

Message Nine

Children of God, Sons of God, and Heirs of God

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:14, 16-17, 21, 23

I. Being children of God is our initial, or primary, relationship with God; we need to grow to become sons of God, and then we need further growth unto maturity in order to become heirs of God—Rom. 8:14, 16-17, 23.

II. “The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God”—v. 16:

- A. As believers in Christ the Son of God, we have been born of God the Father, the source of life, to be children of God with the life and nature of God—John 1:12-13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4.
- B. The greatest wonder in the entire universe is that human beings could be begotten of God and sinners could be made children of God—1 John 2:29—3:1; Rom. 5:19; 8:16, 21, 23.
- C. The Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we who were once children of the devil are now the children of God—John 8:44; 1 John 3:1-2, 10; Rom. 8:16:
 - 1. Even when we are weak or backsliding, we still have the deep conviction that we are children of God, for once we have been born of God, we have eternal life and are His children forever—John 1:12-13; 3:6, 15; 10:28-29.
 - 2. The Spirit witnesses with our spirit; the two spirits are one and witness together that we are children of God—Rom. 8:16:
 - a. Such a witnessing testifies to us and assures us that we are children of God, who possess His life—1 John 3:1-2.
 - b. The Spirit witnesses to our most basic and elementary relationship with God, namely, that we are His children, not that we are His sons or His heirs; therefore, this witnessing of the Spirit begins from the time of our spiritual birth, our regeneration—John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5-6; Rom. 8:16.
- D. As the children of God with the life and nature of God, we can live God, be the same as God in life, nature, and expression, and walk in a manner that is worthy of God, thus fulfilling the purpose of God’s creation of man—Eph. 5:1-2, 8; Matt. 5:48; 1 Thes. 2:12; Gen. 1:26.
- E. The children of God have been regenerated of God the Spirit to become God-men, belonging to the species of God to see and enter into the kingdom of God—John 3:3, 5-6:
 - 1. God has a good pleasure to make us, His children, the same as He is in life and nature but not in the Godhead—Eph. 1:5, 9; 5:1-2, 8; 1 John 1:5; 4:8, 16.
 - 2. Because we have been born of God, we are the same as God in life and nature but not in the Godhead—Rom. 8:2, 10, 16; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 - 3. As children of God, we are God-men, we belong to the species of God, and we are in the kingdom of God, the realm of the divine species—John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5:
 - a. Our second birth caused us to enter into the kingdom of God to become the species of God—vv. 3, 5-6.
 - b. Now as children of God with the life and nature of God, we are God-men in the kingdom of God—vv. 3, 5; Rom. 8:16; 14:17.

III. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”—8:14:

- A. God’s eternal purpose is to have many sons for His corporate expression; the New Jerusalem is the aggregate of the divine sonship for the eternal, corporate expression of the Triune God—Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:7; Rev. 21:7:

1. According to the revelation of the entire New Testament, God's economy is to produce sons by dispensing Himself in His Divine Trinity into His chosen and redeemed people; Christ's redemption brings us into the sonship of God—Eph. 1:5, 7, 10; 3:9; Rom. 8:11, 14.
 2. God's economy is to make us sons of God, inheriting the blessing of God's promise, which was given for His eternal purpose to have sons for His corporate expression—Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:29.
- B. The central thought of the book of Romans is that in His salvation God is making sinners His sons with His life and nature so that they may become constituents of the Body of Christ for His corporate expression—3:23; 8:14, 29; 12:4-5.
- C. We, the believers in Christ, are first children of God, and then we gradually grow up to become sons of God—Gal. 3:26; 4:6:
1. Sons are the children of God who are in the stage of the transformation of their souls—Rom. 8:14; 12:2.
 2. The sons of God not only have been regenerated in their spirit and are growing in the divine life, but they are also living and walking by being led by the Spirit—8:14.
- D. The sons of God have received the spirit of sonship with the sonship; they have the life, the position, the right, the privilege, and the blessings of a son—v. 15; Gal. 4:5-6.
- E. All the sons of God will be brought into glory; this is our destiny—Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:21:
1. Glorification is the step in God's complete salvation in which He will completely saturate our body with the glory of His life and nature according to the principle of His regenerating our spirit through the Spirit—vv. 21, 23, 30.
 2. This is the last step of God's complete salvation, wherein God obtains a full expression, which will ultimately be manifested in the New Jerusalem in the coming age—Rev. 21:2, 7, 10-11.

IV. "If children, heirs also; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other, joint heirs with Christ"—Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29; 4:7; Titus 3:7; Eph. 1:11, 13-14, 18; 1 Pet. 1:3-4:

- A. Christ is the Heir of all things, and we, the children of God, are destined to be joint heirs with Christ, for we are heirs with Him to inherit God in His glory as our inheritance—Heb. 1:2; Rom. 8:17; Acts 26:18:
1. As the designated Heir, Christ will inherit all things in God's economy, including the earth, the kingdom, and the throne; all that God is and has is for Christ's possession—Heb. 1:2; Psa. 2:8; Dan. 7:13-14; Luke 1:32; Matt. 11:27; John 16:15.
 2. Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the appointed Heir of God, and we, the many sons of God, have been saved to be joint heirs with Christ—Rom. 8:17.
- B. An heir is one who is of full age according to the law (the Roman law is used by Paul as an illustration) and who is qualified to inherit the father's estate—Gal. 4:7:
1. In order to become heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, we need to grow in life unto maturity—v. 7; Heb. 5:14—6:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-7.
 2. Heirs of God are the sons of God who are fully matured in every part of their being and thus are qualified as legal heirs to claim the divine inheritance—Rom. 8:17, 21, 23.
- C. We become heirs of God through the Triune God—the Father, who sent forth the Son and the Spirit; the Son, who accomplished redemption for sonship; and the Spirit, who carries out the sonship within us—Gal. 4:4-7.
- D. The condition for us to be heirs is that we grow in life to become sons and then pass through suffering so that we may be glorified to become legal heirs—Rom. 8:17:

1. Genuine growth in the divine life requires suffering—1 Pet. 2:19-21; 3:14, 18; 4:1, 12-13, 19; 5:1, 9; 2 Pet. 1:5-7.
2. The more we suffer with Christ, the more we grow and the faster we are matured to be joint heirs with Christ—Rom. 8:17.