

THE FIRSTBORNS OF THE FIRSTBORN

Hebrews 12:23: *To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*

The purpose of this Bible study today is to ensure that we understand the infinite value of our birthright in the Lord Jesus Christ, so we will cherish and value it. Let us proudly declare today that we are children of the firstborn of God, Jesus Christ. By this is meant that the flesh and blood of the Lord is not of earthly or human origin but has its source in God himself. This is what the Bible means when it states repeatedly that Jesus is the Son of God. “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). If we make this declaration with understanding, the Lord will pronounce a blessing upon us, as he did Peter. Now, the Bible declares we are the children of the firstborn. A child could not determine the order of its birth – the sovereign God alone determined the order of one’s birth in Israel.

If there was one regret that Jacob had it was the fact that he was so close to being the firstborn (he was Esau’s twin brother). He schemed and plotted to cheat his brother into selling his birthright. “And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob” (Genesis 25:33). It was for this reason that God declared he hated Esau because he despised his birthright. All the firstborn are redeemed by blood, as was God’s firstborn, Israel, in Egypt. There is a beautiful symbolism in the fact that Jacob, although not right in his method, nevertheless shed the blood of a goat in deceiving his father with the goatskin on his arms. “And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck” (Genesis 27:16). Best of all, however, is the fact that Jacob put on the garments of Esau, the firstborn. “And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son” (Genesis 27:15). We, today, put on the garments of our firstborn, Jesus Christ, and inherit the blessing of the firstborn of the firstborn.

Romans 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Matthew 22: 11 *And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.*

Matthew 22: 12 *And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.*

Numbers 3:13 Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord.

Numbers 3:45 Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am the Lord.

Clearly, God is zealous for the firstborn; they belong to him and him alone. Pharaoh challenged this truth and lost his kingdom and his life. Saints of God, we are today the firstborns of the firstborn Jesus Christ. The Lord does not have grandchildren, only children, and all those who are born of the Lord become his firstborn and Levites unto him. The tribe of Levi were God's firstborn. This explains why we become the New Testament Levites or priests according to Revelation 5:10 "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. The Bible further declares, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12,13). We become the firstborns of Jesus by first giving up our earthly genealogy and kinship with Adam after which we repent, are baptized in Jesus name and receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Born-again Christians now become the inheritors of the privileges of the firstborn. Remember I said previously that God determines the order of birth, not humans. Now God has determined that all his children who are born of his nature and Spirit are his firstborn. The new birth is equal for all, unlike royal people whose order of birth determines who will sit on the throne. It is in this sense that we can also appreciate the Scripture, "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen" (Matthew 20:16). The firstborns do not merit heaven, it belongs to them by birthright. "And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine" (Luke 15:31). This is why we must witness with this understanding – the Lord has not yet returned because he knows he has many more children, firstborns, who will receive our witness about Jesus and inherit their firstborn right.

Revelation 6:11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Psalm 89 is about the blessings God promised to David. God called it the blessings of the firstborn. “I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him” (Psalm 89:20). “Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth” (Psalm 89:27). What are the blessings of the firstborn: God would strengthen him; defeat his enemies; God’s faithfulness and mercy would never leave him; David would rule over sea and rivers; God would judge his children’s sins, “Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail” (Psalm 89:33). Finally, God concludes:

Psalm 89:36 *His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.*

Psalm 89:37 *It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.*

The above shows that firstborn is not about the order of birth in the kingdom of the Lord. David was not the firstborn, but last. Yet God chose him as his firstborn. The same goes for Joseph who was the second last born, yet the favor of God made him the firstborn above all his brethren. “Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright” (I Chronicles 5:1). There was a coat of many colors that Jacob gave Joseph. This points to putting on the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism. The coat of many colors is the right of the firstborn. Let us proudly say we are Jesus’ firstborn – in putting on his body through baptism, we have evidence of our privileged position as Christ’s firstborn. Heaven is ours to inherit, not because we have done anything to inherit it, but by the power of our birthright. Let us not despise this birthright but delight in the privilege God has given us. We cannot sell it, we will not despise it like Esau but we will always carry this knowledge with dignity and gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ.