**Children of God, sons of God**

For the months of May and June, we have been or will be presenting our unfathomable riches as follows:

May No Subject

6 16 Related to God through propitiation

13 17 Adoption of sons

20 18 Children of God, sons of God

27 19 Brethren

Jun No Subject

3 20 Made close

10 21 Confident access

17 22 Identification truths: joined to Christ & separated from: I

24 23 Identification truths: joined to Christ & separated from: II

Today we will be looking at two very similar expressions, that we who are believers in Christ are children of God and sons of God. These are ways in which we are related to God through propitiation, and the other massive spiritual accomplishments of the Father through Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit.

**Children of God & sons of God passages**

Below are some of the passages with the terms ‘children of God’ and/or ‘sons of God’ that apply to the position of believers. Those specifically relating to other groups than the church or to the walk and condition of believers may not be included. References to Christ, the Son of God, are also not included.

John 1:12 (NASU)

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become **children of God**, even to those who believe in His name…

Romans 8:14-25

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God**. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are **children of God**, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the **sons of God**. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the **children of God**.

Galatians 3:23-29

But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all **sons of God** through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 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. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

1 John 3:1, 2

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called **children of God**; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are **children of God**, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

There are a couple of cultural points to be brought up regarding these terms:

* Unless it obviously refers to a physical child or son, being a child or son of someone or something in biblical times meant ‘like in character and close in relationship. In that sense, being a child of or a son of could have either positive or negative implications (Matthew 13:38; 23:31; Luke 16:8; Ephesians 2:1-3; see above references for position implications).[[1]](#footnote-1)
* In the Roman empire, children did not automatically have any legal protections. Abuse, abandonment, selling as slaves and even deliberate killing of children were allowed – unless a son or daughter were specifically legally accepted. Adoption of sons was a special case of legal acceptance, plus much more. For us in the body of Christ, statements of the spiritual equivalent of legal acceptance are implied in the passages quoted above.

1. See what is implied in 1 Samuel 17:55-58, “Now when Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?" And Abner said, "By your life, O king, I do not know." 56 The king said, "You inquire whose son the youth is." 57 So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine's head in his hand. 58 Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." [↑](#footnote-ref-1)