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LifeinJesus.net

‘Being a Son of God’
by
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BEING A SON OF GOD

God the Father in the Old Testament

To be a son, there has to be a father. I have found the word 'father' only fifteen times in the Old Testament in connection to God. Ten times, it is God speaking of Himself. Twice someone describes God as Father. And three times someone addressed God directly as 'Father' and this was Isaiah, for example in Isaiah 64:8 where he said – *'But now, LORD, you are our Father.'*

The Jews of the Old Testament didn't generally have a concept of God as their Father. They couldn't have the same intimate family relationship with Him that we can have, because Jesus hadn't yet died

for them, so they weren't able to be born-again and come into a Father and child relationship.

Jesus called God 'Father'

In contrast, in the New Testament, Jesus almost always called God 'Father'. The scribes and the Pharisees accused Him of blasphemy because they believed calling God 'Father' was claiming to be equal to Him. An example is in John 10:31-33 – *'Therefore the Jews took up stones again to stone him. ³²Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of those works do you stone me?" ³³The Jews answered him, "We don't stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."*

Jesus called God 'Father' because He had a personal relationship with Him — He was and is God's Son. I believe that the only time Jesus addressed Him directly in any other way was on the Cross when He said in Mark 15:34 – *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* As Jesus took the sin of the whole world on Himself, He became separated from God. For that period of time, His relationship with His Father was broken and He could no longer call Him 'Father', but had to call Him 'God'.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He gave them a model which begins with the words 'Our Father in heaven'. He was saying they could call God 'Father' too. He was also pointing the way to when all believers would be able to call Him 'Father' as a result of the relationship Jesus

was to make possible for us, through His suffering, death and resurrection.

If God is our Father, then we are His sons and daughters. To get a better perspective of what this means, let's first look at how God created men and women and how women were viewed in Bible times.

God Created Men and Women

God took Eve out of Adam to be a helpmeet for him. His intention was that they would help each other. In Genesis 2:18 God said — *'The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him."* Comparable means similar or equivalent. He made her to be comparable to Adam, not superior or inferior. God created men and women to be

different but equal. They are both as important as each other to God. Galatians 3:28 says — *‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’*

But when Satan deceived Eve, and Adam rebelled against God by following her lead and eating the fruit from the forbidden tree, everything became corrupted. When God asked Adam what he’d done, he didn’t own up to the part he’d willingly played. Instead, he replied in Genesis 3:12 — *“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”* Adam blamed Eve and people have been blaming each other and men have been putting down women ever since. Obviously, there have been and are many individual men who

fully respect women and honour them, seeing them as the equal partners God created them to be. But as a whole, society has treated women as inferior throughout history and throughout the world.

Notice that Adam also blamed God, because He was the One who had given him Eve! And people have been blaming God for the bad things that happen ever since, instead of laying the blame where it actually belongs – with Satan.

Women in Jesus' Day

So how were women viewed in Bible times? The Jewish nation was a patriarchal society – it was run by men. Women did not inherit from their father. The inheritance went to the firstborn son or was divided among the

sons. Women had little opportunity to earn money and so were totally dependent on their father before they were married and then on their husband. If he died, they would be dependent on any sons they had. Without any man to provide for them, they were in real difficulty. This is why the early church made sure it looked after widows as well as orphans.

Women's main responsibilities in Bible times were rearing children and looking after the home. They weren't educated in God's law as the men were, so when they went to the synagogue on the sabbath, they didn't understand what was being spoken about and they had to keep to their own separate area.

But Jesus had a revolutionary attitude towards women. He often showed that women were just as important as men. For example, He called a woman who had been bent over for eighteen years to come forward to Him in the synagogue. This means He called her into the men's area! When Jesus spoke with the woman at the well, His disciples were shocked that He would have a conversation with a woman and a Samaritan one at that. Yet she was the first person He told that He was the Messiah. When He rose from the dead, the first person He appeared to and spoke to was a woman — Mary Magdalene. There are many examples in the Bible where Jesus demonstrated the truth that men and women are equal to God.

Being Adopted by God

The Bible tells us that the ultimate purpose Jesus came to earth was so that we might become God's children by being adopted into His family. Galatians 4:4-5 says — *'But when the fullness of the time came, God sent out his Son, born to a woman, born under the law,⁵ that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as children.'*

There was no formal process in Jewish culture for adoption. But the Jews were living under Roman occupation in Jesus' day and the Romans had a legal adoption process. A Roman father had the option of disowning his own biological child for a variety of reasons, but he couldn't disown someone he had adopted. If he had no

children or only had daughters, he could adopt a male son who would then inherit his estate, thus preserving the family name and property. For this reason, the person who was adopted was often an adult male. He was freely chosen by his new father and he became a permanent part of the family, taking their name. Everything connected with his previous life was cancelled and he received a new identity with all its rights and privileges. And, very importantly, he became his new father's heir.

When we are born-again, we become adopted into God's family as His legal children. (To read more about being born-again, go to the end of this booklet.) God adopted us because He desired us and He will never disown us now that we are His adopted children. Through Jesus' sacrifice,

all our past debts are erased — nothing we did wrong is held against us anymore. Colossians 2:14 says Jesus was — *‘wiping out the handwriting in ordinances which was against us. He has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.’* Instead, we are given a new identity as His child with all the rights and privileges which go with that position, with the assurance that they will never be withdrawn. And being adopted into God’s family also makes us His heirs.

Being an Adopted Child of God

When we were adopted into God’s family we became His children legally. John 1:12 says — *‘But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God’s children, to those who believe in his name.’* He gave us a brand-new spirit which is just like Jesus and

He sent His Holy Spirit to live in us. Romans 8:16 says — *‘The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.’* And God says in 2 Corinthians 6:18 — *“I will be to you a Father. You will be to me sons and daughters.”*

We have full assurance of our adoption as God’s children through the Holy Spirit and through God’s Word. 1 John 3:1 says — *‘See how great a love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God!’*

Because we are God’s adopted child, we can also call Him ‘Father’ just as Jesus does. Galatians 4:6 says — *‘And because you are children, God sent out the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, “Abba, Father!”’*

Being a Daughter of God

God prophesied in the Old Testament that both men and women would receive His Spirit in the future. In Joel 2:28-29 God said — *“It will happen afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions. ²⁹And also on the servants and on the handmaids in those days, I will pour out my Spirit.”* God made it completely clear that He would pour out His Spirit on women as well as on men and in all walks of life and that they would both prophesy. He made no distinction.

On various occasions Jesus lovingly addressed women who believed in Him as ‘Daughter’ (e.g. Luke 8:48, Luke 13:16, &

Luke 23:28). If you are a born-again woman as I am, know now that you are your heavenly Father's beloved daughter. That is so special.

Being a Son of God

As we've seen, in Jewish society in Bible times, only men had all the rights and privileges and women were dependant on them. But God's Word makes it clear that, through Jesus, women are adopted into God's family with all the same rights and privileges as men. Being a son of God in the New Testament isn't about gender – it's about our position in His family.

I'm so glad the Bible tells me I am a son of God even though I'm a woman, because this means I have all the rights and privileges of sonship in just the same way that born-again

men do. If the Bible always referred to us as being sons and daughters or His children, then this important truth would be missed. I love being God's daughter and I love being His son too. It is so good that we all share in all that God has for us in the same way, as members together in His family. When you read a verse talking about us being sons of God, don't exclude yourself if you are a woman. Instead rejoice that you are included in just the same way as your Christian brothers are.

God knows whether we are male or female, but In His eyes there is no distinction spiritually between His sons and daughters. He loves us all equally and we all belong in His family as His adopted children in the same way. Galatians 3:28 says — *'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave*

nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Being an Heir of God

A very significant thing about us all being sons, whether we are male or female, is that it means we all inherit from God. This was not what usually happened in Bible times. And this is why it's so important that we are all called sons by God. Galatians 4:7 says — *'So you are no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.'* If God only saw women as daughters, then we wouldn't be heirs. It is because He calls us sons too that we inherit. And Romans 8:17 says we are — *'heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.'* Not only are we God's heirs but we are joint heirs with Jesus. This means that, as born-again

believers, we get to share in everything that Jesus has! We have God's power and His glory and His riches just as Jesus does whether we are male or female. 1 Peter 1:3-4 says — *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy caused us to be born again ... ⁴to an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance that doesn't fade away, reserved in Heaven for you.'* Our full inheritance is stored up for us in heaven, but we get to partake of it now in this life if we are willing to believe it and receive it.

Rejoice that you are a child of God and can call Him Father. If you are a woman, rejoice that you are a daughter of God. And let us all rejoice that we are all sons of God and therefore all heirs of God, men and women

together, all equally beloved and precious members of His adopted family.

Being Born-Again

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour you become born-again. God becomes your Father and you His child, and you can start to enjoy your personal relationship with Him.

Romans 10:9 says – *‘If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.’* Say this prayer out loud and believe it in your heart – “Jesus, I declare that You are Lord and that God raised You from the dead to live forevermore. Thank You for dying for me

personally. I receive my forgiveness and my salvation now. Thank You Jesus, my Lord and Saviour.”

You are now born-again and Jesus has come to live in you. All your sins are forgiven, past, present and future, and you have a new perfect spirit. And after this life is over, you'll live in love, peace and joy with your Father God for ever.

Life in Jesus

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Have you ever wondered why the Bible talks a lot about sons of God and very little about daughters?

It is really important that we understand
how we are all God's sons
whether we are men or women,
and what a difference that makes
to who we are
and how we see ourselves.



Katherine Hilditch has been teaching in local churches for many years. In 2013 she wrote her first booklet and since then has written many more. She created her website to make all the

booklets freely available to everyone. They can be read online or printed out. Katherine's threefold purpose is to help people understand more about Jesus and all He has done and won for them, to encourage them to go deeper in their relationship with God and to provide material to help them share their faith with others. To read her story and find all the booklets go to –

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