

Participation in Divine Life

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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 ... (I John 3:2).

The Lord Jesus Christ is our means of participation in divine life. We join in the life of God through our union with the Son. “*In Christ*” we share the very life the Son has with the Father.

The Son of God “... *proceeded forth and came **from God** ...*” (John 8:42). “*He liveth by the power of God*” (II Corinthians 13:4); and, “*In that He liveth, He liveth unto God*” (Romans 6:10). He is the beloved of the Father (Matthew 3:17; 17:5) Whose sure testimony is, “*I do always those things that please **Him** [the Father]*” (John 8:29).

JESUS CHRIST: THE DIVINE PROTOTYPE

Paul Billheimer has written wonderfully about our place in the Lord Jesus Christ:

Created originally in the image of God, redeemed humanity has been elevated by means of a divinely conceived genetic process ... to the highest rank of all created beings ... This union goes beyond a mere formal, functional, or idealistic harmony or rapport. It is an organic unity ... We become ... actual generated sons of God (I John 3:2), “*partakers of the divine nature*” (II Peter 1:4) ... generated by His own life ...

From all eternity God purposed to have a family circle of His very own, not only created but also generated by His own life, incorporating His own seed, “*sperma*,” “*genes*,” or heredity. Long ago, even before He made the world, God chose us to be His very own, through what Christ would do for us (Ephesians 1:4; also 5:25-27, 32). In order to obtain this personal, organic family relationship, God conceived the infinitely vast and infinitely wise plan of creation plus redemption ... in order to bring “*many sons into glory*” (Hebrews 2:10) ...

Christ is the Prototype after which all other sons are being fashioned ... God's purpose in the plan of redemption – to produce ... an entirely new and unique species, exact replicas of His Son with whom He will share His glory and His dominion, and who will constitute a royal progeny and form the governing and administrative staff of His eternal kingdom.

While we recognize the infinite distinction between the “Son” and the “many sons” born into the family, yet such is their heredity ... that He recognizes them as bona fide blood-brothers ...

Christ is the divine Prototype after which this new species is being made. They are to be exact copies of Him, true genotypes ... As sons of God, begotten by Him, incorporating into their fundamental being and nature the very genes of God, they rank above all other created beings and are elevated to the most sublime height possible ...¹

PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST'S LIFE

Think of it! Through the Son, we have been brought into union with the very life of the Father Himself. “*In Him*” we participate in His life – in divine life.

Christ has the life of the Father in Him.

For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in Himself (John 5:26).

... I live by the Father ... (John 6:57).

... He liveth by the power of God (II Corinthians 13:4).

We have the life of the Son in us.

... Christ ... is our life (Colossians 3:4).

... God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son (I John 5:11).

... The promise of life which is in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 1:1).

... Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

Our being “in Christ” is a strongly emphasized Pauline revelation. It will have great impact if we realize our genuine participation in His divine life.

*For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. **And ye are complete in Him**, which is the head of all principality and power (Colossians 2:9-10).*

1. Paul Billheimer, *Destined for the Throne* (First Edition, 1975) pp. 33-37.

PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST'S NATURE

Think of it! Through the Son, we have been brought into union with the nature of the Father Himself. We often hear of the believer having a new nature. This new nature is not a new nature of our own; it is the very nature of God.

*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (II Peter 1:4).*

The idea is *not* that we somehow will become God; but that we are partakers of His nature – growing into the likeness and character of the Father.

PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST'S SONSHIP

Think of it! Through the Son, we have been brought into union with His Sonship. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, “*the **firstborn among MANY brethren***” (Romans 8:29). We are Christ’s brethren, and too are God’s sons.

We are not just the “*children of God*,” wonderful enough as that is; we are more than that – through our union with Christ, as members of His body, we’re the “*sons of God*.” We are not minor² “*children*”; rather, we have the divine position of full-grown sons.³ This is the position of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We have been placed into union with His full adult sonship. This is the glorious principle known as “*adoption*.”

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 4:5).

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 (Romans 8:15).

This wonderful reality is often missed because of the more modern usage of the word “*adoption*.” We think of taking someone from outside the family and making them a member. This is not the Scriptural concept; instead it is that of placement of one into a full-adult sonship position.

The word translated as “*adoption*” is the Greek word *huiothesia*. This is *Strong’s Greek Lexicon*

2. The word “*minor*” is defined as “*while in a state of infancy; one who has not attained the age of a major.*” The word “*minor*” is in contrast with the word “*major*.” Major is defined as “*one who has attained his full age, and has acquired all his civil rights; one who is no longer a minor; an adult.*” This is a concept known as “*majority*” – “*The state or condition of a person who has arrived at full age. He is then said to be a major, in opposition to minor, which is his condition during infancy.*” (Definitions are from *Bouvier’s Law Dictionary, 1856 Edition*).
3. “*In the Scriptures those who are too young to have a voice in affairs, who need a guardian, are minors ... The Authorized Version renders this “babe,” “child,” and “childish,” ... It is in contrast to the wise and intelligent ... mature man (I Corinthians 13:10-11) ... In Israel a male was mature physically when he arrived at the age of twenty (Leviticus 27:3, 5). Then he was drafted into the host, or army, and was liable to military service, being considered a mature member of the nation ...*” A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), *Babe, Child, Sonship, and Firstborn*

#5206 meaning the “placing as a son,” i.e., “sonship,” or son-placing.

It is defined by A.E. Knoch as:

Sonship, literally son-placing, the station in life accorded a son ...⁴

C.I. Scofield says regarding this:

Adoption is the act of God whereby children of God redeemed by Christ are made adult sons, whose full manifestations as such awaits the resurrection.⁵

Of course the world does not yet know who we are. Our sonship has been completely hidden from them at this time, but one day we will be made manifest. In the resurrection God will reveal to all of creation who His sons are. This will be my glorious coronation day.

*For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the **manifestation**⁶ of the sons of God (Romans 8:19).*

Until our manifestation as “*the sons of God*,” the rest of God’s creation doesn’t know who we are. As we walk through our life, the circumstances will not reflect our true identity. In fact, we are not exempt from all the apparent vanities of this *darkland*. We have our share of the *darkside* – suffering, pain, discouragement, difficulties, weariness, pressure, and the like – but we are not defined by their details. Although we’re beckoned to the contrary on every side, we have a higher life – the *high-life* from above, from the *lightland*, the *lightside* of divine life – in which we are called to walk within this radiant light as our Father’s full-grown, adult sons.

As we go through the various details of our earthly lives, let’s not forget who we really are. Remember our divine calling and position as God’s full-grown sons. Let’s live in this as our day-by-day, moment-by-moment focus; for that

PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST’S INHERITANCE

Think of it! Through the Son, we have been brought into union with the inheritance of the Father.

... Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ... (Romans 8:17).

What an amazing thing it is being God’s heirs. We could never have dreamed up such a thing in our wildest imaginations. As with all that we have through our union with Christ, if it were not the record of Scripture itself we must surely oppose it as pure blasphemy.

4. A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), *Babe, Child, Sonship, and Firstborn*

5. C.I. Scofield, *The Scofield Bible Correspondence Course* (1907), Vol. III, page 412.

6. Strong’s Greek Lexicon #602 “*apokalupsis*” – defined as “disclosure” and translated elsewhere in the King James Version as – “appearing” and “revelation.”

Yet it is true. We are the heirs of God. With Christ we are inheritors to all that God possesses – and He owns it all!

For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof (I Corinthians 10:26).

We will not take full possession of all of our inheritance until the resurrection. The earth and its fullness are currently sublet to the sons of Adam. God has placed Himself in Royal Exile, but this will all change one day.

We often forget as we labor through our days that we are sons of the Father, and heirs of all things. We sometimes live in the circumstances as defeated sons of Adam. This is a denial of our true identity, and when we do so, we live in falsehood and hypocrisy. We deny in the daily details of our lives, who God has actually made us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We currently live in “*this present evil world*,” but we have a divine calling upon our lives. We are to walk here as God's own sons – shining as lights – and doing so changes our approach and outlook upon the many diverse details of our earthly lives.

PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST'S GLORY

Think of it! Through the Son, we have been brought into union with the very life of God Himself. Not only in the Son do we have forgiveness, redemption, justification and sanctification, we also have glorification.

Christ is the “*image of God*” (II Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15), “*and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly*” (I Corinthians 15:49).

*We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, **are changed into the same image from glory to glory**, even as by the Spirit of the Lord* (II Corinthians 3:18).

*... We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world **unto our glory*** (I Corinthians 2:7).

*... The salvation which is in Christ Jesus **with eternal glory*** (II Timothy 2:10).

PARTICIPATION IN THE DIVINE LIFE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

How blessed we are that the plan of the Father is that the Lord Jesus Christ is our means of participating in His life. Truly amazing grace!

The Father has brought us into living union with Himself through our oneness with His Son. “*In Christ*” we have been made participants in the very life that the Son of God shares with His Father.

*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** ... (I John 3:2).*

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