within the human realm, *only firstborn sons can rule in God’s kingdom*.

That’s why Scripture places such a heavy emphasis upon Christ not only occupying the position of *God’s Son* but that of *God’s Firstborn* as well.

Note how the author of Hebrews brings both to the forefront in the first of seven Messianic quotations in chapter one of the book:

“Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (1:5a; cf. Psa. 2:7).

Then, following a Messianic quotation dealing with the Father-Son relationship (v. 5b), reference is again made to Christ as *God’s Firstborn* preceding the remaining five Messianic quotations:

“And again, when he bringeth [*lit.*, ‘And when He shall again bring’] in the firstbegotten into the world...” (v. 6a; cf. II Sam. 7:14).

And even in a passage such as John 3:16, attention is called to God’s “only begotten Son,” a direct reference to not only *Christ’s Sonship* but to *His Firstborn status*.

(The statements to this effect in both the opening verses of Hebrews and John chapter three should be expected.

The opening verses of Hebrews form the manner in which The Spirit of God arranged seven Messianic quotations, introducing *the subject matter in the book*. The Holy Spirit, when He moved the author of this book to pen the recorded words, arranged these seven Messianic quotations from the Old Testament in such a manner that *Christ’s Sonship* and *His Firstborn status as God’s Son* would be brought to the forefront at the beginning, *forming the foundational basis for all which follows*.

Then, John 3:16 forms a part of Christ's discourse to Nicodemus, where the subject matter begins through referencing *the coming kingdom*, responding to Nicodemus' question about *the signs being manifested* (vv. 2-5). "Signs" in Scripture always have to do with two things: *Israel*, and *the kingdom*. And it would be in complete keeping with the subject at hand to continue the thought portended by Nicodemus' question surrounding "signs" into the latter part of the discourse, which is exactly what is seen.)

Within the family relationship, Christians are referred to as both *children* and *sons*. And the two are closely related but are not really the same.

All Christians are referred to as "children" (Gk., *teknon*), but Scripture does not use "sons" (Gk., *huios*) in the same all-encompassing manner. Though all Christians are "sons" because of *creation*, the New Testament use of the Greek word *huios*, referring to Christians through this means, appears only within contexts which are both *regal* and *where Christians are seen actively progressing toward the goal set before them*. In this respect, the word is used relative to Christians in complete keeping with that which "sonship" portends — with *rulership*.

CHILDREN, SONS, ADOPTION

In the New Testament epistles (both the Pauline and the general epistles), Christians are referred to as "children [*teknon*] of God" and "sons [*huios*] of God" about an equal number of times. They are referred to as "children of God" in Rom. 8:16, 17, 21; Phil. 2:15; IJohn 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2. And they are referred to as "sons of God" in Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:5-8 (the word "sons" alone, rather than "sons of God," is used in the latter reference; but a Father-son relationship is in view throughout, showing God dealing with Christians as *His sons*).

In all three sections of Scripture where Christians are presently referred to as "sons," *adoption* is also in view. In both Romans and Galatians, in the Greek text, the word *huiiothesia* (the word for "adoption ['son-placing']") appears in the context of the verses where Christians are referred to as "sons" (Rom. 8:15, 23; Gal. 4:5).

And in Hebrews, adoption is seen in the context as well, though from a different perspective. It is seen following the verses referring to Christians as “sons” (in vv. 16, 17 — verses forming the heart of the fifth and final major warning in the book, dealing with Esau [the firstborn] forfeiting his birthright).

In the antitype of the account pertaining to Esau forfeiting his birthright, the thought of *adoption* would have to be brought into the picture, for Christians must not only be *sons* but they must be *firstborn sons* to realize *the rights of the firstborn* which Esau in the type forfeited. And the only way Christians can be brought into this position is through *adoption*.

(Aside from Rom. 8:15, 23; Gal. 4:5, the only other place in the New Testament where the Greek word *huiothesia* is used relative to Christians is in Eph. 1:5. And the use of this word early in the Book of Ephesians is in complete keeping with how the subject matter of the book is introduced in this first chapter — a future “redemption” and “inheritance,” in connection with the “mystery” revealed to Paul [vv. 7, 9, 11, 14, cf. 3:1-6; 4:30], to be realized “in the dispensation of the fulness of times” [v. 10]. These interrelated things *are presently being made known*, “by [‘through’] the Church,” to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places” [Satan and his angels], which accounts for the warning and instructions concerning the spiritual warfare at the close of the book [3:9-11; 6:10ff].

As in any New Testament epistle, the central subject seen in Ephesians is *not* salvation by grace, though that subject is dealt with in the book. Rather, the central subject has to do with the things seen in the opening chapter, which introduce the things about to be developed in the book — *things pertaining to Christians in relation to the coming kingdom of Christ*. And if this epistle, or any New Testament epistle, is not studied after the manner in which the epistle is introduced, the central message of the epistle will be lost to the reader.)

Thus, Christians are referred to as “sons” *only in sections of Scripture where adoption is in view*. Both sonship and adoption place matters within a *regal setting*; and Christians, in all three passages where adoption is dealt with, are seen actively moving toward the

goal set before them — *the adoption of sons and being brought into a realization of the rights of the firstborn.*

On the other hand, Scripture refers to Christians as “children” within a *regal* setting as well, *but not with respect to adoption.* This is the main difference concerning how the two words are used in the New Testament epistles. It is *sons* who are adopted, not children.

(In Rom. 8:16, 17, 21, the Gk. word for “children” [*teknon*] is used in a context with the Gk. word for “sons” [*huios*]. And an inheritance, an adoption, and a manifestation of sons are seen in the passage [with *huios* alone used relative to the latter two (v. 14)]. In Phil. 2:15, *teknon* appears in connection with present Christian activity, with a view to the coming day of Christ [v. 16]. And in I John 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2 the context shows the same thing as seen in Phil. 2:15, 16.

Teknon is used in these verses to depict present Christian activity, with a view to *the hope* set before Christians, *Christ’s future appearance*, and being shown as *an overcomer* in that coming day.)

Thus, there is the central distinction between the way in which “children” and “sons” are used in the New Testament. Both are used in *regal settings*, with the latter used more specifically in connection with *the rights of the firstborn.* Both can be used of Christians today; but, *only* “sons” is used when *adoption* is in view.

ROMANS, GALATIANS, HEBREWS

In the New Testament passages where Christians are presently called “sons” (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:5-8), each passage presents a different facet of Biblical truth surrounding *sonship.* In Romans, the central issue is *flesh and spirit*, with *adoption* in view; In Galatians, the central issue is *“the faith” in relation to Law*, with *adoption* in view; and in Hebrews the central issue is *God’s training for sons*, with *adoption* in view.

1) ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

For as many as are led [*lit.*, 'are being led'] by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

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" (vv. 13-15).

Chapters one through seven in the Book of Romans build into what could be considered an apex in chapter eight, which begins with "There is therefore..." These opening words are based on that which has preceded, and they introduce that which is about to follow. And that which follows brings to the forefront teachings surrounding *flesh* and *spirit*, dealt with different ways in the chapters which preceded.

All Christians possess two natures, "the old man [the man of flesh]," and "the new man [the man of spirit]" (Col. 3:9, 10). And the far-reaching ramifications of Christians (all Christians, none excluded) following one nature or the other is graphically stated in Rom. 8:13.

Christians following the fleshly nature, living after the flesh, *will die*; but, Christians following the leadership of the Spirit, putting to death "the deeds of the body," that associated with the flesh, *will live*.

Life in this respect is then explained (vv. 14ff), with *death* simply being the absence of that seen in the explanation.

Those following the leadership of the Spirit are presently looked upon as *sons* (v. 14), and this is with a view to *a future adoption and manifestation of sons, with the sons corporately (as Israel) forming a firstborn son* (vv. 15-23).

But those following after and minding the works of the flesh (*cf.* vv. 5-8) will have no part in these things. They are not presently looked upon and being dealt with as sons, and they will have no part in the things seen in this chapter awaiting sons.

The preceding is the manner in which both *life* and *death* are used in this chapter. And the salvation or loss of the soul/life is in view, which is simply another way seen in Scripture to state the matter at hand (*cf.* Matt. 16:24-27; Heb. 10:35-39; I Peter 1:3-9). Christians following after the things pertaining to their fleshly

nature will lose their souls/lives; but Christians following the leadership of the Spirit, putting to death “the deeds of the body,” will realize the salvation of their souls/lives.

For all Christians, it is either one or the other. No middle ground exists (cf. Matt. 12:30).

The salvation or loss of the soul has to do with *occupying or not occupying a position with Christ in the coming kingdom, living or not living with Him in this respect*. And, with “sonship” implying *rulership*, Romans chapter eight places the emphasis on a present *recognition of sons*, for a reason seen in the context: *a future adoption of sons, followed by a manifestation of these sons*.

Both *life* and *death* are dealt with in the chapter, with both relating to the saved and covering the same time period, which can only be *millennial*, not eternal. If for no other reason (though there are other reasons), this time period would be evident from both I Cor. 15:25, 26 and Rev. 21:4, which specifically state that *death* will not exist during the ages beyond the Messianic Era.

Thus, that portended by *death* in Rom. 8:13 cannot extend into these subsequent ages; and, viewing the other side of the matter, neither can that portended by *life* in this same verse.

(The Messianic Era will be the last 1,000 years of a septenary arrangement of 1,000-year periods, which are foreshadowed in the opening verses of Genesis through the use of six and seven days. Scripture deals at length with events during these 7,000 years but sparingly with events outside this septenary period.

During the Messianic Era, man’s rule will be confined to this earth. The manifestation of sons during this time will have to do with bringing one province in God’s kingdom back into the condition and use for which it was originally intended, with governmental power emanating from the Son’s throne in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom [cf. Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21]. The Son, with His co-heirs, will take 1,000 years to bring order out of disorder. Then, once order has been restored, the kingdom will be delivered back to the Father, that the Father might be “all in all [‘all things in all of these things’ (I Cor. 15:24-28)].”

During the eternal ages beyond the Messianic Era, man’s rule will emanate from “the throne of God and of the Lamb,” a throne from which universal rule will issue forth. And this throne will both rest

upon a new earth and be the central governmental point in the universe. Thus, the manifestation of sons at that time will no longer have to do with governmental affairs of the present earth but with an apparent restructuring of the government of the universe itself, possibly beginning with the new earth.)

As previously seen, in Rom. 8:14, God views *only* those Christians as “sons” who are being led by the Spirit and, as a result, are putting to death the deeds of the body. And the reason why God limits viewing Christians as His sons in this manner need not be stated in so many words. God’s apparent reasoning can be easily ascertained from *the context* and that which “sonship” implies — *rulership*.

It is *only* those Christians presently allowing the Spirit to control their lives who will, in that coming day, *live, be adopted* (vv. 14-23), and *be among those manifested as sons* (forming God’s firstborn son). And it is with this end in view that God looks upon certain Christians as “sons” during the present time (v. 19; cf. Heb. 12:23).

Those Christians failing to govern their lives in this manner *will die, and there will be no adoption or manifestation as sons for them*. And with this end in view, there would be no reason for God to view these Christians as “sons” during the present time, but only as “children.”

2) GALATIANS CHAPTERS THREE AND FOUR

“For ye are all the children [Gk., *huios*, ‘sons’] of God by faith in Christ Jesus...

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (3:26; 4:4-7).

Christians are referred to as “sons” in three different verses in

the Book of Galatians (3:26; 4:6, 7). And, as in the Book of Romans, references of this nature are used in a context having to do with *adoption* (4:5). It is simply the same picture once again, though from a different perspective.

A different facet of sonship and adoption is dealt with — how the Law, given through Moses, can have *absolutely nothing* to do with the matter at hand.

The inheritance was given to Abraham, by promise, four hundred and thirty years before the Law was given through Moses; and *the giving of the Law didn't, it couldn't, bring about any type change to that previously given to Abraham* (3:16-18).

Then, as in Romans, “faith” is brought to the forefront in that which is stated in Galatians. The Law cannot be separated from faith, for the Law is God’s Word, and “faith” is simply *believing that which God has stated about a matter*. In this respect, an Israelite keeping the Law would be acting *by faith* (cf. Deut. 5:33; 28:1-14; Matt. 19:16-21; Heb. 11:6).

“Faith” in connection with *the Law* though is *not* how “faith” is dealt with in this section of Galatians, preceding and leading into the reference to Christians as “sons” (3:19-25). Rather, “the faith” is introduced (which is a means used by the N.T. writers to reference the Word of the Kingdom), and “the faith” (used in vv. 23, 25 [“faith” in both verses is articular in the Gk. text]) is sharply contrasted with Law. *One has nothing to do with the other.*

(Regarding “the faith,” refer to the author’s book, FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES, Chs. X, XI.)

The picture presented in Galatians is that of individual “sons,” forming part of God’s national firstborn son (Israel), under Law, who become “new creations” *in Christ*. And, through this means, they relinquish their national identity with Israel — no longer being associated with the things pertaining to Israel (in this case, *the Law, or the adoption relative to a present firstborn status*) — and become members of a new nation where there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile (3:28).

And, once they have become followers of “the faith,” these individuals are looked upon as “sons” (because they are “new

creations" *in Christ*) and, along with all other Christians of like mind in this new nation (whether formerly Jew or Gentile), *await the adoption*.

Then, beyond the adoption will be the realization of an inheritance, *through Christ, Who is Abraham's Seed*, seen in Gal. 3:29 (*cf.* v. 16):

"And if ye be Christ's [*lit.*, 'And if ye are of Christ,' *i.e.*, among those belonging to Christ], then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The promise given to Abraham was to be realized through both *an earthly and a heavenly seed*, as seen in Gen. 22:17, 18. "Israel," the seed of Abraham through the nation's lineage from Isaac and Jacob, will, following Israel's repentance, conversion, and restoration, realize *the earthly portion of the inheritance*; and "the Church," the seed of Abraham through being "in Christ," will, following the adoption, realize *the heavenly portion of the inheritance*.

3) HEBREWS CHAPTER TWELVE

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children [Gk., *huios*, 'sons'], My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons...

Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (vv. 5-8, 16, 17).

The passage in Heb. 12:5-8 deals with God's training for those

Christians whom He views today as “sons.” The words “chastening” (vv. 5, 7), “chasteneth” (vv. 6, 7), or “chastisement” (v. 8) are translations of the Greek words *paideia* or *paideuo*, which are noun and verb forms of the same word. These words refer to “instruction” or “training,” and the translation should reflect this fact.

Paideia and *paideuo* are cognate forms of the word *paidion*, which refers to “a very young child” (used this way in Matt. 18:2-5; 19:13, 14). In this respect, the words *paideia* and *paideuo* in Heb. 12:5-8 refer to *God’s child-training for those whom He presently views as His “sons.”* And this child-training would, of necessity, take the exact form of that seen in Matt. 18:2-5:

“Except ye be converted, and become as little children [*paidion*], ye shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens” (v. 3b).

Then note Heb. 12:8. All whom God views as “sons” partake of this training, and any Christian who doesn’t is referred to by the Greek word *nothos* (translated “bastard,” KJV). The thought, through the use of *nothos*, has to do with “illegitimate sons,” *i.e., Christians not having a part in God’s training of His “sons” — through rejection, unfaithfulness, etc. — and thus cannot be His sons.*

Then *the adoption* awaiting Christians is seen in a type-antitype structure in verses sixteen and seventeen, forming the last of the five major warnings in this book.

God will possess a third firstborn son *only after* God’s present child-training of His sons is brought to completion, followed by the adoption. *Only then* can the Messianic Era be ushered in, *bringing to pass the goal seen throughout all prophetic Scripture.*

Appendix

Adoption, Redemption of the Body

“The adoption” is spoken of in Rom. 8:23 as being synonymous with “the redemption of our body”:

“...waiting out adoption, [namely] the ransoming of our body”
(Lenski).

“...patiently awaiting son-placing, the redemption of our body”
(Wuest).

And since “the adoption” and “the redemption of our body” are synonymous in this respect, the matter cannot possibly be a reference to that which will occur at the time of the resurrection and rapture at the end of the present dispensation, as commonly taught. If the redemption of the body were to occur at this time, all Christians would be adopted into a firstborn status. And this would be *completely contrary* to any Scriptural teaching surrounding adoption, for “sons” *alone* [those whom God presently recognizes in this capacity, as seen in Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:5-8], not children, find themselves in a position to be adopted [ref. pp. 25-33 of this book].

If the redemption of the body/adoption does not occur at the time of the resurrection and rapture, then when does it occur? And exactly what is involved in this future redemption/adoption?

Romans 8:14-23 connects this future *redemption/adoption* with being “glorified together” with Christ and with “the manifestation of the sons of God.”

Then, in this same respect, note how these things have been put together in Phil. 3:20, 21:

“For our conversation [Gk. *politeuma*, ‘commonwealth,’ ‘political sphere of activity’] is in heaven [‘heavens’]; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall change our vile body [*lit.*, ‘our body of humiliation’], that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body [*lit.*, ‘His body of glory’], according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

The thought from the preceding two verses has to do with the Christians’ future regal position in the heavens, following Christ’s return; and it has to do with occupying this position in a “body of glory,” like unto the body presently possessed by Christ, not in the “body of humiliation” presently possessed by Christians.

There was a time when this same *humiliation* presently seen in connection with the Christians’ body was also seen in connection with Christ’s body. Note the quotation from Isa. 53:7, 8 in Acts 8:32, 33:

“...He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.”

(The Gk. word translated “humiliation” in Acts 8:33 [*tapeinosis*] is the same word translated “vile” in Phil. 3:21 [also in the Septuagint trans. of Isa. 53:8]. “Humiliation,” as in Acts 8:33, is *the correct* translation of the word.)

The preceding reference from Acts has to do with the events surrounding Calvary. Christ, following His being stripped of His garments and arrayed as a mock King, was again stripped of His garments and impaled on a cross. Reference is made in all four gospels to His garments being removed prior to the crucifixion (Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23, 24). Christ was lifted up in this manner, after His garments had been removed (except for perhaps an inner tunic), *exposing His uncovered flesh for all to see* (Psa. 22:16-18).

The time of *the humiliation* spoken of in the text was the time when two things occurred: 1) *His judgment* was “taken away,” and 2) *His life* was “taken from the earth [*i.e.*, He was cut off from the land of the living].” The former could only have to do with *regal activity* and the latter with *His death*.

Christ had come over three decades prior to the events surrounding Calvary as “King of the Jews,” “in the likeness of [or, ‘in the resemblance of’] sinful flesh” (Matt. 2:2; Rom. 8:3). And upon the cross, this body of flesh was *exposed for all to behold*. It was a body which, in all outward appearance, was *like* that which man presently possesses. It was a body which bore *a likeness* to that of all other men in their bodies of sinful flesh and, consequently, a body connected with *humiliation*.

To properly understand that which was involved in relation to Christ’s body at the time of His first coming and in relation to man’s body both prior to and following that time, one must go back to the fall and see exactly what occurred in relation to Adam’s body at the time he partook of the forbidden fruit.

When man sinned in the garden in Eden, the complete being of man — spirit, soul, and body — became in a fallen state. God had commanded Adam concerning the fruit of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, “thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17).

After Satan had deceived Eve into eating of the fruit of this tree, she then “gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Immediately following this, “the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.” Then, in a vain effort to cover their nakedness, “they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:1-7).

At the time of the fall, Adam and Eve lost something; and it is clearly stated in Scripture that both immediately recognized this fact. That which they lost could only have been *a covering of pristine glory* which had previously clothed their bodies, for they, following the fall, found themselves in a twofold condition: 1) *naked*, and 2) *separated from God*.

God is arrayed in a covering of “light,” connected with “honour and majesty.” And man, created in the “image” and “likeness” of

God, could only have been arrayed *in a similar manner* prior to the fall.

“Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with [‘you have put on’] honour and majesty.

Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain” (Psa. 104:1, 2).

Recognizing the loss of this covering, realizing that they were naked, explains why Adam and Eve, immediately following the fall, *sought to clothe themselves*. They tried to replace the covering which had been lost with a work of their own hands, with fig leaf aprons. And then, apparently realizing the utter inadequacy of this covering, they, in their fallen state, sought to hide from God.

God, finding Adam and Eve in this condition, completely rejected the works of their hands. God completely rejected their feeble efforts to atone for their own sin through seeking to replace the covering of pristine glory with fig leaves.

Then, to bring His fallen creature back into a right relationship (although not in complete keeping with their previously unfallen state — something still future even today [and, as will be shown, something in connection with the redemption of the body]), God provided a covering consisting of animal skins (Gen. 3:21). This necessitated *death and the shedding of blood*; and herein lie basic, unchangeable truths concerning the state of fallen man and the means which are necessary to effect his redemption.

Unredeemed man is a fallen creature, alienated from God; and two things are necessary to effect his redemption: 1) *Divine intervention*, and 2) *death and shed blood*. These truths have forever been set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis and can never change.

(Two different words are used for “naked” in the Hebrew text of Gen. 2:25 [before the fall] and Gen. 3:7 [after the fall]. In the latter [3:7], the word has to do with *absolute nakedness*, but not so in the former [2:25].

Remaining within the way a person dressed in the East at the time Moses wrote Genesis, and at later times as well, the word used relative

to *nakedness* pertaining to Adam and Eve preceding the fall [2:25] could be used to describe a person clothed in a tunic [inner garment] but lacking the mantle or cloak [outer garment]. In the preceding respect, prior to the fall, Adam and Eve were clothed in the Glory of God but had yet to possess the regal outer garments worn by kings [fulfilling the reason for man's creation — to rule the earth (Gen. 1:26-28)].

Then, following the fall, no longer clothed in the Glory of God, Adam and Eve were no longer in a position to be further clothed in regal garments, realizing the purpose for their creation. They, apart from the inner garment [the Glory] could not wear the outer garments [royal apparel].

Adam, prior to the fall, never wore regal garments or held the sceptre. In this respect, he never moved beyond the description given in Gen. 2:25 — a “naked” condition, “*naked*” *in relation to the reason for his creation [lacking the outer regal garments]*.

Thus, if man, now separated from the Glory, is to ever fulfill the purpose for his creation, God must act. Redemption has to occur; and this, of necessity, has to include the complete man — *spirit, soul, and body* — with a view to not only *a restoration of the Glory but to regality beyond this restoration.*)

Flesh in Scripture is spoken of in synonymous terms with sin (e.g., Rom. 8:1-13; Gal. 4:23; 5:16; 6:8; I Peter 3:21; I John 2:16). But, in actuality, there is *nothing* inherently wrong with flesh. Flesh is sinful *only* in the sense in which Scripture uses the expression, *which must relate back to and have to do with the fall*. God created man in a body of flesh; Christ appeared in a body of flesh, which He still has today and will continue to possess throughout eternity; and the whole of mankind, as well, will live in bodies of flesh throughout eternity — a type body which God designed for man in the beginning.

Flesh is referred to as *sinful* and spoken of in synonymous terms with *sin* when it is not covered in the manner which God originally covered flesh and intended that flesh remain covered. And the removal of this covering at the time of the fall, because of sin, provides the connection between flesh and sin, existing today.

Thus, Christ coming “in the likeness of sinful flesh” is simply

a reference to His coming apart from His body being enswathed in Glory. And, in this respect, the height of His humiliation could only have occurred following His being arrayed as a mock King when His naked body, apart from the covering of Glory originally enswathing man's body, *was exposed on the cross for all to behold*.

Christ *could not* have worn regal garments at this time, for there was *no covering of Glory*. Christ, as Adam following the fall, lacked the inner garment; He lacked the covering of Glory.

And, apart from this covering of Glory, which would have allowed *regal garments* to be worn, "judgment," *was not* Christ's to render. Consequently, it was taken from Him.

Then, another — Pilate, a Gentile ruler (exercising power during the Times of the Gentiles, a time existing because of Israel's past disobedience, extending over centuries of time) — was allowed to execute judgment upon Christ. And, as a result of this judgment, Christ was "led as a sheep to the slaughter," with His "life" then taken away.

With all these things in mind, in the light of that stated in Rom. 8:15-23 and Phil. 3:20, 21, it should be a simple matter for anyone to see what is involved in the adoption, the redemption of the body.

Christ, at the time of His resurrection, was not raised in a glorified body. Christ's body, following His resurrection, was still void of the covering of Glory. Christ's body was not enswathed in a covering of Glory until at least forty days following His resurrection, when He ascended and "a cloud" received Him out of the disciples' sight (Acts 1:9), an apparent reference to His being "received up into glory" (I Tim. 3:16).

In this respect, until His ascension, Christ still appeared exactly as He had appeared since the time of His incarnation — in a body of flesh, void of the Glory.

Note the differences in His appearance to the two disciples on the Emmaus Road following His resurrection and His appearance to Paul on the Damascus Road at a time following His ascension. In the former appearance, it is evident that the two disciples noticed no visible difference between Christ's outward appearance and that of any other Jewish man of that day. However, following

His being “received up into glory,” that changed dramatically. When Christ appeared to Paul in a body enswathed in Glory, Paul was blinded by His outward appearance, by light which he later described as occurring at “midday” and being “above the brightness of the sun” (Acts 9:3-9; 26:12-15).

(Note the similar description of Christ in Rev. 1:16, where He is seen at a yet future time in the role of *Judge*—a time when “judgment” cannot be and will not be taken from Him:

“...out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.”)

In like manner to Christ’s resurrection, Christians will not be raised in glorified bodies either. The bodies of Christians will not be enswathed in Glory until events following the judgment seat, for it will be there that decisions and determinations will be made surrounding Christians relative to their having been shown qualified or having been shown disqualified to occupy positions with Christ in the kingdom. And *only those having been shown qualified to occupy these positions will enter into events surrounding the adoption, the redemption of the body, and the Glory.*

If a person takes the redemption of the body back to the time of the fall — *which is exactly where it must be taken, for something happened to the body at this time, necessitating redemption* — he can come to only one conclusion. “The redemption of the body” has to do with *placing man back in the position which he occupied prior to the fall and, in this position, allowing man to realize the reason for his creation, which is regal.* This is the way matters are set forth in both Rom. 8:15-23 and Phil. 3:20, 21.

The word “change” in Phil. 3:21 (referring to changing our body of humiliation) is a translation of the Greek word *metaschematizo*, which refers to *an outward change.* An *inward change* — described by the Greek word *metamorphoo* (Rom. 12:1, 2 [translated, “transformed”]) must have previously occurred, else there can be *no outward change* at that future time when Christians having previously been shown qualified find themselves *enswathed in Glory*, with their bodies “fashioned like unto” *Christ’s body of*

Glory (Phil. 3:21).

Thus, the adoption, the change in our body of humiliation, the redemption of the body, occurs at a time following the resurrection and rapture. This will be *the capstone of all which preceded, placing man back in the position which Adam occupied before the fall, though with regal garments*. And, accordingly, it will precede and anticipate Christ's millennial reign.

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God presently has two firstborn Sons — *Christ* (Heb. 1:6) and *Israel* (Ex. 4:22, 23). *Christ* is God's firstborn Son through procreation (John 3:16), and *Israel* is God's firstborn son through adoption (Rom. 9:4). And God is about to bring into existence a third firstborn son through adoption — *the Church* (Rom. 8:14, 15, 19, 23).

"Sonship" implies *rulership*. Only *Sons* can hold regal positions in God's kingdom — past, present, or future. That's the way God established matters in the beginning, and that which God has established in this respect *never changes*.

In the human realm though, something additional was added — a "*firstborn*" status. In the human realm, unlike the angelic realm, an individual has to be a *firstborn Son* in order to rule and reign in God's kingdom.

Angels alone (sons of God because of creation) have ruled throughout God's kingdom in time past (both over this earth and elsewhere in the universe). But, with man's creation — an entirely new order in the universe, an individual created in God's image, after His likeness — a change in the order of rulers within God's government was made known. Man was created for *regal purposes* (Gen. 1:26-28); and, though sin subsequently entered, resulting in a ruined creation (Gen. 3:1ff), God did not and will not change His mind concerning the reason He brought man into existence (Rom. 11:29).

The whole of man's salvation has this high end in view, whether salvation past (the spiritual birth, presently possessed by all Christians) or salvation present and future (the saving of the soul, not presently possessed by Christians but awaiting realization). Man has been, is being, and is about to be saved for a *revealed regal purpose*.

A new order of Sons is about to be brought forth (Rom. 8:19; cf. Heb. 2:5). And *only then* will God's purpose for man's creation (in the beginning) and His reason for man's subsequent salvation (following his ruin) be realized.
