

HIS SIDE VERSUS OUR SIDE - OVERVIEW OF GALATIANS

Or, What is a TRUE Christian?

by Norman Harrison

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CHAPTER 9

SONS VERSUS SERVANTS - GALATIANS 4:7

What is sonship? What does it mean to say that we are the sons of GOD?

This study will answer that question - and in so doing, bring assurance and security to the heart of GOD's people.

"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." --Galatians 4:7

Through this succession of antitheses we have reached the privileged position of sonship. The sons of GOD; think of it! Why should any one be content to continue in the condition of servants?

Justification of life brought us to such a glorious pinnacle that Paul cannot leave it without a peroration, brief though it be. Just as in Romans 5 justification leads to a listing of its benefits, so here:

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." -- Galatians 3:26-28).

This peroration is the Spirit's preparation for the Ephesian letter that is to follow. It is the Ephesian truth. No man-administered ordinance has done this. **"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free"** (1 Corinthians 12:13). Baptized into complete identification with CHRIST -- His body. We have become the **"one new man"** He had in mind all the while. No room for old distinctions here! We are a part of the person of CHRIST. Away with the old rules and regulations; this new man is to be Christ-controlled.

Children, Yet Servants

Christians require training; rightfully they are placed under discipline. While undergoing this needful discipline "**the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all**" (Galatians 4:1). Recently I was in a well-to-do home where the mother refused to have a hired servant; she wanted her four girls trained in housekeeping experience, so they did the work of a servant. Many of our leading industrialists began as employees in the lowest ranks; they submitted themselves to discipline as laborers; though heirs of all, they were no better than the servants about them.

Such is the condition of childhood, in the years of minority, but only "**until the time appointed of the father.**" Father and child alike looked forward to the day of full-grown sonship. Doubtless the reference here is to the custom by which the father would publicly and officially declare his boy to have attained his majority and thus recognize him as his heir.

One Son -- Many Sons

Just so our Heavenly Father. The Old Covenant was a covenant of discipline. The best it could do was to treat us as "under age," in need of training, subject to regulation. But GOD looked forward to bringing us out of our minority into the state of majority. How would He do it?

"**When the fullness of time was come**" for Him to do this for us "**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**" (Galatians 4:4-5). The great moment of human history has arrived; something very wonderful is taking place. It should command the closest attention of scientific men, for it is the turning point of destiny for the race.

Adam was "**the son of God**" (Luke 3:38). But he failed as the head of the race and led it away from GOD into sin and death. Now GOD will have another Son, a Sinless One, sinlessly born of a woman, virgin-born, born of the Spirit -- very GOD, yet very man. It is "**God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin**" (Romans 8:3).

GOD has come over to Our Side, making Himself one with us in our lot, "**born under** [a subject to] **the law,**" meeting Himself all its demands in life and in death, all because He wanted sons, wanted us as His sons, wanted to undo the robbery Satan committed in stealing man from Him, wanted to redeem us from being subject to law, wanted to bring us over onto His Side to live with Him as His sons.

GOD has done all of this "**that we might receive the adoption of sons**" (vs. 5). He has officially heralded us and welcomed us as His sons. We who once were condemned under law now are in GOD's family. Could anything be more wonderful? What a tragedy that many continue to live in the servile spirit of minority, under law regulation, refusing to grow up spiritually.

The Spirit of Sonship

Sons of GOD, we must have the Spirit of His Son. It would be tragic indeed to belong to a royal family and still serve in the spirit of a slave.

The Christian life is a "life"; nay it is **"His life in us."** Only those who have His life are qualified to live a Christian life. Note carefully the repetition of **"sent forth"** (vv. 4 and 6). As GOD sent forth His Son, so now, just as definitely and with as well-defined purpose, He has sent forth His Spirit. The Son was sent forth in one body, identifying Himself with the race; the Spirit was sent forth **"into your hearts,"** identifying Himself personally and individually with believers. The Son gave His life for us; the Spirit gave His life to us.

Let us fully comprehend what GOD is doing. It is a new thing. He is uniting us to Himself, intimately, in the spirit-life, to live our lives in conscious oneness with Him, His sons along with His one Son.

The HOLY SPIRIT is variously entitled, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, of holiness, of wisdom, of glory, the Spirit of GOD, in accordance with the varied aspects of His ministry. Here He is called **"the Spirit of His Son,"** because He has come into our hearts to minister conscious sonship to the Father. His presence alone begets the cry, Abba, Father. (See the same statement in Romans 8:15; there **"we cry,"** here the Spirit does the crying in us.)

Any one can speak of deity as GOD. To do so means nothing more than the recognition of His existence. No relationship is implied. But a Christian is in the endearing relationship of son to a father. **"Abba,"** translated, is our "papa." It is Hebrew, and joined to it is pater, the Greek word for father. Thus Jew and Gentile are joined together through CHRIST in the common fatherhood of GOD.

Upon what condition is this priceless benefit of the Spirit bestowed? "Because ye are sons." Nothing more. Nothing to be added. This gift of the Spirit is in the covenant, the promise of the Father. Just as soon as we step over onto His Side by faith in CHRIST He claims us as His. In that father and son relationship we were immediately **"sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise"** (Ephesians 1:13).

"If a Son, Then an Heir"

GOD our Father has made us, who were utterly condemned, His heirs. He wants to bestow all that He has upon us, as in the parable of Luke 15 the father is heard to say, "Son, all that I have is thine."

Romans carries the fuller declaration of our heirship:

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." --Romans 8:15-17.

The imagination is staggered before such a statement. GOD our Father owns everything. CHRIST, His one Son, **"He hath appointed heir of all things"** (Hebrews 1:2). And now -- can we take it in? -- He has made us in His New Covenant **"joint heirs with Christ."** Look up into

the heavens; there are trillions upon trillions of worlds. Whose are they? Ours! CHRIST's and ours! And since the Father has made us "joint" heirs with Him He cannot possess any of the inheritance without us. That is what joint heirship means; we must share together. That's the ultimate of being on His Side.

Child of His love, all things are yours -- He tells you this in 1 Corinthians 3:22-23 to arouse you to a realization of riches beyond your utmost powers of imagination to comprehend. Consider the universe. Whose is it, but His and yours? Then live royally.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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