



SONSHIP

KINGDOM PRINCIPLE STUDY KP1

READ THIS FIRST

Surely the most amazing revelation that comes through the Bible is that God has determined to make us His sons! Jesus, of course, is the perfect revelation of what a Son is like. It was He that revealed to us God's intention to make us His sons.

Before reading the study material, read John's Gospel, chapters 1 to 17 **underlining** the verses in which Jesus talks about his relationship with His Father and with us. Also note the word 'life' or 'everlasting life'. **Write these verses in a note book.**

Then read: **Romans 8, Galatians 4 and I John 3 to 5**

Now go through the study notes, looking up the Bible texts indicated as you go. Finally, answer the questions and forward your answers to us. We will return them to you together with our comments and the next series of notes.

LEARN THIS SCRIPTURE BY HEART:

"In the past God spoke to His people many times in many different ways but in these last days He has spoken to us through His Son. The Son is the one through whom God created everything. He is also the one whom God has chosen to possess everything at the end. The Son shines with the full radiance of God's glory, showing us exactly what God is like. It is He who holds the universe together by His powerful word. It is also He who has cleansed us from sin. Having done this, He is right now sitting down, resting, at the right side of God, the Father, the supreme Majesty." (*Hebrews 1:1-3*).

GOD'S PLAN TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO A WORLD SEPARATED FROM HIM

God is a spirit (*John 4:24*). Humans cannot see spirits because we are created beings; we live in a three dimensional, time bounded world and have fleshly bodies which can only communicate through the senses of sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell.

Because of this, God sent His own Son into our world, in a human body (*John 1:14*), so that He could show us exactly what He is like (*John 1:18; 1 John*

1:1-2). In sending His Son God also showed us His plan to save us from death and make us His sons.

BACKGROUND

To understand what God has said to us 'through His Son' we need to understand what the Bible means when it uses terms like 'father', 'son', and 'brother'.

'Father' - In the Bible, a father is a person who has only one objective in life - to have a son to whom he can pass on all of his life and possessions. This is the revelation to the patriarchs of human society and especially to the Jews through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For many years Abraham longed for a son. At last Isaac was born - when Abraham became old he delighted to give Isaac all that he had (*Gen.25:5*). When God spoke to us through Jesus His Son he showed us that, above all else, He has a father's heart! So great is His father's heart that He desires many sons to whom He can give His Life!

Because of our disobedience, those whom God has planned to be His sons (us) were separated from Him and unable to receive His Life. That is why He sent Jesus - not only to reveal the Father to us but also to do what was necessary to bring us back into the Father's family (*Heb.2:10; Rom.8:29-30*).

'Son' - The Bible idea of a son is not that of a male child born into a family. It is a relationship term referring to one who gladly puts aside his own life and ambition in order to receive and live out his father's life. A true son is an obedient son. Isaac was an obedient son; he did nothing new - he lived out the life of his father Abraham. In this way he also inherited Abraham's blessing (*Gen.26:17ff; Gen.26:24ff*). (When a Jew says that he is a son of Abraham he means he is living Abraham's life). But it was Jesus who showed us perfectly what it means to be an obedient son... a son does what his father does with the ability that the father gives him... a son puts aside his own will so that the father's will may be done.... a son has his father's authority because he does what the father wants. By living the life of the father a son represents the father and shows what the father is like. Rightful sons, born into a family, cease to be sons when they cease to live their father's life. Similarly, if the father pleases, he can adopt sons from outside the family, if they do what pleases him (*John 5:17-23; 5:30; 6:37-40; 7:16-18; 7:28-29; 8:27-29; 8:18-19; 14:7-14; Luke 15:11-32*). People know whose sons we are by the way that we live, not by our family name (*John 8:37-44*). Through God's grace and love disobedient sons can be restored again into His family (*Rom. 8:14-17*).

'Brother' - Jesus not only revealed to us the Father-Son relation, he also showed us the family of God. In this family there are no mothers (!) - just the Father

and many sons, Jesus being the first and oldest brother. We become Jesus' brothers when we receive the Father's Life and begin living obediently, as Jesus lived - doing the will of our Father. This new relationship with our heavenly Father and the family of God may cut across natural, human family relationships (*John 5:21; Heb.2:7-9; Matt. 12:46-50; Matt. 10:34-39; Luke 14:25-27*).

BECOMING A SON OF GOD

Through Jesus, God has opened up a way for all people - both men and women, Jews and Gentiles - to become his sons. How wonderful! By allowing Himself to be put to death on the cross Jesus has earned the right to give us the Father's life. (This was God's plan from the beginning). If we receive this life we are empowered by it to live for God as obedient sons; we escape from our old life lived in slavery to human passions and avoid the punishment that will come on all those who continue to be disobedient. When we receive the Father's life through Jesus we are adopted into God's family *with full privileges*. We become joint heirs with Jesus of all God's life as we live in union with Him. It is the Holy Spirit living in us who makes sure that we know that this is really true! (*John 3:36; Rom. 6:12-23; Rom.8:12-17; Gal.4:4-7*).

We see clearly what it means to become a son of God in John's Gospel chapter 1. When the Word (Jesus) came into the world he had within his human body the life of the Father. He also showed us clearly that he was able to pass on this life to others; the lame walked, the blind were made to see, even the dead were raised to life! (*John 1:1-18; John 5:21, 26; Matt.9:1-8; John 9:1-7*).

This life in Jesus brought light to the whole world. Until that time the people of the world had been sitting in darkness and the shadow of death (*John 1:4; 8:12, Luke 1:78-79*). The life that came in Jesus is the only real life that has ever come into the world - other forms of 'life' lead only to certain death; Jesus' life is the Father's life and it cannot die; this is why it is called 'eternal life' (*John 11:25; John 6:25-58*).

Whoever receives the Father's life through Jesus shall never die (*John 3:16*). We receive this life firstly by recognising who Jesus is (believing in Him). It is the Holy Spirit who makes it possible for us to see Jesus as he really is - God's Son. Without the Holy Spirit we are unable to see or understand anything that God is saying to us through Jesus.

But we must do more than just know who Jesus is - even the devil knows that. We must **receive** the free gift of the Father's Life, i.e. the Holy Spirit (*Rev. 3:20*). When we receive God's life we know that we

have it (*Acts 19:1-7*). It is a definite and real experience. God's Spirit (life) joins with our spirit deep within us. We are born again (*John 3:3*), our spirit made alive and part of God's new creation. If we do not have God's life within us we are not His sons and not Jesus' brethren (*Rom.8:9*). It is by receiving His life that we are made God's sons. This life is very powerful - it changes us into the likeness of Jesus within and can keep our human bodies in health as well (*I John 5:12; John 3:36, Romans 8:11*).

LIVING AS A SON

John says it this way: 'Dear brothers, see how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children and so in fact we are; we know that when Jesus appears again our human bodies will be changed so we shall be like Him. We shall then be able to 'see' Him as He really is. Everyone who has this hope in Jesus keeps himself pure, just as He is pure'. (*Heb.8:9; Rom.8:17; I John 5; I John 3:1-3*).

Everyone who lives in union with Christ does not continue in sin... whoever does what is right is righteous... **whoever continues in sin belongs to the devil**. Whoever is a child of God does not continue in sin for God's very nature is in him... here is the difference between God's children and the devil's children - **anyone who does not do what is right or does not love his brother is not God's child**. We know that we have left death and come over into life because **we love our brothers**. (*I John 3:7-10, 14*).

Jesus gave His life for us (*John 3:16-18*). We too must give our lives for our brothers. If a rich person sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim to be God's son? Our love should be **not just in words - it must be TRUE LOVE which shows itself in action**. When we are God's sons we receive from God whatever we ask because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him! Whoever obeys God's commands lives in union with God and God lives in union with Him. And because of the Spirit that God has given us, we **know** that God lives in union with us (*I John 3:22-24*).

God's children are not deceived by false anti-Christ prophets, because **the life** of God within them is **more powerful** than the spirit of those who belong to the devil's world (*John 4:4*). God's children listen and understand each other; whoever does not listen or understand us does not belong to God - that is how we can tell the difference between the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error (*I John 4:6; John 8:43*).

Dear friends, let us love one another - whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. God showed His love for us by sending His Son into the world so that

we might have life through Him... if this is how God loved us then we should love one another... God is love and whoever lives in love lives in union with God and God lives in union with Him (*1 John 4:7-16*).

If someone says he loves God but hates his brother he is a liar... the command that God has given us is this: whoever loves God must love his brother also (*1 John 4:20-21; John 13:34-35*).

This is how we know that we are God's children - it is by loving God and obeying His commands... and His commands are not too hard for us because every child of God is able to defeat the world by means of faith... We know that we belong to God even though the whole world is under the rule of the evil one... We live in union with the true God - in union with His Son, Jesus Christ! (*John 15:1-27; 1 John 5:1-4; 1 John 5: 5-20*).

A FINAL WORD FROM JESUS OUR LIBERATOR

'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father... the Father who remains in me, does his own work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me... If not, believe me because of the things I do. I am telling you the truth: whoever believes in me will do what I do - yes, he will do even greater things because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father's glory will be shown through the Son. If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it?' (*John 14:9-14*)

QUESTIONS

1. What was Jesus showing us when he told us to pray 'Our Father in Heaven' (*Matt. 6:9*)?
2. The Jews understand that when Jesus said that God was his Father that he was making himself equal with God. In what way is a son equal with his father?
3. *Romans 8:29* makes it clear that God intended us to be Jesus' brothers; how do we become His brothers?
4. How do we actually know that we are the sons of God?
5. What do you think is the most important characteristics of a son of God? Explain why.
6. If we are God's sons right now and joint heirs with Jesus of all that God has - how does this affect our daily lives?

Post your answers to:

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