

GOD'S FIRSTBORN SON

PART III "THE CHURCH"

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH ONE DAY BECOMING GOD'S
FIRSTBORN SON

By Arlen L. Chirwood

"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" (Gal. 3:26; 4:4-7).

Galatians Chapters Three and Four

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 promised 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 Greek 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, Chapters 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*.

Thus, for a Jew to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ today and become a Christian (*a new creation* "in Christ"), relinquishing his national identity, is for that Jew to give up his association with *Israel's earthly calling* (having to do with *an earthly inheritance*) and come into possession of *a higher calling* (having to do with *a heavenly inheritance*).

(In the preceding respect, there is *absolutely no place* in Christendom for distinctions to be made between saved Jews and saved Gentiles. Both are *new creations* "in Christ," part of *the one new man*, wherein distinctions between those comprising this *new man* cannot exist [Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:11-15; 3:1-6].

But in Christendom today, completely contrary to Scripture, certain individuals from both groups [from saved Jews, and from saved Gentiles] attempt to form distinctions between the two groups.

For example, there are congregations of saved Jews calling themselves “Messianic Jews” or “completed Jews” [both misnomers], distinguishing themselves from saved Gentiles. And there are groups comprised of saved Gentiles who look askance at saved Jews, somewhat forcing saved Jews to meet together in separate places, often referred to as “Messianic congregations,” distinguishing themselves from saved Gentiles.

All of this — by saved Jews or by saved Gentiles — forms no more than vain attempts to build up a middle wall which has been broken down by Christ Himself [Eph. 2:14].

And, as well, there is *absolutely no place* in Christendom for *the new creation* “in Christ” to go back to the old creation in Jacob [cf. Isa. 43:1, 7; II Cor. 5:17] and attempt to bring things from this old creation over into the new [cf. Matt. 9:16, 17].

God has set Israel aside for a dispensation; and He is, today, dealing with *the one new man* “in Christ,” not with Israel. And for this *new man* to go back to Israel [a nation set aside] and bring things having to do with this nation over into things having to do with *the one new man* [the Law, forms, ceremonies, etc.] is not only completely out of place but it serves to break down distinctions which God established between the two creations, *adding to an already existing confusion.*)

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 refers to God’s training for those Christians whom He deals with 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 refers

to and deals with as “sons” partake of this training; and any Christian who doesn’t partake of this training, whom God is not dealing with as a “son” after this manner, 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 (though “sons” because of creation) not having a part in God’s child-training of His “sons” — through rejection, unfaithfulness, etc. — and thus cannot be His “sons” (with respect to that in view, i.e., they cannot be His “sons” with respect to child-training; rather, they are nothos).*

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.* And this will occur *only after* the present dispensation has run its course and Christians have been removed from the earth into the heavens (the rapture).

This will be followed by God’s final dealings with Israel and the nations during Man’s Day (events of the seven-year Tribulation). *Only then* can the Messianic Era be ushered in, *bringing to pass the goal seen throughout all prophetic Scripture.*

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