

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

HEIRS
CONFORMED
FOR
GLORIFICATION

WITNESS LEE

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MANY BROTHERS OF THE FIRSTBORN

Christ is God's firstborn Son, and the believers are the many sons of God ([Heb. 2:10](#)). As God's firstborn Son, Christ is the model, example, pattern, and prototype for all His brothers, the many sons of God, who will be conformed to His image. This conformation is for the coming glorification. We should not expect to be glorified without first growing in life and being conformed to the image of God's Son.

We may use the illustration of a carnation seed. The seed is sown into the ground and sprouts; this is regeneration. Then the carnation grows; this is the growth in life, the stage of transformation. Eventually the carnation plant grows to the point of blossoming; this is transfiguration and glorification. The stage of blossoming of the carnation plant is the stage of its glorification. If you do not grow in life, yet await the time of blossoming, the time of glorification, you are a dreamer.

Many Christians are interested in two main

aspects of prophecy: the rapture and the signs relating to the Lord's coming. However, if we expect to be raptured without growing in life, we are dreamers, for rapture is actually our transfiguration and glorification. No carnation seed can grow from a sprout to a blossom overnight. According to the law of life, a carnation plant must grow gradually until it reaches maturity. Then and only then will a blossom appear. Likewise, we must grow gradually until we arrive at a full-grown man ([Eph. 4:13](#)). Once we reach the stage of blossoming, we are ready to be transfigured and glorified. Glorification with transfiguration is possible only after we have reached maturity.

In the New Testament the rapture is likened to a harvest, and a harvest is possible only after the crop has matured and ripened. If the crop is not ripe, but is still tender and green, how can the harvest come? It is impossible. Look at the situation among the Lord's people today. Look at the crop. Is it ripe? Do you believe that according to the present stage of the growth of the crop the harvest is imminent? It is impossible. Look at the field—nowhere is there any real growth. Although there are thousands of genuine Christians everywhere on the earth as

a result of two centuries of evangelization, of missionaries going out to the uttermost parts of the earth with the gospel, there is still very little growth. Where is the real growth in life? There is hardly any growth and no maturity. How then can we expect to have the harvest? I dare to say that the harvest will not come until the crop is ripe. During the last one and one-half centuries there have been many predictions regarding the coming of the Lord. However, the years passed and nothing happened. Every prediction failed to materialize.

We must realize that glorification with transfiguration depends upon our growing in life until we reach maturity. If we want to be glorified, we must grow, for glorification comes as the issue of maturity. When we enter into maturity, that maturity will issue in glorification. Glorification will not come as an accident, as an overnight occurrence; it is the result of growth in life. Brothers and sisters, we need to grow. As God's crop we need to ripen until the time of harvest, the time of our transfiguration and glorification.

JOINT-HEIRS OF CHRIST

Romans 8:17 says, "And if children, heirs also; heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ, if indeed

we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him.” Children cannot be legal heirs. In order to become legal heirs the children must grow into sons, and the sons must grow into heirs. When we have reached this stage of growth, we shall be glorified. We need to understand that the genuine growth of any kind of life depends upon hardship and suffering. Without hardship or suffering it is difficult for any life to grow. The more suffering we undergo, the greater will be our degree of glory. However, the suffering mentioned in [verse 17](#) does not only concern outward glorification; suffering is also for growth in life. The more we suffer, the more we grow and the faster we are matured. A crop in the field grows not only by the soil, water, fertilizer, air, and sunshine, but also by suffering. Even the sunshine itself is a source of suffering, for the scorching heat of the sun burns the crop into ripeness. Therefore, if you expect to grow and to be a joint-heir of Christ, you should not expect a life that is free of suffering.

CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE FIRSTBORN

[Verses 26 and 27](#) say, “And in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness;

for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; but He Who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.” Here we have the sympathizing, helping, and interceding of the Spirit. For what purpose do we have these things? The purpose is found in [verses 28 through 30](#). “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to the purpose.” What is the purpose of God’s calling? We find it is [verse 29](#). “Because whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He should be the firstborn among many brothers.” Paul does not say that God foreknew and predestined us to go to a happy place or to have a life that will endure forever. These are not our destiny. God predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. This destiny was determined before we were even created. Before the creation of the world God had decreed such a destiny for us. Hence, it is a predestiny.

God’s firstborn Son is the prototype, and we are the mass production. Christ is the model, mold, and pattern. God has put us all into Him

that we may be molded into the image of His firstborn Son. Eventually, we all shall be conformed to the mold. By being put into a mold, dough assumes the pattern and image of the mold. Then, the dough must also be baked that the cake may bear the pattern of the mold without any change. Likewise, Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the prototype, pattern, and mold, and we are pieces of dough. We all have been put into the mold and are now being kneaded by the hand of God.

We have been predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son that He may be the firstborn among many brothers. God's purpose is to produce many brothers of His firstborn Son. When Christ was the only begotten Son, He was unique, but God desired to have many sons who will be the many brothers of His Son. In this way the only begotten Son of God becomes the firstborn among many brothers. He is the firstborn Son, and we are the many sons. What is the purpose of this? The purpose is that we express God in a corporate way. God's kingdom is built up with His many sons, and the Body of Christ is built up with His many brothers. Without the many sons God could never have a kingdom, and without the many brothers

Christ could never have a Body. Thus, the many sons of God are for the kingdom of God, and the many brothers of Christ are for the Body of Christ. The kingdom of God is simply the Body life, and this Body life in the church is God's kingdom where He is expressed and where His dominion is exercised on the earth.

Therefore [verse 30](#) says, "And whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." In eternity we were predestinated, and in time we were called.

Why does God arrange our environment, surroundings, and situations in such a way that we experience suffering? We must realize that God's purpose is to make us full-grown sons, not little children. We should not be content to remain children enjoying His cherishing and loving. God intends to make us full sons, completely grown up to be legal heirs that we may inherit all that He is in this universe and that we may express Him and exercise His dominion over the earth. Since God's intention is to bring us into full sonship, we need to grow. There is no doubt that growth comes from inward nourishment, but this inner nourishment needs the coordination of the outward environment.

God knows in which situation and in which environment we can grow well. He is our Father, and everything is under His arrangement. He can do nothing wrong. Everything He does for us is excellent and wonderful, although to our feeling it may not be good. However, we should not care for our feelings; we should take care of God's arrangement. According to our feelings, our environment may be a suffering, but actually it is a blessing; it is God's sovereign provision. Everything we need for our growth in life has been sovereignly provided by God. Everything is right. Therefore, when we are experiencing pain and suffering, we must deny them and say, "Satan, you are a liar. This is not a pain or a suffering to me; it is God's arrangement. This is a blessing that I may grow into full sonship." We all need a proper environment to provide the elements which are required for our growth in life.

Inwardly by the Working of the Spirit

When unpleasant things happen to you, you may not understand that they come from the hand of your Father for your growth. Hence, you begin to groan, and while you are groaning, the Spirit groans in your groaning. Why do you groan? Because you feel suffering and do not

know how to pray. You groan with hardly any purpose, but the Spirit groans in your groaning with a definite purpose. This purpose cannot be uttered by you, but it can be uttered by the Spirit. He “intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

The Holy Spirit groans in your groaning in order that you may be fully molded and conformed to the image of God’s firstborn Son. When many saints encounter hardship they say, “I just don’t know why this happens to me.” I believe that we have all said this many times. Even you who have recently been saved perhaps have already spoken in this way. Why do certain things happen to you? Because the groaning Spirit prayed for them. Although you do not know the purpose, He knows, and He prays according to God. Christ is the pattern, and the Spirit prays that everything which happens to you will mold you into this pattern, into the image of the firstborn Son.

It is much easier to speak about sanctification in life. However, accompanying sanctification is the matter of conformation. We not only need to be sanctified, to be saturated with what God is, but also to be molded. We may be separated from everything common and saturated

with God's holy nature, but still lack this conformity. Sanctification probably does not require any suffering. Conformation, on the contrary, needs suffering. In sanctification there is no pattern, only a change in disposition, in nature; but in conformation there is a mold by which we are conformed to the image of God's Son. Along with this mold is the pressure and the molding and the mixing with water and the burning with fire. Without suffering we cannot be molded into the pattern.

Outwardly by the Working Together of All Things

We cannot avoid the process of conformation, for it is the purpose of the Holy Spirit's intercession with groanings. God the Father knows the purpose of the Spirit's groaning, and thus He causes all things to work together ([v. 28](#)). Following [verses 26 and 27](#) which speak of the Spirit's intercession, we have [verse 28](#) which says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to the purpose." The Holy Spirit groans within us, interceding for us, and God the Father answers this intercession by causing all things to work together for good. "All

things” means all matters, all persons, all things, all in all. God the Father is sovereign, and He arranges everything. He knows how many hairs you need ([Matt. 10:30](#)) and how many children you should have. He knows whether you need obedient children or naughty children. He knows whether you need boys or girls. He causes all things, all matters, and all persons to work together for your good.

God has determined our destiny beforehand, and this destiny can never be fulfilled without the divine arrangement which causes all things to work together for us. Our destiny is to be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God. We are not yet fully in the image of the firstborn Son of God, but God the Father is planning, molding, and performing by causing all things to work together for good. Praise the Lord! While we are growing, He is molding.

We all should be comforted. If you have a nice wife, praise the Lord for your nice wife. If you have a difficult wife, praise the Lord even more for your difficult wife. Whether you have a nice wife or a difficult wife, a nice husband or a difficult husband, obedient children or naughty children—whatever you have you should be comforted. We must be happy with all that the

Father gives us, because we know that everything is in His hands and comes our way that we may be conformed to the image of His firstborn Son. This conformation is the preparation for our glorification.

Verse 31 says, “What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” We should not take this word according to our natural concept. God is not for us in our way, but in His.

Verse 32 says, “He Who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?” The word “all” in this verse is the Greek word, *panta*, which means all things, matters, and persons. All things, matters, and persons have been freely given to us. We must believe that everything works together for good.

“Who shall bring a charge against God’s chosen ones? It is God Who justifies” (**v. 33**). Only God is qualified to place a charge against us, but He justifies us.

“Who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus Who died, but rather Who was raised, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also intercedes for us.” In **verse 10** we see clearly that Christ is in us, but here in **verse 34** we are told that

Christ is at the right hand of God. Thus, in one chapter we are told that Christ is in two places—in us and at the right hand of God. Where is Christ? Because He is the Spirit ([2 Cor. 3:17](#)), He is omnipresent. He is both in heaven and on earth, both at the right hand of God and in our spirit. According to [verse 26](#) the Spirit intercedes within us, and according to [verse 34](#) Christ intercedes for us at the right hand of God. Do we have two intercessors—one within us and the other at the right hand of God? No, these two are one. This is similar to electricity. We have electricity in our homes as well as in the power plant; nevertheless there is just one electricity. Likewise, Christ intercedes for us both at the right hand of God and from within our spirit.

I would now like to call your attention to the fact that in [verse 30](#) all of the verbs are in the past tense. “And whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” Although glorification has not yet occurred, Paul uses the past tense. What does this mean? We must remember that we are subject to time. One great teacher has said that there is no clock in heaven because God is the God of eternity. He is the eternal God; with Him

there is no time. When were you glorified? You were predestinated, called, justified, and glorified in eternity past. In God's eyes and according to His concept everything has been accomplished. According to our feeling, glorification will happen in the future, but according to God's concept it has occurred already. With God everything is timeless. Our predestination, calling, justification, and glorification are eternal matters, not matters of time.

GLORIFICATION

The Revelation of the Sons of God in the Freedom of Glory

We come now to the matter of glorification and continue with [verse 19](#). "For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly expects the revelation of the sons of God." Revelation means to open the veil. Something has been covered with a veil. One day the veil will be removed, and the hidden things will be revealed. Although we are the sons of God, we are veiled, not yet revealed. When the Lord Jesus was on earth He was the Son of God, but He was veiled by His human flesh. One day on the mountain He was unveiled and revealed ([Matt. 17:1-2](#)). It is the same with

us. Although we are sons of God, we are under a veil. One day this veil will be removed—that will be our glorification. All the sons of God will come out from under the veil and be revealed. Then the whole universe will behold the sons of God.

The creation is eagerly expecting and anxiously watching to see this revelation of the sons of God, because “the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him Who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” ([vv. 20-21](#)). The entire creation is under vanity, bondage, and the slavery of corruption. Creation’s only hope is to be freed from this slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God when the sons of God are revealed. Although the entire creation is presently held in a condition of vanity and corruption, God will bring in a kingdom to replace this present condition. The present condition is vanity and slavery of corruption; the coming kingdom will be a kingdom of the glory of God, a kingdom composed primarily of revealed sons of God. At the time of the revelation of this kingdom the whole creation will be

liberated. The creation is eagerly expecting and anxiously watching for this kingdom to come. Thus, “the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now” (v. 22). The universe is groaning and travailing in birth awaiting the revelation of the sons of God. Furthermore, we ourselves, “having the firstfruit of the Spirit,” also groan as we expect sonship, the redemption of our body (v. 23).

In [verse 24](#) Paul says that “we have been saved in hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what anyone sees, why does he also hope?” The hope mentioned in this verse is the hope of glory. Since none of us has ever seen this hope, it is a hope complete and genuine. Some hope is partial because we have seen a certain percentage of it. However, the hope of glory is a whole hope, for we have not seen any part of it. Hence, we are waiting for that hope; “we eagerly expect it through endurance” (v. 25).

The Sharing of God’s Glory

[Romans 5:2](#) says, that we “boast in hope of the glory of God,” and [9:23](#) says that we are “vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory.” This glory will be in the revelation of the coming kingdom in which we, as revealed sons

of God, shall participate. God has called us into this glory ([1 Thes. 2:12](#); [2 Thes. 2:14](#); [1 Pet. 5:10](#)). Christ Himself is the hope of this glory ([Col. 1:27](#)) which we are expecting and for which we are waiting. Our hope is none other than Christ Himself who will be revealed as our glory. We now boast and rejoice in this hope of glory. We shall share this glory at the day of our glorification. When Christ appears, we shall appear with Him in glory ([Col. 3:4](#)). This is our destiny.

Today we are growing in life and being conformed into the image of His Son. When we are matured we shall be glorified and share God's glory.

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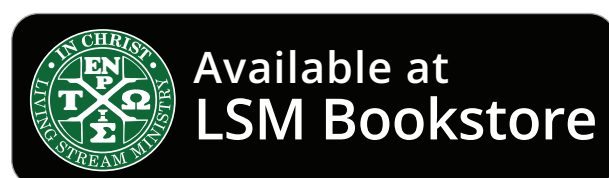
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