

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev. Chris Trinhnam

Called By a New Name No 3

11th September 2001

Sons

Scripture Reading: Galatians 4.1-7

This study of the title 'Son' is a good place to consider the way the Bible uses a metaphor to teach us about the things of God. A metaphor is a word picture of an every day object which we can easily see that is like a sacred thing which we cannot see. There are four forms of these word pictures often used in the Bible:

1. The *simile* is a short word picture which uses words such as 'is like.' See James 1.6
2. The *parable* is an extended form of a simile, and usually includes an explanation. See Luke 6.46-49
3. The *metaphor* is a short word picture similar to a simile, except that words such as 'is like' are not used. The reader is left to work out whether statements are literal or word pictures. See Jude 1.12
4. The *allegory* is an extended form of metaphor, used only occasionally. See Galatians 4.21-31.

The New Testament uses 'Son' as a metaphor to teach us about the relationship which exists between God and those, both male and female, who have put their faith in Him. 'Son', 'child', 'father' (all objects) and 'born again' and 'adopted' (both processes) are all words used as metaphors. Also 'servant', 'saint', 'converted', 'redeemed' are other words which express different aspects of the same relationship.

Some thoughts on the use of metaphor in Scripture

1. We need to carefully distinguish between a metaphor and the actual name of a thing.
2. A metaphor does not lessen the value or reality or existence of the object it describes, it adds meaning by assisting our understanding.
3. There are things which are true about the object of the metaphor which are also true of the object in reality which it describes, and often more than one metaphor is used to better describe it.
4. We ought to draw as much understanding, instruction, encouragement and comfort as we need, knowing that God the Holy Spirit has fully inspired this part of the Bible for this very purpose.

'Son' in Scripture is a Metaphor Expressing Origin and Relationship

Jesus is called the 'Son of God' as one of His names in the New Testament. His mother was Mary, but he was born of the Holy Spirit, Luke 1.35. This denotes earthly origin. His spiritual origin as Son is His resurrection, where the metaphor 'firstborn' is used. See Luke 2.7 and compare Colossians 1.15-19.

We also are called the Sons of God as we receive Him to be our Saviour and Lord. See John 1.12. The the critical

question is, "Have you received the Lord Jesus Christ?" If the answer is 'yes', you are a son of God and have life which originates of God through Him. If the answer is 'no' you are not a son of God and do not have the life of God through Him. How can we be so sure? Look up 1 John 5.11-13. This is God's word, not ours. We simply trust Him.

Our sonship will be made plain to all at the resurrection when Jesus comes for His saints. Look up Romans 8.29 and compare Hebrews 12.23. Then

1 Corinthians 15.20-23. What is not evident now will be plain to all then.

But, We are Sons of God NOW! The transaction is done. The right has been conferred on all who have put their faith in Jesus Christ and His redemptive work on the cross. Although the day of our resurrection to come will make it plain, the reality is ours right now. John the apostle writes, *'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.'* Feed your heart and mind on these words. All the rights and privileges of sonship are yours by right, by faith, now, if you are His. Fully enjoy your calling.

'Son' is a Bible Metaphor Expressing Relationship and there are Two Metaphors Expressing This Process

'Born Again' is a Bible Metaphor Expressing the Process of Transmission. See John 3.3-8 and 1 Peter 1.18-23. This is a metaphor introduced by Jesus which leans heavily on the process of human birth, and is also used by Peter and John his disciples. Read the whole of John 3 to see how Jesus applied it to the process of becoming a child of God. Make a list of the parallels between natural and spiritual birth, between the relationship of family and the relationship of faith.

'Adoption' is a Bible Metaphor Expressing the Process of Transformation.

Romans 8.13-23,

Galatians 4.5 and Ephesians 1.3-12. These verses come from the writings of the apostle Paul. He was the apostle to the Gentiles who were being called from the darkness of a doubtful past to share with the saints in the kingdom of God.

If We are the Sons of God, Then We Belong to His Family. Therefore:

We Can Call God 'Our Father'. Jesus taught His disciples to pray *'Our Father which art in Heaven'* Matthew 6.9, and that Our Father cares for us because we are His children, Matthew 6.32.

If God is Our Father, Then We are Brothers and Sisters. When Saul of Tarsus first trusted in Jesus, Ananias went to him to encourage him. The very first words he used to his former enemy were *'Brother Saul . . .'*

If God is Our Father, Then Those We Bring to Faith and Life in Him are Our Spiritual Children. Writing to young Timothy who had come to new faith through Paul, he called him *'Timothy my son . . .'* 2 Timothy 2.1, also Philemon 1.10, Hebrews 5.12, 1 Peter 5.13. Do you have any spiritual children or grandchildren?

If God is Our Father Then We Have a Special Love and Care for Other Members of the Family. Look up Galatians 6.9&10, Ephesians 2.19 & 3.15, Hebrews 3.6. Family members have a duty of care to one another, and the family is responsible to be good citizens.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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