

## Revisiting "Sonship" Part 3

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Since our series on revisiting sonship will initially be sent forth in individual installments before being put into book form, I want to say at this point that, given the potential, understandably, for misunderstanding, shocked reaction and hasty conclusions, the responses to the first two installments were all, in my estimation, very intelligent, both in terms of the kind of questions that were raised, the depth of understanding where there were affirmations given, and in the honest confession of deep disturbance that was caused in some cases.

All in all, a gracious spirit, so far, has prevailed. I have been urged by close friends to write at least this third installment to probe our subject further, and to add clarification to what has been shared thus far. Here we go:

In order to freshen our perspective regarding that particular eschatological expectation-distinctive that prevails within a loose-knit, wonderfully enlightened community of believers, often identified as those who embrace the manifest sonship/kingdom message, it is important to look at the subject within its larger context.

It became very obvious to me, from one phone call response and several e-mail responses---and I hasten to acknowledge again how intelligent was the content, and how gracious was the spirit of the responses---that the immediate larger context of consideration had to be the doctrine of election.

Very few subjects have the potential of exposing either a general darkness of spiritual mentality, or of remaining pockets of darkness in other-wise enlightened hearts, than does the subject of divine election.

I have a burning desire that the saints of God might come to see the grandeur, the scope, the simplicity, and yet, paradoxically, the complexity, and finally, that singularity of purpose in the nature of God's predestinating choices.

Also, few subjects are more vulnerable to the can't-see-the-forest-for-the-trees syndrome that has impaired theology's search for truth down through the centuries. No subject has endured more abuse and distortion than the subject of sovereign election. For instance, the two theological camps, Calvinism and Arminianism, classically represent the propensity to either blatantly ignore certain undeniable biblical themes, or to twist, bend, and pummel them into a shape to fit some theological box.

Faced with our Lord's regal claim that discipleship is solely a matter of His choice, as summarily declared in His tender yet authoritarian statement, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you," (Jn. 15:16 NAS), what is Arminianism's response?

Well, basically, the Arminian totally ignores the force of Jesus' assertion because it violates his precious doctrine of free will. And, what about the Calvinist? He takes the statement very seriously and then draws a conclusion that is rooted in the darkest regions of the human psyche.

The Calvinist concludes that God has chosen some for heaven and some for hell, and that's it---period. The Arminian insists that God can't carry out His choice without man's approval, and they both lay claim to scriptural, moral and ethical high ground. You fools; deceivers you are, God-character assassins, lacing the gospel of Christ with the poison of your traditions, blind leaders of the blind.

Brethren, we do not want in any way, or in any measure, to be found in complicity with such infamy. This is a subject of great weight, worthy of our deepest worshipful consideration. Think with me: When our Lord spoke those words to The Twelve---granting that, at that moment the words were meant for their ears only and that He had them particularly in mind---, hasn't it been right for us to find a principle in his statement that applies to all of us?

Are we not to understand that though speaking to them particularly, He affirmed the incontrovertible, universal, divine principle regarding

the call of God, that it is just that---God's call, God's choice, wholly? If so, something so essential to understanding has been established. It is just this, that election is not about exclusivity, it is about inclusivity.

Many millions have been chosen and called to the Master's service since He spoke those words to that small company, because His words did not indicate a closed-ended election, but a very special representative election.

Those who are elected, are elected as representing the Way of God for all men. Or we might say that the exclusivity of election points to election's inclusivity. I am elected by God so that He might reveal through me His election of you and every other man and woman. God's election begins with One through whom He reveals His election of all.

"Many are called, but few are chosen," but each time the call goes out, more respond, in this life, or the next, and incrementally more are proven to be the chosen, until finally all are approved.

To understand this principle, please notice that God's choice of The Twelve was for the purpose of them bearing abiding fruit. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. God gives to us, and calls us according to His immutable will. This is election, plain and simple. We must trace the commission for fruit bearing back to its original aeonian appearance, and in so doing we will be able to better interpret the meaning of election as it appears ongoingly in God's working in and among men.

The record of that original election unto fruit bearing is found in Gen. 1: 27 and 28: "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'be fruitful.....' " Brethren, this was God's first and all-encompassing election. All other personal applications of God's electing prerogative are subservient to, under the umbrella of, and moving toward the fulfillment of that original decision of God.

It is man, Adam, in his gender-completeness, male and female, who is the elect of God to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it.

This is God's ordination, God's gift and calling that shall not be reversed, amended, or repented of. This original election embraces, defines and gives meaning to all other incidents of God choosing men and women for this or that subordinate but related purpose.

All election begins with, moves by, and is fulfilled out from the dynamic of God's commission to Adam. You may assume that your particular experience of election---as genuine as it may be, and as conscious as God has made you of it---has placed you at the very forefront of fulfilling His ultimate intention. Well, OK, think that, if you must, but don't be offended if I give it a raised eyebrow of skepticism. There have been many before you, of a similar mind.

More than once, I have felt deeply that the level of revelation in my heart, and in the hearts of those I was keeping company with in the fellowship of the saints, indicated that I was among the elect of the elect. It's a pretty heading feeling, I tell you.

Now I would hope that the reader knows that I am referring to Adam, not merely as one individual, but as man, corporate. The human race was in the loins of Adam, and, according to biblical principle, what God spoke to him, male and female, applies to the race that came out of him.

It is that gender-complete humanity that finally is the body and bride of Christ, as seen prototypically in Adam and Eve.

Nothing less than the whole body of humanity is the body of Christ and the bride of Christ. Nothing less than the whole of humanity is the temple of the living God. Nothing less than the whole of humanity is "the sheep of His pasture," the family of God, AND will be the revealed sons of God. Nothing less than the whole of humanity is "he who overcomes."

Does this mean that the overcoming that His grace accomplishes in each of us individually is of little meaning? Of course not! But it is that complete, final overcoming that gives the fullest meaning to our individual victories. Often we allow ourselves to feel special because of the special group of believers we belong to.

Your specialness lies in the specialness of all humanity. Do not demean that by a cultic mentality of spiritual superiority. There is nothing more special than being human. God thought so much of it that, in Christ, He became flesh and dwelt among us.

The great apocalyptic figure in the Book of Daniel, that figure that is at the heart of Daniel's revelation of God's forward movement historically toward the conclusion of His purpose in the earth, is "the Son of MAN." Jesus Christ, our Lord summed up in Himself the whole of humanity and humanness, and by Him, and Him alone, man is qualified as, and demonstrated to be, God's elect.

All of man's destiny centered in Him, and all that would disqualify man from fulfilling his destiny came to rest upon Him. In His death, all of man's failure ended, and in His resurrection, all that man was intended to be rose to the throne of God.

Until Jesus, all individual deaths were a part of an ongoing, passed-on death, but in Him, and in His all-inclusive death, death came to its end---resurrection. In Him, man is fulfilled and demonstrated to be the elect of God.

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