

Sonship Edification: Tracing Its Origin & Development Within the Mid-Acts Grace Movement

<p>Proverbs 1:1-6 1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; 2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; 3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; 4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. 5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: 6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.</p>		<h2 style="margin: 0;">TABLE OF CONTENTS</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">FOR</h3> <h2 style="margin: 0;">SONSHIP EDUCATION</h2> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <h3 style="margin: 0; text-decoration: underline;">PROVERBS 1:2-6</h3>								
LEVEL I		LEVEL II		LEVEL III						
THE ADOPTED SON	PHASE 1 vs. 2	PHASE 2 vs. 3	THE SIMPLE	PHASE 1 vs. 4a	THE YOUNG MAN	PHASE 2 vs. 4b	A WISE MAN	PHASE 1 vs. 5a	A MAN OF UNDERSTANDING	PHASE 2 vs. 5b & 6
	To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;	To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;		To give subtilty to the simple,		to the young man knowledge and discretion.		A wise man will hear, and will increase learning;		and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels; To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

Complete Notes

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The following notes were taught at [Grace Life Bible Church](#) in Grand Rapids, MI between September 2014 and March 2015 as part of the [Grace History Project](#). The final term of the class was devoted to tracing the origin and development of the theological system known as Sonship Edification within the American Mid-Acts Grace Movement. These notes were written using the published teaching notes of the primary enunciators of Sonship Edification and contain extensive quotations from the primary sources themselves.

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Sunday, September 7, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 143](#)
[Sonship Edification: Introduction](#)

Introduction

- In Lesson 142, our last lesson before we took a break for the summer; we finished up our discussion of Progressive Dispensationalism in the Grace Movement by concluding our discussion of the 2002 publication of *Dispensationalism in America During the Twentieth Century* by Dr. Dale S. DeWitt.
- Having come all the way through church history to 2002, many have been asking me how I intend to wrap up and conclude this course of study on church history from a mid-Acts Pauline Grace viewpoint. It was always my intention to conclude by talking about current trends within the Grace Movement as well as discuss some overall lessons or takeaways from our consideration of church history.
- Many of you are aware that within the last year I have become embroiled in an ongoing debate/discussion on the nature of the believer's inheritance via the joint-heir controversy. In studying to write *Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17*, I became aware of something called Sonship Edification (SE). SE, along with the authors and supporters of *Heirs of God or joint-heirs With Christ? Sanctified Works in the Dispensation of Grace*, maintained as of March, 2014 when the first edition of *Ifs, Ands, and Buts* was released that not all believers are joint-heirs with Christ and the joint-heirship was conditioned upon suffering with Christ in Romans 8:17. Consequently, it was my studies related to the “two inheritance” controversy that first introduced me to the teachings of SE.
- Prior to my initial involvement in the “two inheritance” controversy in the late summer of 2013, I had seen some curious postings on Facebook talking about SE. At the time I was too involved in my own studies for this project as well as others to pay SE any mind. Once I encountered SE and studied it and its role in the “two-inheritance” controversy I quickly concluded that it was a contemporary development within the Grace Movement that the Grace History Project simply could not ignore.
- These realizations regarding SE coupled with my long-held intention to cover current trends within the Grace Movement prompted a nine-month long investigation into the theological suppositions and historical development of SE. All the lessons that will be contained in this mini-series on SE as part of the greater project are the result of these studies.
- At the outset, fairness and transparency dictate that I be up-front and candid regarding my thoughts and impressions of SE. Simply stated, I am not a fan of SE and find it to be a dangerous development within the Grace Movement in the last fifteen to twenty years.

- In an attempt to tackle this sizable subject in a manageable way that will make sense to anyone viewing/reading these classes, I have decided to proceed as follows. First, I will set forth a basic understanding of what Sonship Edification is as a theological system. This will include a summary of its core doctrines, beliefs, and distinctive characteristics. Second, we will chronicle its historical development as a theological system within the Grace Movement over the last decade and a half.
- We understand that anytime one discusses a contemporary movement there is an inherent risk of being accused of making personal attacks against the teachers/supporters of a particular doctrine or belief. With that in mind, I will seek to exercise all due diligence to limit my comments to the ideas being advanced by SE and not personally attack the men involved. After all, it is the ideas of SE and their historical/theological development that are our primary concern.

What's In a Name?

- Our main point in this Lesson is to impress upon you that when you hear the word “sonship” you ought not to assume that you understand how a person is using that term. The terms “adoption” and “sonship” have a widely varied meaning depending on who is using them.
- To get started it is important to note that the word “sonship” is not found in the King James Bible. This does not automatically disqualify the use of the term since the words Rapture and Trinity do not occur in the Bible either. Yet they are commonly accepted words to describe the doctrines to which they are ascribed.
- The concept of “sonship” finds its origin in a few key texts found in Paul’s epistles. These texts include Romans 8:14-15, Romans 9:4, Galatians 4:1-6, and Ephesians 1:5. The key word in these verses is the English word “adoption.” The Greek word translated “adoption” is *huiiothesia* which only occurs five times in the New Testament.
 - Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5
- Some modern versions do render the Greek word *huiiothesia* with the English word “sonship.” Please consider the following examples:
 - Romans 8:15 (NIV)—“The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your **adoption to sonship**. And by him we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” (Footnote: The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture; also in verse 23.)
 - Romans 8:15 (ESV)—“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of **adoption as sons**, by whom we cry, “*Abba*! Father!”

- Romans 8:23 (NIV)—“Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our **adoption to sonship**, the redemption of our bodies.”
- Romans 8:23 (ESV)—“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for **adoption as sons**, the redemption of our bodies.”
- Romans 9:4 (NIV)—“the people of Israel. Theirs is the **adoption to sonship**; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises;”
- Using the word “sonship” to describe the results of the believer’s “adoption” or placement into the family of God as fully grown adult “sons” has been commonplace within the body of Christ for centuries. C.H. Mackintosh used the term “sonship” in his famous work *Notes on Genesis* which dates from the 1860s to describe the believer’s “adoption” in Romans 8.
 - “In it we have unfolded to us the two great principles of sonship and heirship. . . Sonship and heirship are inseparably connected in the thoughts of God. ‘He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.’ Sonship is the proper basis of everything; and, moreover, it is the result of God's sovereign counsel and operation . . . so long as a man is under the power of death, and under the dominion of sin, he can neither know the position of a son, nor the condition of righteousness. Thus, God alone can bestow the adoption of sons, and He alone can impute righteousness, and both are connected with faith in Him as the One who raised up Christ from the dead. . . Hence, therefore, sonship, being founded on resurrection, stands connected with perfect justification — perfect righteousness — perfect freedom from everything which could, in any wise, be against us. God could not have us in His presence with sin upon us. He could not suffer a single speck or stain of sin upon His sons and daughters. The father could not have the prodigal at *His* table with the rags of the far country upon him. He could go forth to meet him in those rags. He could fall upon his neck and kiss him, in those rags. It was worthy, and beautifully characteristic of his *grace* so to do; but then to seat him at his table in the rags would never do. The grace that brought the father out to the prodigal, reigns through the righteousness which brought the prodigal in to the father. It would not have been grace had the father waited for the son to deck himself in robes of his own providing; and it would not have been righteous to bring him in in his rags; but both grace and righteousness shone forth in all their respective brightness and beauty when the father went out and fell on the prodigal's neck; but yet did not give him a seat at the table until he was clad and decked in a manner suited to that elevated and happy position. God, in Christ, has stooped to the very lowest point of man's moral condition, that, by stooping He might raise man to the very highest point of blessedness, in fellowship with Himself. From all this, it follows, that our sonship, with all its consequent dignities and privileges, is entirely independent of us. We have just as little to do with it as Abraham's dead body and Sarah's dead womb had to do with a seed as numerous as the stars which garnish the

heavens, or as the sand on the seashore. It is all of God. God the Father drew the plan, God the Son laid the foundation, and God the Holy Ghost raises the superstructure; and on this superstructure, appears the inscription, "THROUGH GRACE, BY FAITH, WITHOUT WORKS OF LAW" (CHM, *Notes in Genesis*)

- Modern mainline Evangelical Christianity also has much to say about adoption. Consider the following entry on “Adoption” by William E. Brown in the popular Evangelical reference work *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* edited by Walter A. Elwell:
 - Adoption—“Act of leaving one's natural family and entering into the privileges and responsibilities of another. In the Bible, adoption is one of several family-related terms used to describe the process of salvation and its subsequent benefits. God is a father who graciously adopts believers in Christ into his spiritual family and grants them all the privileges of heirship. Salvation is much more than forgiveness of sins and deliverance from condemnation; it is also a position of great blessing. Believers are children of God.

Old Testament—Legal adoption was not prescribed in Jewish law or practiced by the Israelites. In fact, the term ‘adoption’ does not occur in the Old Testament. While there are several possible allusions to adoption, such as Moses (Exodus 2:10), Genubath (1 Kings 11:20), and Esther (Esther 2:7), the incidents recorded take place in foreign societies (Egyptian and Persian) and there is no evidence that legal adoptions were enacted.

The adoption metaphor was not lost to Israel, however. God declares that he is the Father of the nation Israel, whom he loves as his child (Isaiah 1:2; Hosea 11:1). He tells Pharaoh, "Israel is my firstborn son" (Exodus 4:22). More specifically, he says to David (and the Messiah), ‘You are my son; today I have become your Father’ (Psalm 2:7); and of David's descendant, "I will be his father, and he will be my son" (2 Samuel 7:14). Although not precisely adoption passages, the instances of declared sonship in the Old Testament provide a theological foundation for Israel's designation as the children of God.

New Testament—The New Testament cultural environment was much different from that of the Old since elaborate laws and ceremonies for adoption were part of both Greek and Roman society. To people with this background, the adoption metaphor in the New Testament was particularly meaningful.

The Greek word for adoption (*huiothesia*) means to ‘place as a son’ and is used only by Paul in the New Testament. Each of the five occurrences in his letters is to readers of a decidedly Roman background. In one instance Paul refers to the Old Testament idea of Israel's special position as the children of God ‘Theirs is the adoption as sons’ (Romans 9:4). The remaining four references describe how New Testament believers become children of God through his gracious choice. The full scope of God's work of salvation past, present, and future is seen in adoption.

The believer's adoption as a child of God was determined by God from eternity: God 'predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ' (Ephesians 1:5). This adoption is not the result of any merit on the part of the believer, but solely the outworking of God's love and grace (Ephesians 1:5, 7).

The present reality of the believer's adoption into the family of God is release from the slavery of sin and the law and a new position as a free heir of God. Entering into salvation brings the rights and privileges of free sonship: 'For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, *'Abba, Father'*' (Romans 8:15). Paul tells the Galatians that Christians were redeemed from the law so that they might receive adoption as sons. As a result the Holy Spirit comes into the believer's heart crying, *'Abba, Father'* (Galatians 4:5). The intimacy of a relationship with God the Father in contrast to the ownership of slavery is a remarkable feature of salvation.

Like many aspects of salvation, there is an eschatological component of adoption. Believers 'wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies' (Romans 8:23). The full revelation of the believer's adoption is freedom from the corruption present in the world. Being a member of God's family includes the ultimate privilege of being like him (1 John 3:2) and being conformed to the glorious body of Christ (Philippians 3:21). This is part of the promised inheritance for all God's children (Romans 8:16-17)." (Elwell, 11-12)

- Pastor C.R. Stam, one of the founders of the mid-Acts Grace Movement in the United States expressed a similar understanding of "adoption" or "sonship" in his short piece for *Two Minutes With the Bible* titled the "The Spirit of Sonship."
 - *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption [Lit., sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15).*

The position of the believer in the family of God is amply illustrated for us in the Epistles of Paul. In Galatians 4:1-5 the Apostle alludes to the fact that in the life of every Hebrew boy there came a time, appointed by the father, when the lad was formally declared to be a full-grown son, with all the rights and privileges of sonship.

It was now assumed that the young man would no longer need overseers to keep him in check. There would be natural understanding and co-operation between father and son. And so the "adoption" [Gr., son-placing] proceedings took place, indicating that the child, now a full-grown son, was no longer under law, but under grace.

"And because ye are sons," says the Apostle, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a [full-grown] son" (Galatians 4:6, 7).

This is the position of every believer in Christ. He may, like the Corinthians, still be a babe in his spiritual experience (I Corinthians 3:1), but in Christ he occupies the position of a full-grown son, and to grow spiritually it will do him no good to go back under the Law; he must rather recognize his standing before God in grace. This is why the Apostle says in Romans 8:15: “*Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption [sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*”

A recognition of this position will do far more to help us live Godly lives than will the “dos and don’ts” of the Law.”” (Stam, *Two Minutes With the Bible*)

- As these comments from the pen of Pastor Stam indicate, he understood “adoption” in a manner that was consistent with the common reading/understanding of the passages stretching all the way back to Mackintosh and beyond. Believers are adopted into the family of God and given a position of fully grown adult sons. Consequently, God deals with them as adults and not as children who are under the tutor and governor system of the law.
- Seeing that “adoption” is a Biblical concept, many over the years have put forth various viewpoints or understandings of not only what adoption/sonship means but also its implications. One such view is found in the writings of Dr. Jack Miller the founder of World Harvest Mission. Dr. Miller thinks that a believer’s “sonship” as a vital factor in living a triumphant Christian life. Dr. Miller shared his ideas with the Christian world with the publication of *Sonship, Discovering Liberty in the Gospel as Sons and Daughters of God*. The ideas expressed in this work have become known as “Sonship Theology” within mainline denominational Christianity and especially within the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). While Dr. Miller has some good things to say about the believer’s identity in Christ on account of our “adoption” much of this thinking is very dispensationally confused and not in line with the mid-Acts Pauline dispensational approach to Bible Study. Please see the Appendix to this Lesson for a fuller treatment of Dr. Miller’s “Sonship Theology.”
- Sonship Edification (SE) is an understanding of “adoption” and its implications that have arisen from within the mid-Acts Grace Movement within the last fifteen to twenty years. SE sees five different uses for the word “son/sons” in the Bible and defines “Biblical Adoption” differently than William A. Brown did in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* or Pastor C.R. Stam in *Two Minutes With the Bible*. SE offers the following definition for “Biblical Adoption:”
 - “Biblically, adoption was for the natural-born children of a family. That is, a Father would adopt His natural son or daughter. And this was not unusual, but rather, it was the rule. The primary motivation for adoption was not pity or some strong emotion of rescue, but it had in mind the welfare of the family’s name and the family’s business. It is true that on occasion, a man might adopt a son or daughter outside of his own natural children. It may be that he had no children of his own. There is another circumstance that may arise that would have a man adopting someone other than his natural children, but we will discuss that a little later. . .

In adoption, the father would be looking for some specific traits in the son or daughter he would adopt. The father did not just want a son that would be able to carry on the family business, but one that would carry on that business with the same commitment and dedication that he had. The father would want a son that possessed his wisdom and way of thinking. In other words, the father wanted a son who would carry on the business exactly as the father himself would. To accomplish this adoption, the father would look over his sons, and if he found one that was willing and able to be educated in his father's business, then the father would adopt that son and begin personally teaching him all about his business. He would teach the son the way he (the father) thought, and pass on all his wisdom and experience to his son. This was so that his son would take on his father's thinking, and living, and then as he labored in his father's business, all of his dealings were as if it were the father, himself who was engaged in the business. It would really be, "Like father, like son!"

But sometimes the father would look over his own, natural born sons, and still not be able to find one with the desire, the drive, and the ability to be educated properly as his son. In that case, the father could look outside the family and find a child that would fit the bill (so to speak), and he would then adopt a child that was not natural born. The father would take that son (or daughter) and begin to educate them so they could enter into laboring with father in all his business.

This was done so that the integrity and the success and the character of the father and the father's business could be successfully passed on from generation to generation. It was a way to not only keep the integrity of the father's name and the father's business strong, but to insure that it would continue getting even stronger and more powerful as time went on. In other words, it is was a way to ensure the father's business against corruption, weakness, attack and ultimately, failure!" (McDaniel, *SE Orientation* Lesson 1, 5-6)

- "A father adopted his son for the purpose of installing and instilling his wisdom into his son so that the son would labor with his father in all his business." (McDaniel, *SE Orientation*, Lesson 5, 5)
- Again, our main point in this Lesson has been to impress upon you that when you hear the word "sonship" you ought not to assume that you understand how a person is using that term. The terms "adoption" and "sonship" have a widely varied meaning depending on who is using them.

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Appendix A

Sonship Theology According to Dr. Jack Miller

- It is also important to note at the outset that there are various versions or types of Sonship Edification (SE) that have been put forth into the marketplace of ideas. For our purposes in the Grace History Project, we must note a difference between the type of SE that became popular within some mainline denominations during the mid-1990s and the type of SE that has its origin from within the mid-Acts Grace Movement. While these share the same descriptive title (SE) they are not the same thing.
- The denominational version of SE finds its origin in the ministry of Dr. Jack Miller the founder of World Harvest Mission. Dr. Miller was an American Presbyterian pastor. He served as pastor of New Life Presbyterian Church in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, and taught practical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. Miller founded World Harvest Mission and the New Life Presbyterian network of churches. He was known for emphasizing the Christian's status as a child of God, a view known as sonship theology. Much of Dr. Miller's thinking on the matter is captured in the World Harvest Training manual titled *Sonship, Discovering Liberty in the Gospel as Sons and Daughters of God*.
- Sonship theology emphasizes the Christian's adoption as a child of God from in Romans 8 and Galatians 4. The following points regarding Sonship are taken from the introduction of the Third Edition of the Sonship manual put out by World Harvest Mission.
 - *Cheer Up: The gospel is far greater than you can imagine!*—"The gospel is the best news we could ever hear. The gospel is about Jesus Christ and his power to transform our lives and relationships, communities, and ultimately, the nations. Through this gospel, we are freely given a new identity—an identity not based on race, social class, gender, a theological system, or a system of rules and regulations. Rather it is a new and perfect identity based solely on faith in Christ, an identity that defines every aspect of our lives. We are now forgiven, righteous, adopted, accepted, free, and heirs to everything that belongs to Christ. So even our sin, weakness, and failures do not define who we are. Because of this good news, we no longer have to hide from our sin and imagine that we have it all together, for God knows and loves us as we are, not as we pretend to be. Receiving and resting in the truths of the gospel translates into a Christian life of joy, peace, freedom, and love. So the gospel also gives us a new way to live and relate to other people. It frees us from sin's stranglehold on our lives, liberates our conscience, and releases us from living according to the principles of this world. Since our new identity and new way to live is based solely on faith, the gospel excludes all manner of boasting and arrogance. Everything that we have has been given to us—thus it is called the gospel of God's grace (Acts 20: 24)." (*Sonship*, i)
 - *Cheer Up: You are worse than you think!*—"One of the great hindrances to Christian growth, healthy relationships, and strong communities is a life of pretence—pretending that we don't struggle with a multitude of sins, such as self-righteous attitudes, foul

tempers, nagging anxieties, lustful looks, controlling and critical hearts, and a general belief that we are better than other people. Part of the good news of the gospel is that it can change our selfish desires to be right, look good, be in control, and gratify ourselves. Faith in the gospel transforms even good desires that have started to rule our lives and thus have gone out of bounds. . . . Because our sin is a block to intimacy with God and others, we need God's Spirit to show us our many fears and offensive ways. One way to promote this is to invite the insights of others and encourage them to speak into our lives. The goal is that we repent and be led in the way of Jesus, and grow in our intimacy with him. Our goal is to live a life of repentant faith, recognizing that when we live by unbelief, we are doing nothing less than trusting in something or someone other than Christ for life, happiness, security, respect, love, identity, fulfillment, and significance. Belief in the gospel tears down these false trusts in our lives, whether we are putting our faith in a system of rules or laws (legalism) or in something like food or sex (licentiousness).” (*Sonship*, ii)

- *Cheer Up: God's Spirit works in your weakness!*— “In addition to our new identity, we have been given the Spirit, who is more than sufficient to lead, guide, and empower us in our new life. Often, we think that the great problem in our lives is that there is not enough power available to change our lives and relationships. There is, however, more than enough power available, for the power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us (Ephesians 1:19-20). Nevertheless, this power does not work automatically, for it is at work in those who believe. So the Spirit works through repentant faith. To live by faith is to live by the Spirit, who brings about the obedience God is looking for.” (*Sonship*, ii-iii)
- *Cheer Up: God's kingdom is more wonderful than you can imagine!*— The kingdom of God is the new and final age that began with the coming of Jesus. His kingdom is not part of the present age—an age where the flesh reigns; where people are divided, relationships are broken, and suspicion and competition predominate; where money, sex, and power are abused; where leaders are first and servants last; where behavior is controlled by law, and identity is defined by race, gender, or social standing; and where gifts and resources are used for the advancement of oneself. Rather, the kingdom of God is the new age. It is the age of Spirit (Matthew 12:28). It is the age of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). The kingdom of God is about renewal, restoration, and reconciliation of all things, and God has made us a part of this great story of salvation. It is about the restoration of relationships, justice, and equality, about freedom from every lord except Jesus; about reconciliation, forgiveness, and the defeat of Satan. It is about compassion for the poor powerless, about helping those who are marginalized and rejected by society, and about using our gifts and resources for the advancement of others. It is about new communities and the transformation of society and culture, so that race, gender, and social class no longer define identity, nor are they used to control and divide. For Paul to preach the gospel is to preach the kingdom, is to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:24-27). The gospel sums up the whole message of good news that he brought to the nations—particularly to the downtrodden and powerless. And

since it is good news, our response to the message of the kingdom is to be one of repentant faith (Mark 1:15).” (*Sonship*, iii)

- Having its origin with the Presbyterian Church, Dr. Miller’s version of Sonship has been the target of much discussion and debate within the denomination. On August 15, 2011 the Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church (CCPC) put forth a paper based on events and discussions within their local church as well as within both the Tennessee Valley Presbytery and the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), regarding Sonship theology. The reasons for drafting this paper were precipitated by the introduction of “Sonship” teaching within their church body. The church states, “This material contained a “new” teaching that caused our leadership to look more closely at it. As Sonship began to be more widely seen and heard within our church, many of us viewed this as yet another ‘spiritual fad’, something that was popular today and would be gone and forgotten tomorrow. It seemed at first that Sonship was just another program aimed at making us ‘more spiritual’. While this is true in some ways, the errors that these teachings leave behind and foster are not minor. Among these teachings are the following:
 - that the believer’s responsibility is to “*believe the Gospel*” or “*preach the Gospel to ourselves*” rather than strive at the Christian life by discipline and perseverance, that “*God is never angry with a believer*”, and perhaps most importantly of all, the fact that our *Justification is the essential power behind our Sanctification* – seemingly at the expense of the role of the Holy Spirit.” (*Doctrinal Position Paper on Sonship Theology (DPPST)*)
- CCPC also took exception to the following aspects of Dr. Miller’s Sonship teaching. First, the gospel was seen as having application, not just in bringing about one’s justification but also being active in one’s sanctification. “Whenever a pastor or missionary began slipping into sin, or into a “works-oriented” mode of ministry, he was taught to remember to “*preach the gospel to his heart.*” The gospel, therefore, was not merely how the unsaved were brought into the Kingdom, but was also seen as the main method of sanctification for Christians.” (*DPPST*)
- Second, CCPC stated, “. . . the language of Sonship uses a number of common terms and phrases (e.g. “Gospel”, “justification”, and “sanctification”). Often, however, these words and phrases have been imbued with quite “non-ordinary” meanings. This redefinition of words adds a great deal to the confusion that often arises from its teachings. . . We would like to offer a word of caution here. Much of the language of Sonship is very familiar to us. Words like *gospel*, *grace*, *law*, and *sanctification* are words that are dear and precious to all of us in the Reformed faith. It seems that Sonship often uses these words with meanings that are somewhat different than what the accepted and orthodox meaning of them has been.” For the CCPC this means that the definitions/functional meanings ascribed to certain words were foreign to Reformed Theology. It is important to note that the type/version of SE that has developed with the Grace Movement is also characterized by a highly technical and developed vocabulary that is unique to itself. (*DPPST*)

- Other CCPC objections to Miller’s Sonship theology can be summed up in phrases like: “preach the gospel to yourself” and “believe your own justification.” Miller’s version of Sonship has also been characterized as creating a stark dichotomy between law and grace.
- The movement has garnered the attention of some big-name evangelicals. In 1991 Gary North argued that these churches "have not officially departed from confessional orthodoxy," but that "their focus has not been on traditional confessional preaching and Calvinist doctrine." ([North, 36](#)) Meanwhile, R.C. Sproul criticized the movement in 2012 for being to “antinomian.” ([R.C. Sproul’s Blog](#))
- While there are some positive aspects of this version of Sonship related to the believers new identity in Jesus Christ, the type of Sonship advocated for by World Harvest Mission is dispensationally confused to say the least. Ultimately, this type of Sonship suffers from the same deficiency observable in the Bob George’s Exchanged Life model, i.e., it lacks a sufficient and consistent dispensational underpinning in Pauline truth.

Sunday, September 14, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 144](#)
[Sonship Edification: Origins](#)

Introduction/Review

- The main point of Lessons 143 was to impress upon you that when you hear the word “sonship” you ought not to assume that you understand how a person is using that term. The terms “adoption” and “sonship” have a widely varied meaning depending on who is using them. Consequently, the majority of our time was spent looking at the question of “What’s In a Name?”
- In order to accomplish that purpose, we began by looking at how the Greek word translated “adoption” (*huiiothesia*) is rendered in both the King James Bible (KJB) and modern versions. By doing so we saw that the word “sonship” does not occur in the KJB. In contrast, modern versions such as the New International Version (NIV) render *huiiothesia* as “adoption to sonship” each of the five times the Greek word occurs in the New Testament text.
 - Sonship—“1) The state of being a son, or of having the relation of a son. 2) Filiation; the character of a son.” (*Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*)
 - Adoption—“1) The act of adopting, or the state of being adopted; the taking and treating of a stranger as one’s own child. 2) The receiving as one’s own, what is new or not natural. 3) God’s taking the sinful children of men into his favor and protection.” (*Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*)
- We further noted that many Bible teachers over the years have used the term “sonship” to describe the results of “adoption” in the Bible, i.e., the fact that all believers are adopted into the family of God as fully grown adults. We observed this point was considering the writings of C.H. Mackintosh from the 1860s and C.R. Stam from the twentieth century. Moreover, we considered the entry on “adoption” found in the popular reference work—*Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. This was done in an attempt to ascertain the mainline Evangelical view of adoption.
- Lastly, we considered the definition of “Biblical Adoption” that has been advanced by the supporters of Sonship Edification (SE).
 - “A father adopted his son for the purpose of installing and instilling his wisdom into his son so that the son would labor with his father in all his business.” (McDaniel, *SE Orientation*, Lesson 5, 5)
- Again, our main point of our last lesson was to impress upon you that when you hear the word “sonship” you ought not to assume that you understand how a person is using that term. The terms “adoption” and “sonship” have a widely varied meaning depending on who is using them.

- Before looking at the origins of SE within the Grace Movement, I would like to conclude our discussion of “What’s In a Name?” by presenting one more important name: the “Joint-heir Position.”

What’s In a Name? Part 2

DISCLAIMER: I deliberated long and hard over whether to include the information contained in this section in the Grace History Project. In the end, I determined that historical completeness and transparency necessitated the inclusion of this section. To get your bearings, we will be mentioning three different papers:

[*Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ?*](#) by Matt Stutzman (supported by Northern California Grace Fellowship (NCGF))

[*Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two-Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17*](#) by Pastor Bryan Ross - critique of Matt Stutzman’s *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ?*

[*Wrongly Deriding Joint-heirs with Christ*](#) by Matt Stutzman & Ryan Michael Jones (supported by NCGF) - rebuttal to Pastor Ross’s paper. Please note the secondary rebuttals authored by Ryan Michael Jones: [*The King James Bible: it’s all Greek to Bryan Ross: An exposition of the Greek game of Bryan Ross*](#) and [*The Erroneous Acts 28 Argument... No Pauline Resurgence, Just “Old Chestnuts”: A Rebuttal to the Acts 28 straw man of Bryan Ross*](#)

In late July of 2013, following the Grace School of the Bible Summer Family Bible Conference in Chicago, someone (I can’t remember who) sent me a copy of a paper titled *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ?* published and promoted by NCGF. Around that same time I was added to the Joint-heirs with Christ group page on Facebook where the aforementioned paper was being “discussed.” After reading NCGF’s paper multiple times I became convinced that they were mistaken in how they were understanding “Joint-heirship” in Romans 8:17: NCGF’s paper maintains that the “if so be” in Romans 8:17 places a condition upon being a joint-heir with Christ in the previous part of the verse. The condition that needs to be met in order for one to qualify for “joint-heirship” according to these brethren is that one suffer with Christ in/for the Pauline paradigm of Scripture. Parties interested in the details of the doctrinal disagreement are encouraged to consult the papers listed above.

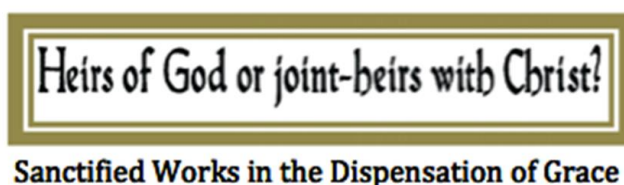
Following some initial participation in those discussions on Facebook, I left the group for a variety of reasons. In December 2013 I preached a message at Grace Life Bible Church (GLBC) titled, “Is Saeed Abedini a Joint-Heir with Christ?” Unfortunately, during that message I accused the Brothers associated with NCGF of drafting their paper for the purposes of stirring up trouble on Facebook and the internet. I also called them “peons” and suggested that they forced me to use Greek to make my arguments. In late January 2014 we (GLBC) removed the message “Is Saeed Abedini a Joint-heir with Christ?” from the internet and issued a public apology from the pulpit and on Facebook.

On Monday, March 17, 2014 I released my critique of NCGF’s paper on Facebook, *Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17*. I then spoke on the subject at Grace School of the Bible’s April [Pastors Conference](#) where hard copies of my paper were distributed freely ([PowerPoint](#) used to present). As some of you may be aware, earlier this summer (late June and early July), immediately prior to and in preparation for the Grace School of the Bible Summer Family Bible Conference, NCGF published a “rebuttal” paper titled *Wrongly Deriding Joint-heirs With Christ* and sent it to as many of the conference speakers for which they had contact information. Enclosed was a cover letter from the Pastor of NCGF fully supporting the paper and commending it to the Brethren for their consideration.

As stated above, my decision to include the information contained in this section within the Grace History Project is in the interest of historical accuracy and transparency. Not only is the “joint-heir” controversy a modern development within the Grace Movement but is directly related to the subject matter we began discussing last week in Lesson 143, Sonship Edification. Consequently, the Grace History Project would be incomplete if this controversy were simply stricken from the record or ignored. Therefore, it is in the spirit of historical accuracy, NOT retaliation or revenge that I decided to include this content as a means of explaining why I and others associated the “joint-heir view” of NCGF with SE. I have included links to all the relevant documents, even those that are critical of my paper as well as my personal character (see papers listed above). I will seek to limit my comments to documentable FACTS only and offer little in the way of editorial commenting or personal defense against my accusers.

The Joint-Heir Position - Different Name, But Some Similar Teachings to SE

- Earlier this summer, NCGF released a “rebuttal” to *Ifs, Ands and Buts* titled *Wrongly Deriding Joint-heirs with Christ* in which they took exception with my associating their “joint-heir view” with SE. Specifically they characterized my work as a “conflation” of SE with their “joint-heir view.” Moreover, they denied having any “cognizance” of SE when drafting *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ?* (Stutzman and Jones, 2) Similar accusations were also made in the NCGF YouTube video from May 6, 2014 titled “[The Similarities & Differences Between the Joint-heir Doctrine & Sonship Edification.](#)” ([Click here](#) to access the written transcript of the video.)
- These are curious statements given the history of NCGF’s internet footprint as well as the public social media postings of one of my chief critics and authors of *Wrongly Deriding Joint-heirs with Christ*, Brother Ryan Michael Jones. See the PowerPoint for photographic evidence.
 - [Image 1](#)—title page on contributors for *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ*.
 - Author: Matt W. Stutzman
 - Contributor: Ryan Michael Jones
 - Special Thanks: Pastor Ron Knight of Northern California Grace Fellowship



A CROWN FOR THE SANCTIFIED: HEIRS OF GOD OR JOINT HEIRS
WITH CHRIST?

SANCTIFIED WORKS IN THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE

Author: Matt W. Stutzman

Editing and additional contributions provided by: Ryan Michael Jones
Special thanks given to Pastor Ron Knight of Northern California Grace Fellowship



- Image 2—title page for *Wrongly Deriding Joint-heirs with Christ*.
 - Authors: Matt W. Stutzman & Ryan Michael Jones
 - Special Thanks: Pastor Ron Knight of Northern California Grace Fellowship

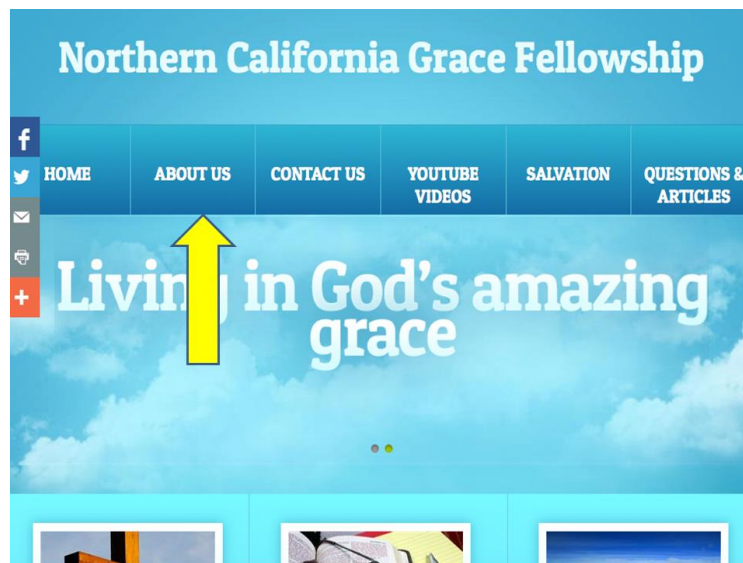
Wrongly Deriding Joint-heirs with Christ

Rebuttal to Bryan C. Ross' Paper Titled: "Ifs Ands and Buts:
The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17"

**Collaboratively authored by: Matt W. Stutzman and Ryan Michael Jones
June 22, 2014**

Special thanks to brother Ron Knight of Northern California Grace Fellowship

- Image 3—screen shoot of the current Northern California Grace Fellowship (NCGF) website (norcalgrace.net). Click on the “About Us” link on the top navigation bar.



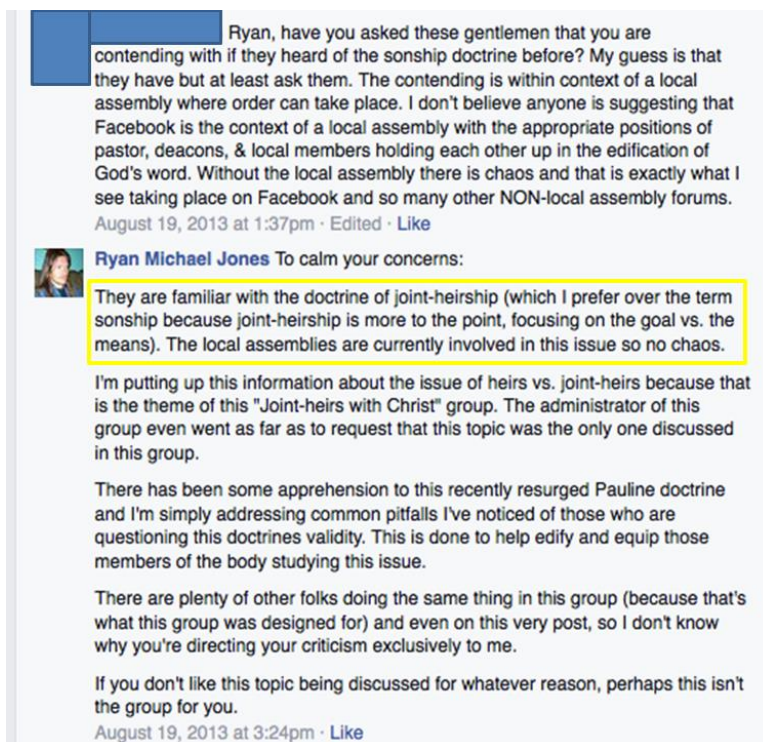
- Image 4—on the right-hand margin there is a numbered list under the title “Listen to Past Sermons” of the various video, radio, and blog ministries of NCGF. Number 2 on this list is titled Questions/Answers and lists a blog titled “I am glad you asked. . .” at bibleanswersrightlydivided.blogspot.com



- Image 5—on August 10, 2013, Brother Jones posted a link on Facebook to the NCGF paper *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ?* This link took those who clicked on it to the blog associated with NCGF noted and shown on the previous slide. Here, underneath the title “I am glad you asked . . . Sonship Edification”, was a link to download *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ?* The original blog posting was made on Monday, February 25, 2013.



- Image 6—on August 19, 2013, Brother Jones stated that he believed the label “Joint-heirship” is preferable to “sonship” because it is “more to the point, focusing on the goal vs. the means.”

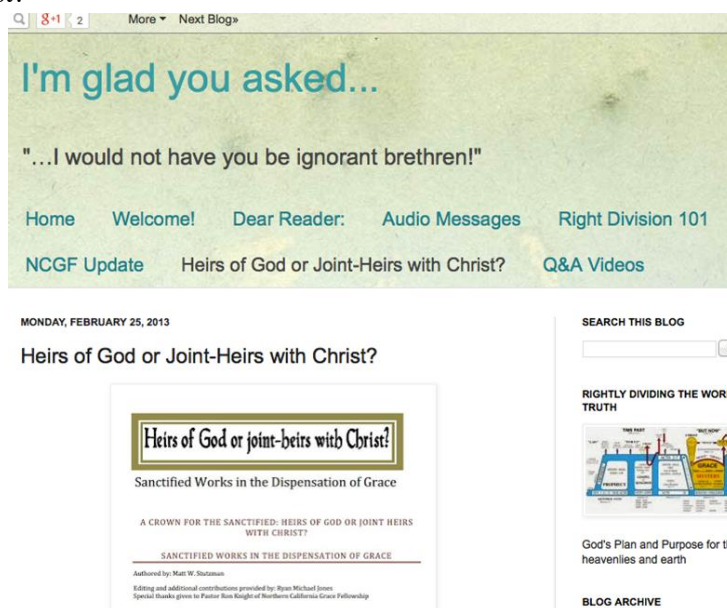


- Image 7—another link to *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ* was posted on August 28, 2013, by Brother Jones under the title “Sonship Edification.”




- Illustration: If I placed a heading on one of the websites/Blogs associated with GLBC that read “Universalism” and then it was followed by an article denying the existence of hell would not one conclude that I/we believed in universalism?

- Image 8—at some point subsequent to August 28, 2013, the title on the blog posting from Monday, February 25, 2013, was changed to read “Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ?”



- Image 9—on June 7, 2013, Brother Jones stated the following on a Facebook wall in response to a posting made on June 5, 2013. Ryan said in part, “I think the Pauline concept of sonship or even more so pointed when titled Joint-heirship is the most recent “forgotten truth” within Pauline mystery doctrine to be resurged.” Within the same post Jones goes on the equate Sonship and joint-heirship as the same thing and lists Ron Knight, the Pastor of NCGF, as part of the line of men involved in the resurgence of this “forgotten truth.”

 **Ryan Michael Jones** I think the Pauline concept of sonship or even more so pointed when titled joint-heirship is the most recent "forgotten truth" within Pauline mystery doctrine to be resurged. The purging of religious leaven makes way for the Pauline mystery doctrinal resurgence.

The order of the main points of Pauline mystery doctrinal resurgence to date:

- 1.) Salvation by faith not works (Luther)
- 2.) Pre-tribulation rapture (various)
- 3.) Paul's unique apostolic authority (Darby, Plymouth brethren, etc.)
- 4.) The refinement of when (Mid-Acts [ultimately Acts 9]) the body of Christ began (Baker, O'Hair, Stam)

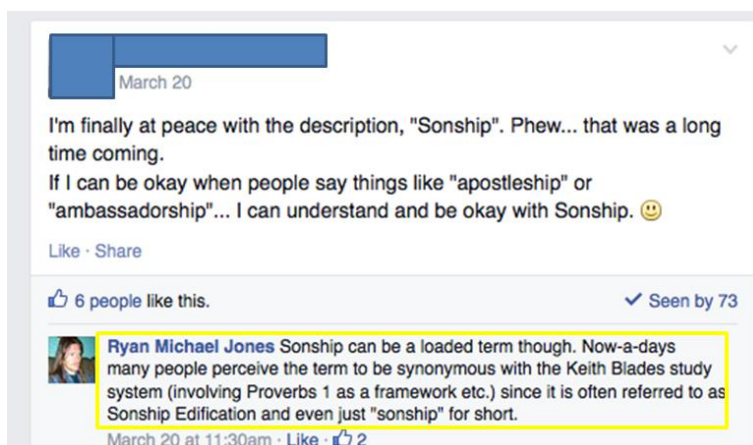
*Kind of an aside but worth mentioning:
The issue of God's preserved (KJV) word (Richard Jordan [current further refinement by Bryan Ross]) + God's intervention only being through His written word and the body of Christ (Jordan)

- 5.) Sonship/Joint-heirship (Blades, Newbold, McDaniels, Strelecki, Knight, Stutzman, etc.)

It seems these forgotten truths have been resurged in the reverse order that they were abandoned by the "early church". It seems to me that sonship/joint-heirship may very well be one of the last major aspects of the Pauline mystery doctrine to be resurged which would perhaps indicate that the end of this dispensation may be all the more near.

June 7, 2013 at 1:38pm · Like

- Image 10—on March 20, 2014, Brother Jones stated the following on Facebook in response to a saint’s posting regarding “sonship.” Jones wrote, “Sonship can be a loaded term though. Now-a-days many people perceive the term to be synonymous with Keith Blades study system (involving Proverbs 1 as a framework etc.) since it is often referred to as Sonship Edification and even just “sonship” for short.”



- Image 11—on May 6, 2014, NCGF published a YouTube video titled “[The Similarities & Differences Between the Joint-heir Doctrine & Sonship Edification](#).” In this video Brother Ron Knight, Pastor of NCGF spells out where and how their “joint-heir view” differs from SE.



- The following FACTS are plain given the above evidence.
 - Initially the NCGF paper *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ?* was promoted on an official church blog under the heading Sonship Edification. It is also evident from the comments and “praise” for the paper found below the link to the paper that readers viewed the NCGF paper as indicative of the SE position. As of Sunday, September 14, 2014, there is no posting from NCGF correcting or alerting their readers that their “Joint-heir view” is somehow different from SE. Consequently, NCGF is allowing a misconception of their paper to go uncorrected on their official blog site while at the same time they are accusing me of conflating their “Joint-heir view” with SE.
 - Brother Jones, a contributor to *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ?* and co-author of *Wrongly Deriding Joint-heirs with Christ*, is on record multiple times equating the terminology “Joint-heir/s/ship” with SE.
 - At some point in the spring of 2014, NCGF took some steps to distance their “Joint-heir view” from some of the more objectionable aspects of SE, namely its use of Proverbs 1 in establishing a “table of contents” for Paul’s epistles. This took the form of changing the title on the blog posting from Monday, February 25, 2013, that contains the link to their paper *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ* from “Sonship Edification” to “Joint-heirs.” In addition, the aforementioned YouTube video was released on May 6, 2014, to explain the differences between NCGF’s “Joint-heir view” and SE.
- I am perfectly willing to accept the fact that NCGF does not NOW fully embrace the teachings of SE. That being said, it is not as though the actions on the part of NCGF documented above would not have led one (and still may for one who only looks at the blog) to conclude that prior to the Spring of 2014 their position was not part and parcel with SE. Their official blog advertised their first paper as SE and one of the paper’s chief contributors was all over social media equating the views expressed therein with SE.
 - The “Joint-heir view” expressed in *Heirs of God or Joint-heirs with Christ?* is not “identical” to the SE position, however, it is a “cousin” as I expressed in the March, 2014 release of *Ifs, Ands, and Buts*. While NCGF does REJECT some aspects of the SE position they are also in agreement with SE on the following issues among others: 1) the progressive nature of the believer’s sanctification in Romans 7 and 8; 2) the conditional nature of the Holy Spirit dwelling in Romans 8:9; and 3) the conditional nature of Joint-heirship in Romans 8:17, just to name a few. For a complete explanation of the similarities and differences between the “Joint-heir position” and SE, interested parties are encouraged to either view the video or read the transcript of the NCGF video “[The Similarities & Differences Between the Joint-heir Doctrine & Sonship Edification.](#)” ([Click here](#) to access the written transcript.)

Origin of Sonship Edification

- As we observed in Lesson 143, a distinct type of “Sonship Theology” has developed from within the Grace Movement over the past fifteen to twenty years. Presently, this type of Sonship teaching is known as SE. Proponents of SE subscribe to the following tenants of mid-Acts Pauline Dispensationalism: 1) that the body of Christ did not start in Acts 2; 2) a difference between Israel and the body of Christ; 3) a difference between the earthly and heavenly places and purposes of God; 4) a difference between prophecy and mystery; 5) Paul is our Apostle during the dispensation of Grace; 6) a difference between the Rapture of the church and the 2nd Coming of Christ, and many more.
- The fountainhead of SE, within the Grace Movement was Keith R. Blades, author of the popular book *Satan and His Plan of Evil* and founder of *Enjoy the Bible Ministries*. When I first released *Ifs, Ands, and Buts* on Monday, March 17, 2014, I was very critical of the SE position regarding Joint-heirship in Romans 8:17. Outside of the introduction where I address SE specifically, my criticisms largely took the form of footnote citations of the two most prominent SE teachers Mark Newbold of Triangle Bible Church in Raleigh, North Carolina and Mike McDaniel of Millennium Bible Institute headquartered in Imperial, Texas.
- Originally, I did not include a discussion of Brother Blades as the fountainhead of SE in *Ifs, Ands and Buts* is because at the time of the paper’s release (March 2014), I was unaware of Blades’ involvement in the articulation of the position. After learning of Blades’ involvement, via a critique of my paper, immediately I set out to investigate the matter. Since late March 2014 I have read every issue of Blades’ quarterly Bible study periodical *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly* in chronological order in an attempt to understand both the theological and historical evolution of the SE paradigm.
- At this time, having completed that course of study, I can now say with certainty that Brother Keith Blades was the fountainhead of the modern SE doctrine within the Grace Movement. Moreover, a clear theological and historical progression with respect to SE is readily apparent in the writings of Blades. Prior, I had only read Blades’ published books, booklets, and pamphlets which do not contain much if anything by way of SE information. Functionally, Blades reserved writing about SE to his quarterly newsletter. In addition, there is very little by way of audio/video material available of Blades teaching on SE (will say more about this in a future lesson). Consequently, it is theoretically possible that those who have never read Blades’ quarterly periodical would have no idea that he was the point of origin from the SE movement.
- Other ministries around the United States are also teaching Bladesian style SE. These ministries include the following:
 - Mark Newbold of [Triangle Bible Church in Raleigh](#), North Carolina
 - Mike McDaniel of [Millennium Bible Institute](#) headquartered in Imperial, Texas

- David Winston Busch of [Columbia River Bible Fellowship](#) in Vancouver, Washington. Brother Busch is also the author of the *Sonship Stablishment Study Series* of books which at present contains the following two volumes:
 - *More Than Conquerors: Sonship, Sufferings, Prayer & the Intercessor Ministry of the Holy Spirit* (2012)
 - *The Fullness of Christ: The Prisoner, the Creature & the Eternal Purpose of the Father of Glory* (2013)
- Ron Knight and [Northern California Grace Fellowship](#) are best thought of as modified Bladesian SE. These brothers desire that people know that their “Joint-heir view” is not identical to or synonymous with SE.

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Sunday, September 21, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 145 Sonship Edification: General Timeline and Overview of Key Concepts, Part 1](#)

Introduction/Review

- In Lessons 143 and 144 we began our consideration of Sonship Edification (SE) as a modern development from within the Grace Movement. These lessons were primarily taken up with noting that one ought not to assume that they understand how someone is using the terms “sonship” or “adoption;” since these terms have a widely varied meaning and usage in church history depending on who is using them. As a result, one should always seek clarification in a definitional sense when encountering the use of these terms.
- Second, we discussed the relationship, i.e., the similarities and differences between Sonship Edification and the “joint-heir view” advocated for by Northern California Grace Fellowship. The “joint-heir view” is related to but not identical to the SE position.
- Thirdly, we identified Keith R. Blades as the fountainhead or point of origin of SE into the mid-Acts Grace Movement. We noted that Brother Blades’ SE teaching is primarily confined to his quarterly Bible study periodical *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly* which ran from 1996 through 2009. Consequently, those familiar only with Keith’s popular book *Satan and His Plan of Evil* and some of his other booklets, pamphlets, and tracts might not be aware of Keith’s teaching with respect to SE. We will discuss some of Keith’s recorded messages on Sonship in a future lesson.
- Lastly, we identified other men and ministries from around the country that are teaching Bladesian style SE. The two most prominent supporters of this approach to Bible study are Mark Newbold of Triangle Bible Church (TBC) in Raleigh, North Carolina and Mike McDaniel of Millennium Bible Institute headquartered in Imperial, Texas.

SE General Timeline

- Having identified Keith Blades as the founder of the SE approach to Scripture and Mark Newbold and Mike McDaniel as its present primary champions, a bit of historical context is in order. Please consider the following general timeline:
 - 1996, 1st Quarter—Blades begins publishing the quarterly Bible study periodical *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly*. The first article in the first issue was titled, “[The Adoption of Sons: A Primer to this Wonderful Truth.](#)” In this article Blades presents a standard view of Biblical Adoption that is in line with Stam’s definition found in *Two Minutes With the Bible*. In short, in 1996 Blades does not yet exhibit the definition of Biblical Adoption, i.e., “sonship” that came to dominate the *Quarterly* beginning in the ‘00 decade.
 - Exact Date Uncertain—Newbold learns right division and purchases Blades’ book *Satan and His Plan of Evil* on recommendation. Enclosed was a pamphlet listing of Blades’ tapes. Newbold orders the tape “The Battle on the Cross” and is so impressed with

Blades' teaching that he orders Blades' entire audio library with assistance from Triangle Bible Church. (Triangle Bible Church Audio #[2094](#), 7/11/2010)

- 2000— Newbold begins emailing Keith Blades with questions (TBC Audio #[2094](#))
- 2001, June—Millennium Bible Institute is organized in Glen Rose, TX by Mike McDaniel – (graceage.org, About us)
- 2001— Newbold begins phoning Keith Blades and recording the conversations (TBC Audio #[2094](#))
- 2001, 3rd Quarter—Blades publishes an article in the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly* titled “[For It Were Better For Me to Die, Than That Any Man Should Make My Glorifying Void.](#)” It is in this article from the second half of 2001 that Blades really begins to promote what would eventually become Sonship Edification. It is here that Blades really begins to use the vocabulary of SE in a manner that he heretofore had not. Consider the following statistical evidence: Sons/Sonship—64 times, Sonship Liberty—30 times, Sonship Status—10 times, Abba Father—1 time. Prior to the 3rd Quarter of 2001 the terms “sons,” “sonship,” and “sonship status,” had been used less than 50 times total between 1996 and the first half of 2001.
- 2002, 1st Quarter—Blades publishes an article in the *Quarterly* titled “[Do You Cry ‘Abba Father?’](#)” It is in this article that Blades teaches two different inheritances in Romans 8:17. In addition, the Sonship Vocabulary is further expanded: Sonship—39 times, Sonship Status—11 times, Sonship Education—6 times (first time this term is used), Sonship Life—7 times, Father’s Business—5 times (first time this term is used), Abba Father—10 times. (We will have much more to say about this in a future lesson.)
- 2003— Newbold asks Blades to teach him everything he knows about SE (TBC Audio #[2094](#))
- 2007, June—Newbold teaches Romans 8:14 “Sonship: Introduction to Sonship” (TBC Audio Archives, Romans 8)
- 2009— McDaniel states: ‘And, in your exaltation, I’m going to make you the glory of God in Jesus Christ, and **you’re going to be a joint-heir with my Son and you’ll inhabit the heavenly places** and here’s all you have to do to get in on that: RECEIVE IT BY FAITH, because faith is the only thing you can do without doing something’. (Millennium Bible Institute, Revelation DVD Lesson 21)
- 2010, April— Newbold travels to Alberta Canada as a guest speaker for Blades' assembly (TBC Audio Archives, [Sonship Conference, Strathmore, Alberta Canada](#), April 2010)

- 2010, July 4—Keith Blades passes away. (Endnotes page of more recent prints of *Satan and His Plan of Evil*)
- 2010, August—McDaniel teaches first SE lesson, Justification Lesson 1 (Class Notes)
- 2011, February—McDaniel attends TBC Sonship Gathering, Raleigh, NC - <https://youtu.be/OzrfSWRsCkM>
- 2011, February—Newbold reads a thank you letter from McDaniel regarding the February 2011 Sonship Gathering McDaniel attended. (TBC Audio #[2205](#))
- This timeline establishes the following GENERAL line of progression with respect to SE: Blades—Newbold—McDaniel
 - Newbold—Strelecki
 - It is unclear at this time how David Winston Busch of Columbia River Bible Fellowship came to understand SE.

The Vocabulary of SE

- At the outset it important to understand that SE has developed and utilizes its own functional vocabulary much of which cannot be found in the Bible. Frankly, overcoming this language barrier and understanding how words and phrases are being used is one of the major roadblocks to understanding the SE position. As we saw in Lesson 143 words such as “adoption” and “sonship” are used in a manner that many Bible students are unfamiliar with. In other words, they have been ascribed meanings that are unique to SE. Understanding these definitional differences is the first key to negotiating the labyrinth of SE.
- Please consider the following non-exhaustive list of words and phrases that comprise the SE vocabulary:
 - Sonship: Status, Education, Establishment, Edification, Liberties, Life (Lives), Checkpoints, Curriculum, Learning, Life, Prayer, Commitment, Aims and Goals, Walk, Glories, Awareness, Confidence, Youth
 - Father’s: Business, Curriculum, Chain of Provision, Mind and Thinking, Supplied Capacities
 - Edification/Effectual
 - Spirit Dwelling
 - Curriculum
 - Sense and Sequence
 - Table of Contents
 - Levels
 - Vocational Educational Training

- Abba Father
 - Creature
 - Adoption
-
- Figuring out what a term means and how it is being used is a key first step to understanding SE. It is interesting to note that SE rejects the notion of the “indwelling” Holy Spirit in Romans 8:9 in part because the word “indwelt” does not appear in the Bible. Meanwhile they have invented an entire functional vocabulary and imposed it upon the Scriptures.

 - One key to understanding SE is found in dissecting the meaning of the name “Sonship Edification” itself. The words “Sonship” and “Edification” individually possess highly specialized meanings according to this manner of study. These individual meanings are then mixed together or wedded to one another. Consequently, it behooves us to spend some more time looking at how the words “Sonship” and “Edification” are used according to teachers of SE.

Sunday, September 28, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 146 Sonship Edification: General Timeline and Overview of Key Concepts, Part 2](#)

Note: These notes are a continuation of [Lesson 145 Sonship Edification: General Timeline and Overview of Key Concepts, Part 1](#).

SE's Edification Curriculum

- II Corinthians 11:3—one of the red flags for me regarding SE is its lack of simplicity. Not only does it have its own private vocabulary, but it also contains a detailed edification complex or “curriculum.” According to SE, it is only by following the “curriculum for our Godly edification” that one is prepared for “laboring with our heavenly father in his business.” This “curriculum” is found in Paul’s church epistles, i.e., Romans through II Thessalonians. The “curriculum” for our “sonship education” which directly impacts ones “sonship vocation” in eternity begins in Romans which is viewed as the “establishment” book.
 - Romans 1-5—Justification
 - Romans 6-8:13—Sanctification
 - Romans 8:14-15—Sonship Orientation (Capstone of Sanctification)
 - Romans 8:16-39—Sonship Establishment
 - Romans 9-11—Dispensational Establishment
 - Romans 12:1-II Thess. 3:18—Sonship Education
- The “curriculum for our Sonship Education” is further divided into three levels: Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3. Each “level” is complete with its own attainments and checkpoints that one needs to pass before moving on to the next level. Likewise, each Level contains two “phases” that one moves through as they advance through each level.
- As one advances through the “curriculum for their Sonship Education” they begin as an Adopted Son at the beginning of Level 1 and move through four more “appellatives” as they advance through the various phases and levels of the “curriculum:” Simple Son, Young Man, Wise Man, Man of Understanding.
 - “Simple Man: Educated within Romans through Galatians—this doctrine deals with a son in the first stage of sonship; this is the foundational doctrine for the saint to get his education properly underway. This doctrine also goes over God’s wrath against man’s ungodliness, Israel’s blindness, and conduct issues within the church, these saints are called “babes” and “foolish.”
 - Young Man: Educated within Ephesians though Colossians—this is where a son begins to learn to think like God does, this is why Paul goes over “knowledge” and “wisdom,” and his desire for us to have his understanding in it.

Wise Man: Educated within I Thessalonians through II Thessalonians—this is when a son learns to do things God’s way, he now understands how God’s word can work “effectually” within him, and how to apply it within his life as a son.

Man of Understanding: Educated within in I Timothy through Philemon—now the son has the ability to be fully utilized by God the Father in His business, he can now work together with God in what He is doing, he can now teach the doctrine as a father, and establish other saints in the doctrine for their souls.” (Jones, 28)

- All of the phases, levels, and appellatives that comprise the “curriculum for our Sonship Education” found in Paul’s church epistles (Romans—II Thessalonians) are gleaned from the “table of contents” found in Proverbs 1:1-6, according to SE. The following images were produced by Triangle Bible Church with input from Keith R. Blades. They are ordered to give the reader an understanding of SE’s curriculum apparatus. They begin at the macro level and work in descending order to the individual pieces/sections of the curriculum and intended responses of the individual practitioner of SE.

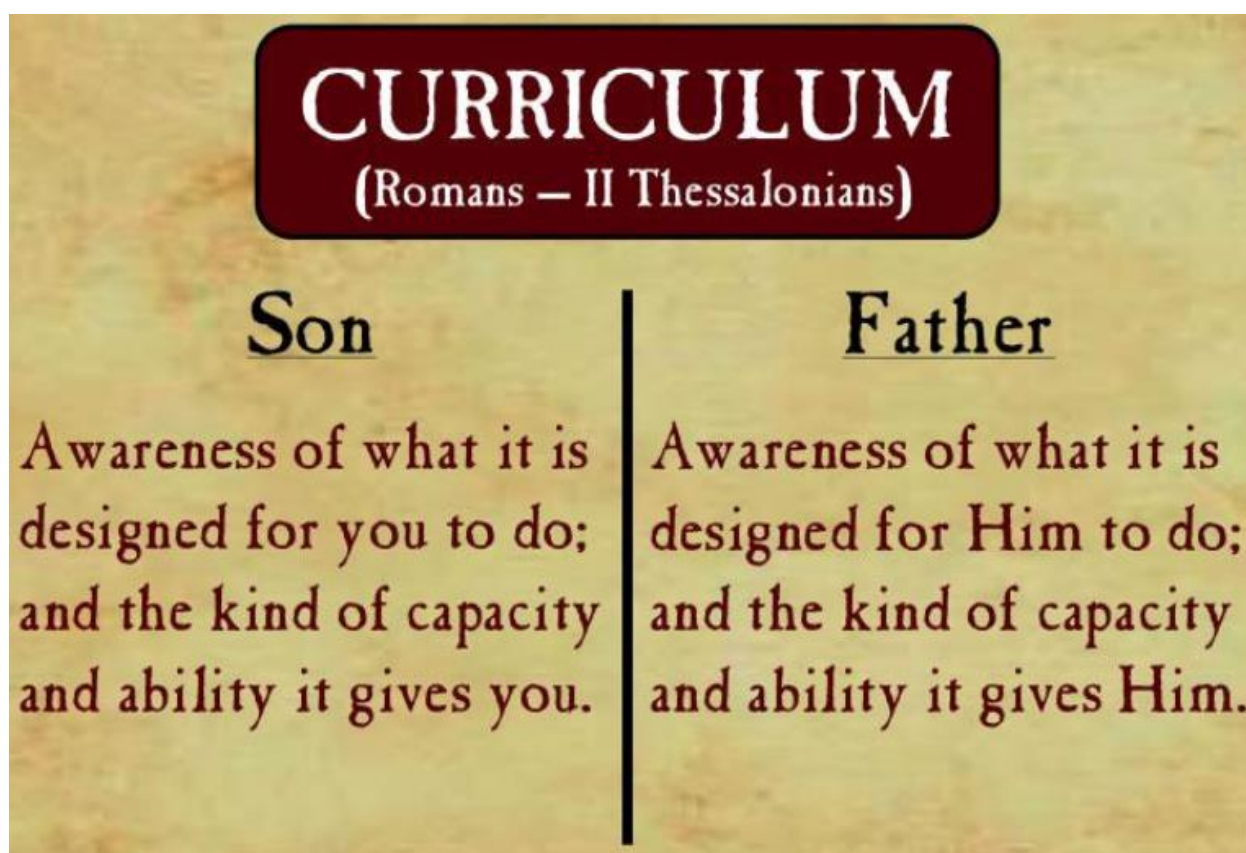


Image 1: At the macrolevel Romans through II Thessalonians comprise the “Curriculum” between a “Son” and his “Father.” Notice that the “Son” and the “Father” are given “capacity” and “ability” by the “Curriculum.”

		<h2 style="text-align: center;">TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR SONSHIP EDUCATION</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">PROVERBS 1:2-6</h3>					
		LEVEL I		LEVEL II		LEVEL III	
		PHASE 1 vs. 2	PHASE 2 vs. 3	PHASE 1 vs. 4a	PHASE 2 vs. 4b	PHASE 1 vs. 5a	PHASE 2 vs. 5b & 6
THE ADOPTED SON	To know wisdom and instruction;	THE SIMPLE		THE YOUNG MAN	A WISE MAN	A MAN OF UNDERSTANDING	and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels;
	to perceive the words of understanding;						To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;
						and will increase learning;	

Image 2: Here we see that the “Table of Contents for Sonship Education” is furnished by Proverbs 1:2-6. Notice the various “Levels,” “Phases,” and “Appellatives” as one moves from left to right. According to SE, it is only by properly progressing through the “Curriculum” as outline by Proverbs 1:2-6 that one can be properly edified.

THE CORRESPONDING EXHORTATIONS IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS AND DOCTRINE IN THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

LEVEL I		LEVEL II		LEVEL III		
PHASE 1 vs. 2	PHASE 2 vs. 3	PHASE 1 vs. 4a	PHASE 2 vs. 4b	PHASE 1 vs. 5a	PHASE 2 vs. 5b & 6	
<p>"To know wisdom and instruction;" EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 1:7-19)</p> <p>DOCTRINE: ROMANS 8: 14-15</p>	<p>"To receive the instruction of" wisdom," EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 3:1-20) DOCTRINE: ROMANS 12:3-16</p> <p>"justice," EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 3:21-35) DOCTRINE: ROMANS 12: 17-13:7</p>	<p>To give subtilty to the simple. EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 6:20-35)</p> <p>DOCTRINE: EPHESIANS 1-3</p>	<p>to the young man knowledge and discretion. EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 7-8)</p> <p>DOCTRINE: EPHESIANS 4-6</p>	<p>A wise man will hear, EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 9)</p> <p>DOCTRINE: ROM. 8: 14 - COL. 4: 18 AGAIN</p>	<p>and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 9)</p> <p>DOCTRINE: II THESSALONIANS</p>	
<p>"to perceive the words of understanding;" EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 2:1-22)</p> <p>DOCTRINE: ROMANS 8: 16-39</p>		<p>"and judgment," EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 4: 10-5:6) DOCTRINE: ROMANS 13:8-14</p> <p>"and equity;" EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 5: 15-6:19) DOCTRINE: ROMANS 14:1-15:7</p>		<p>and will increase learning; EXHORTATIONS: (PROVERBS 9)</p> <p>DOCTRINE: I THESSALONIANS</p>		<p>To understand a proverb, and the interpretation: the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">THE ADOPTED SON</p>		<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">THE SIMPLE</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">THE YOUNG MAN</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">A WISE MAN</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">A MAN OF UNDERSTANDING</p>	
<p>AS WELL AS THE BOOKS OF PHILIPPIANS & COLOSSIANS.</p>						

Image 3: Next, we see the skeleton of the “Table of Contents” from Image 2 populated with the specific content or “Exhortations” from Paul’s Epistles. According to this framework, one cannot jump ahead without properly mastering the doctrine/exhortations in each “Level” and “Phase.” It is only by following the proper “sense and sequence” of the “Curriculum” that one can be properly edified.

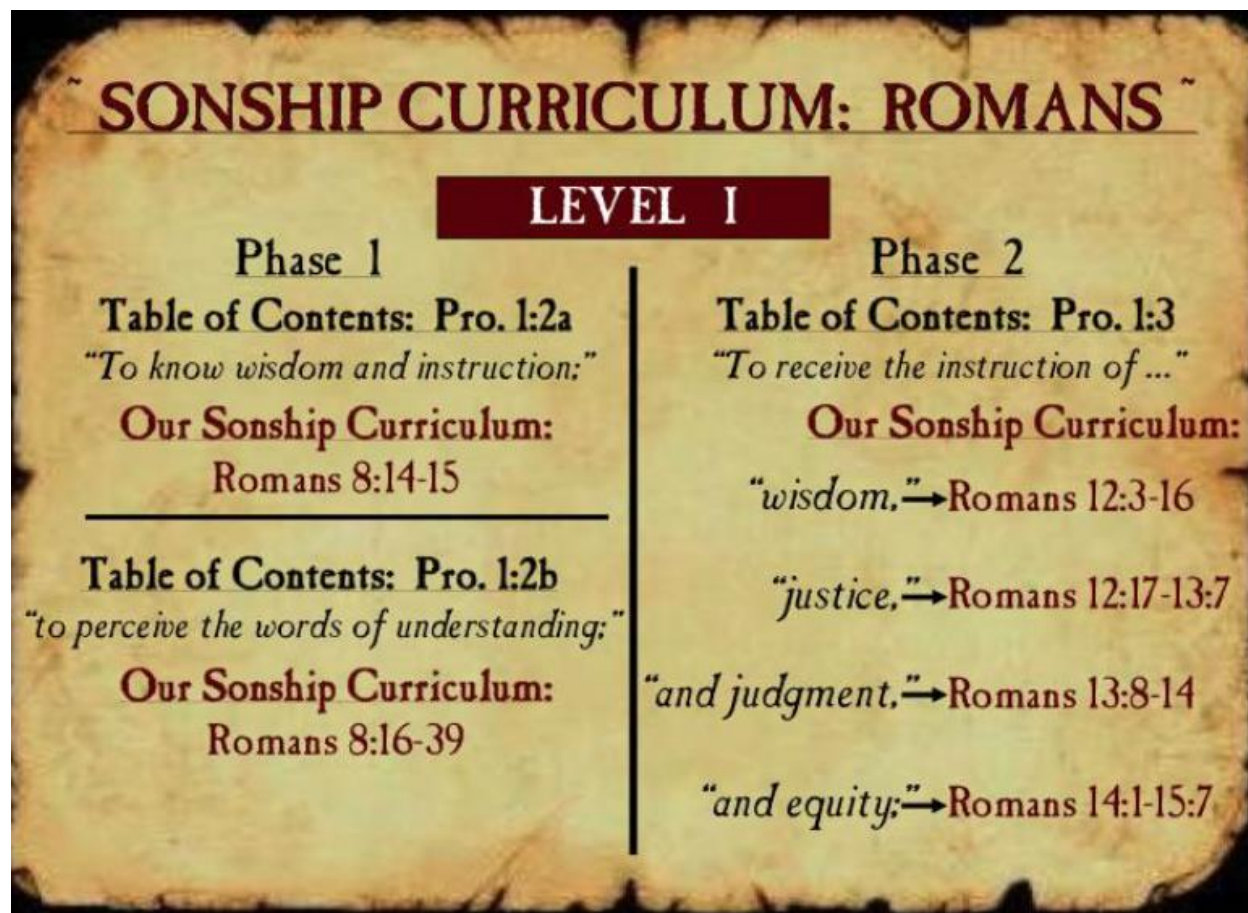


Image 4: Provides a close look at "Level 1" from the framework presented in Image 3. Notice how the "Table of Contents" from Proverbs 1 is matched up with various sections of the book of Romans.

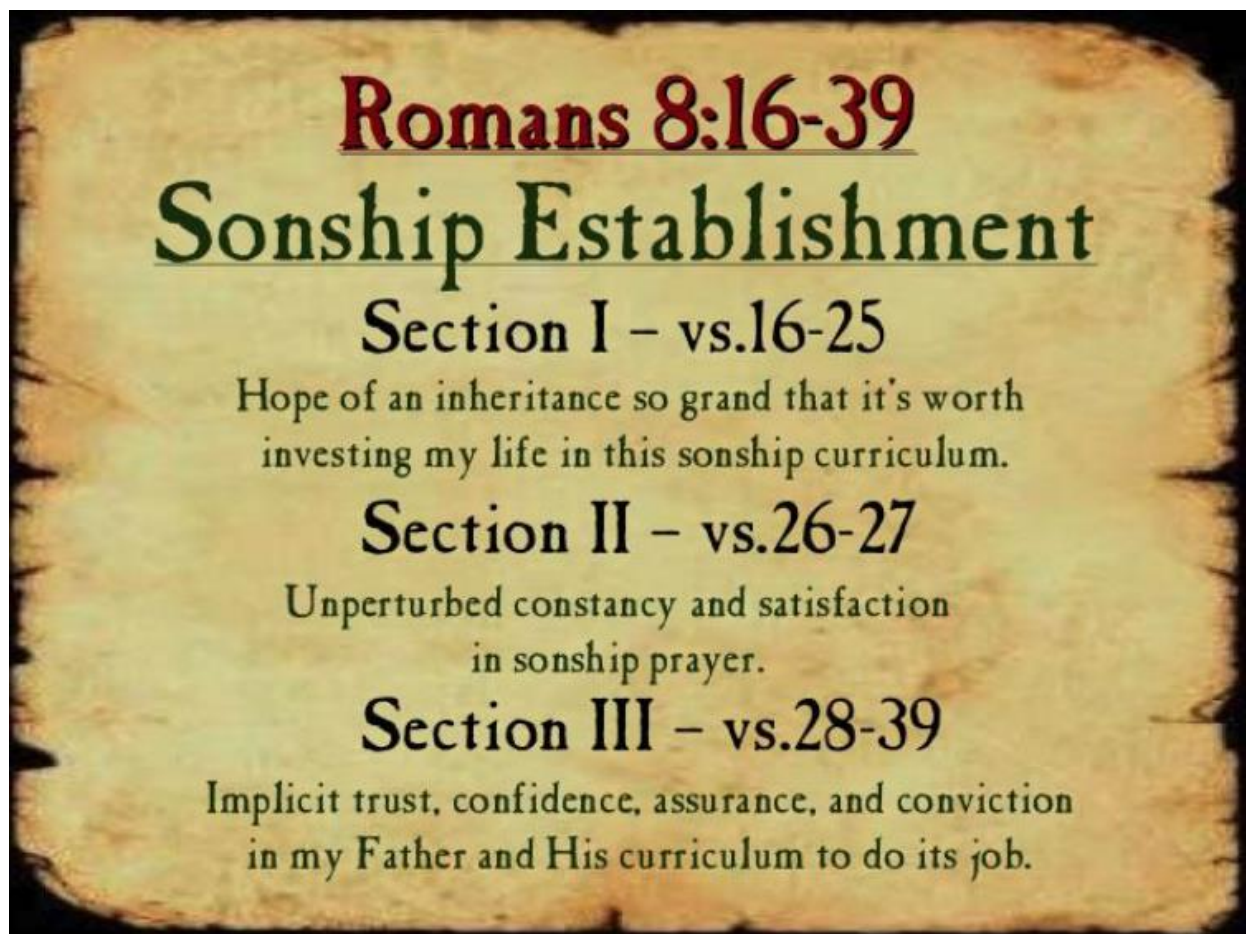


Image 5: This image further breaks down the left-hand column presented in Image 4. Here we learn that the “Sonship Establishment” portion of the “Curriculum” breakdown further into three subsections in Romans 8.

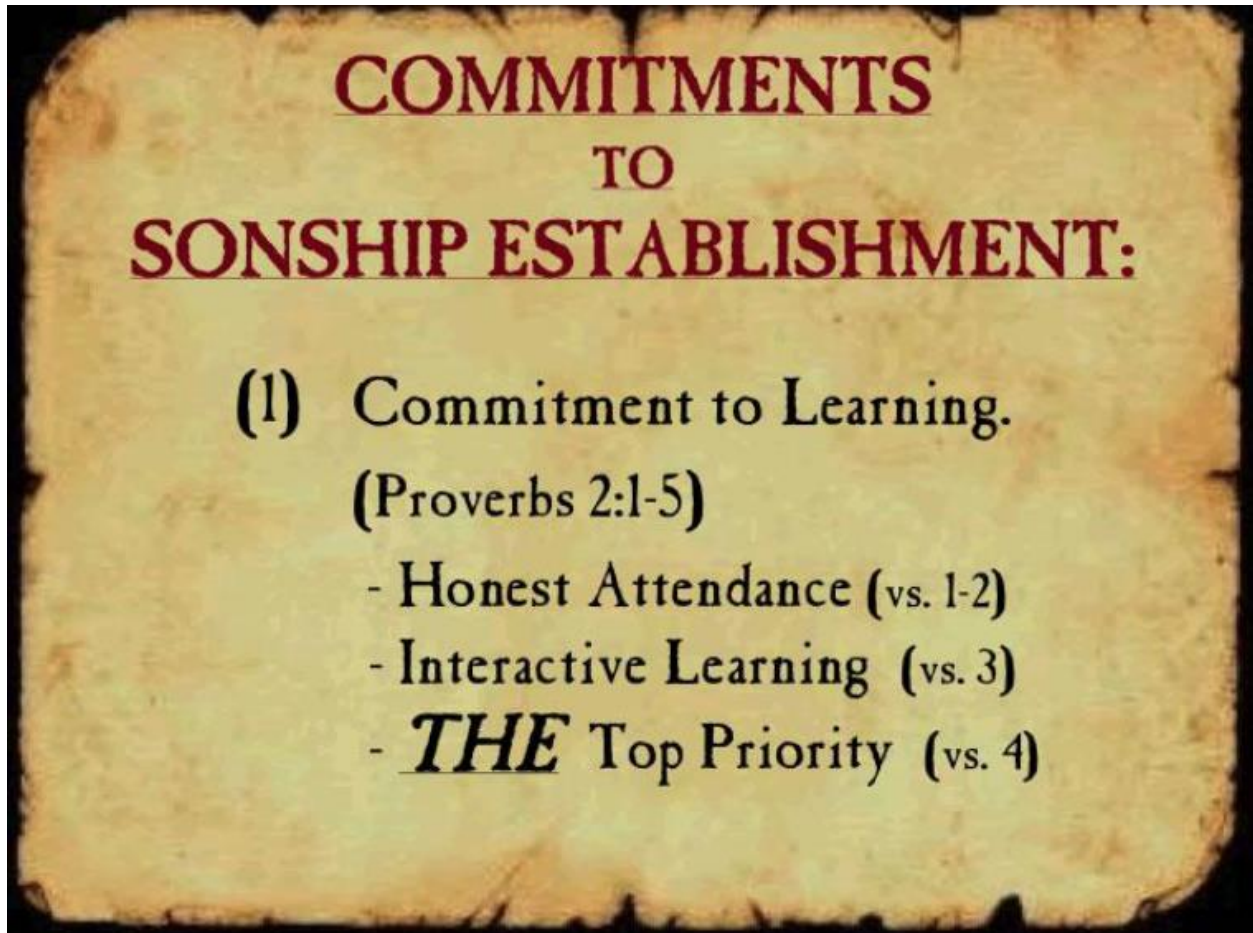


Image 6: Here we see the “Sonship Commitments” from Proverbs 2 identified. In SE if one does not properly to their Sonship Education, they cannot be properly edified. One must make these “commitments” before beginning their course of “Sonship Establishment” outline in the previous image.

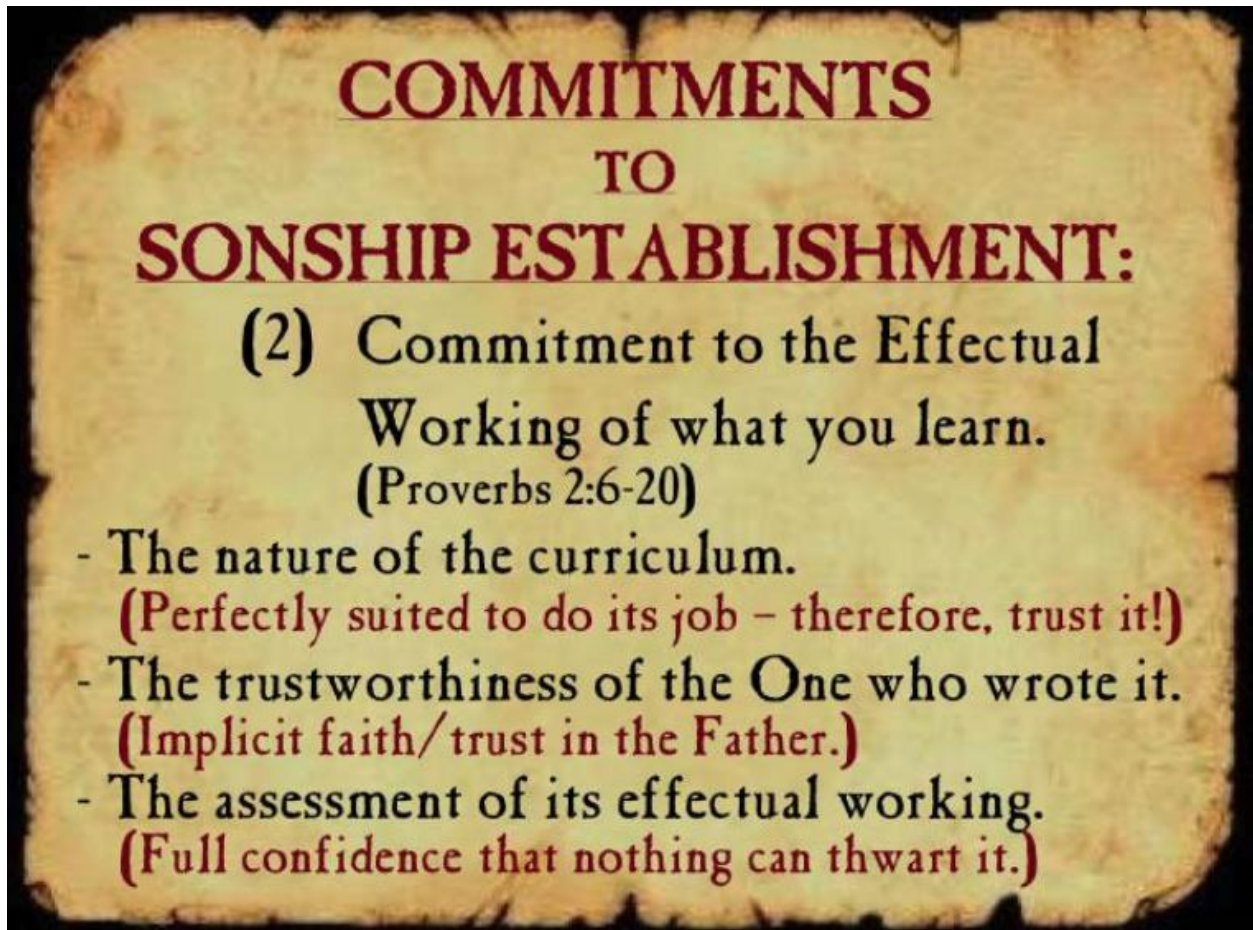


Image 7: Here we see the second set of “Sonship Commitments” one must make before commencing “Sonship Establishment.”

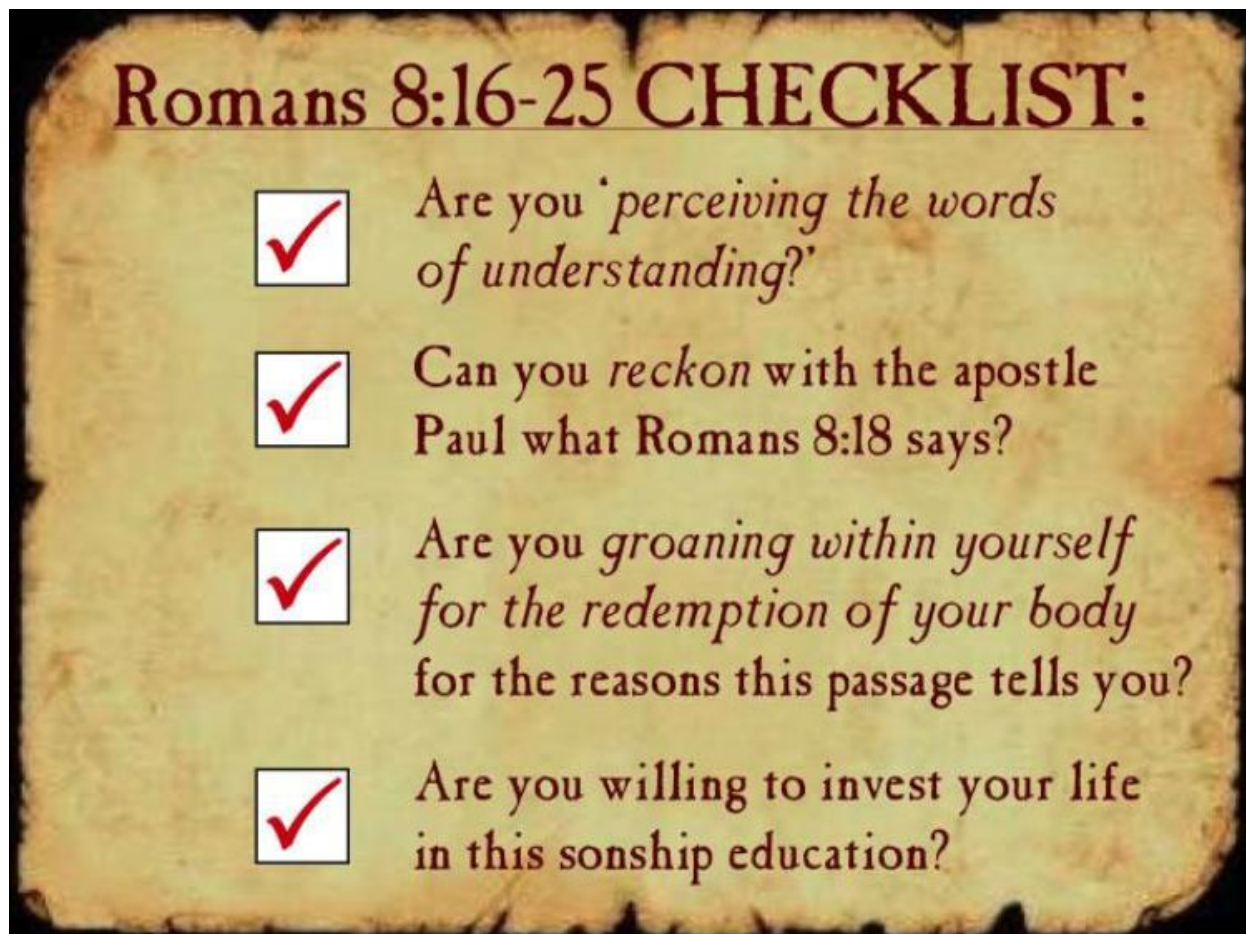


Image 8: Before moving on the next Phase of one's "Sonship Establishment" they must pass all of the "check points" in the "Curriculum" before moving on. So before moving on the "Section II" (see Image 5) self-assess their progress through the "Curriculum." If after doing so one cannot check all the boxes, they must figure out where they are deficient in this portion of the "Curriculum" and fix it before moving on.

- SE views edification as a progressive process as one advances through the "curriculum." This is like how the public education system works. One starts out in elementary school, moves on to junior high, and finishes up their mandatory education with high school. Each level contains "curriculum" that is relevant to the age and maturity level of the students. For example, one must learn to add, subtract, multiply, and divide before studying algebra and geometry.
 - "As you are beginning your education, one of the things you need to get firmly settled in your mind, first and foremost, is that this process has to follow a very certain pattern and curriculum. And so, as you begin to be introduced to particular subjects, you will see that you are not taught certain things in Romans. You will be taught them later, let's say in Ephesians for instance. You will be prepared for them in Romans, but you are not taught them in Romans.

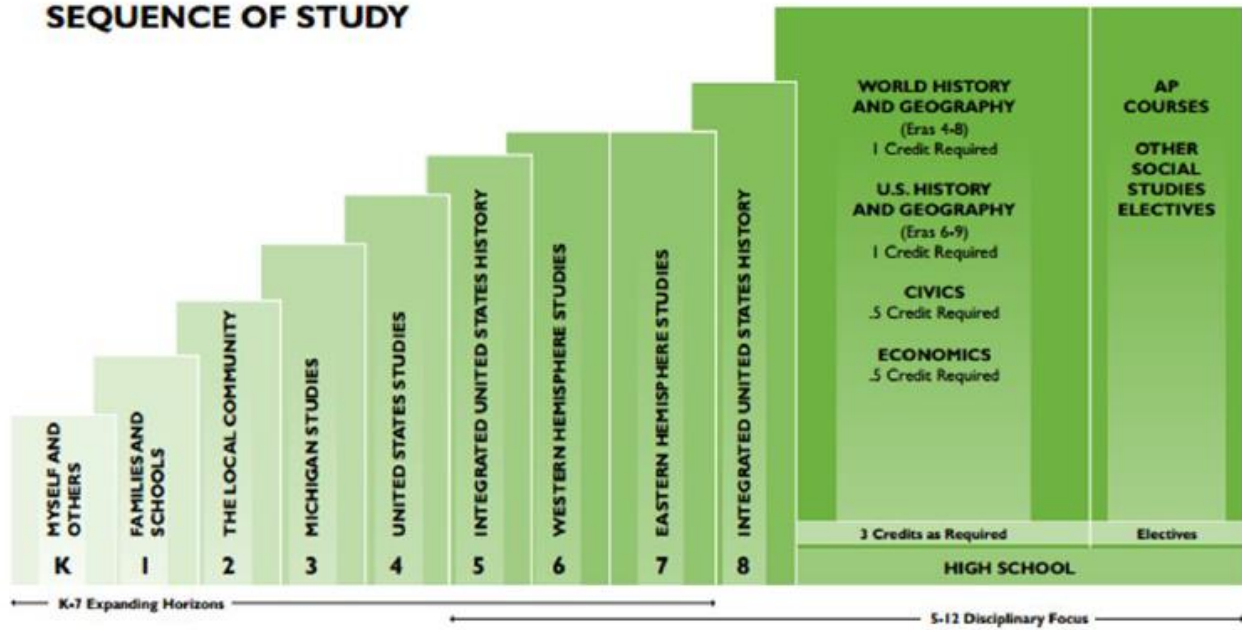
Moreover, you will have problems if you are trying to teach them in Romans because Paul and the Holy Spirit do not see fit to teach them here, and there is a reason for that. You understand this concept even in a secular context when it comes to teaching. You would not teach advanced calculus or quantum physics if you were teaching an introductory course on mathematics. You have a basic introduction to the subject, Math 101 for instance, and you then progress through the information.

Oftentimes what will happen is that when we are back in Romans, we many want to run to other information and doctrine that is sitting in more advanced curriculum of the later epistles to attempt to explain that portion of scripture, but this is really not how it is happening doctrinally. You can't do it because the doctrine is sitting here in Romans. This is where the explanation of the particular Romans doctrine is occurring, and this is where you will first need to be "grounded" before moving on. When you get to the advanced curriculum, that is taking into account that you already have that background and foundation laid. So all you have in the advanced epistles is a review of certain issues, just like you are dealing with advanced mathematics courses. It will take for granted that you understand some basics about addition, subtraction, multiplication, fractions, certain equations and so on and, in light of that, you will then be able to go on and build that host of doctrine upon that base of knowledge. . .

And so it is important that you follow Paul's teaching pattern in this regard because you will get yourself into a mess if you don't. It will be frustrating as well, because there are things you have not been properly prepared for yet, and therefore will not have your thinking properly ordered with its designed results if you just jump ahead without regard to the curriculum. As you continue on in your education, you will find that there are things that Paul will withhold. There are things that he would not share with Corinthians or exposit for them because they were not prepared to receive them yet. There is a definite process that you will go through in your education curriculum and this must be appreciated for the word to do its designed effectual work in you." (Busch, 15-169)

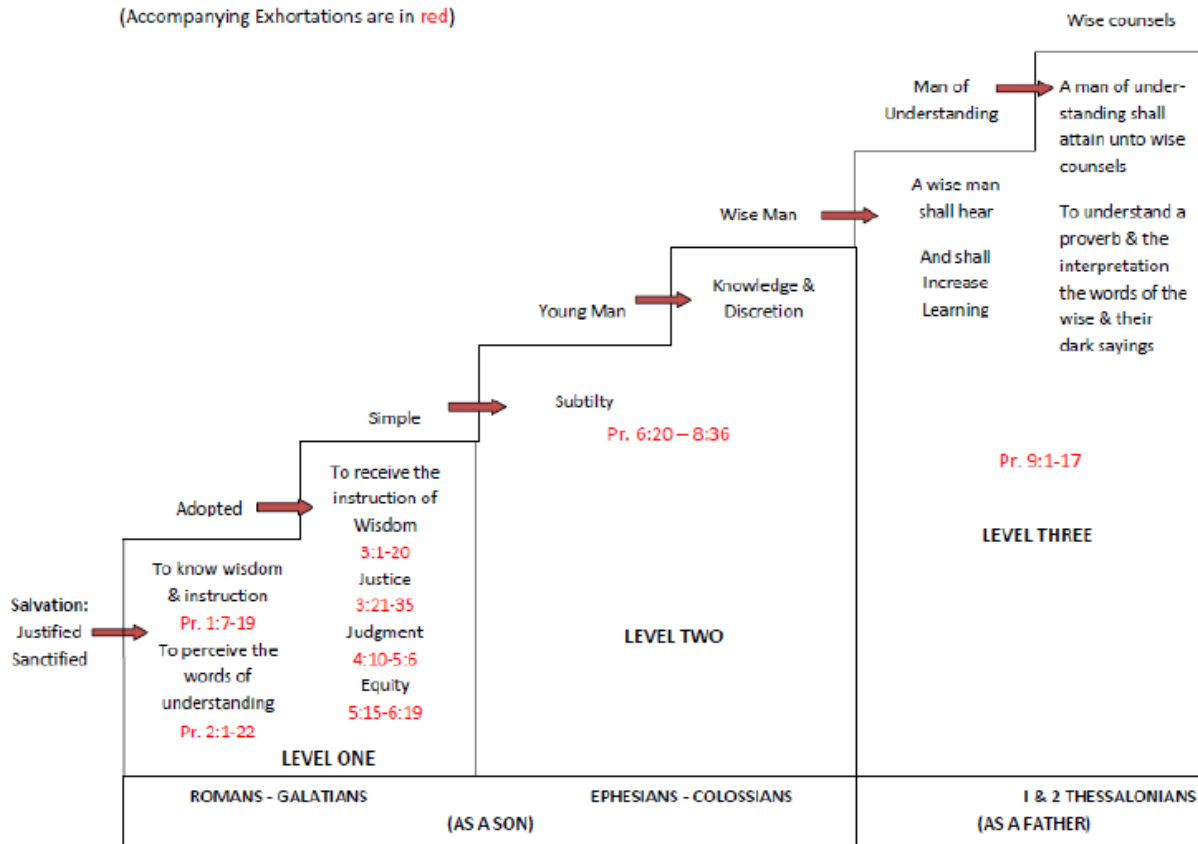
- To help illustrate the point, please consider the following images comparing the Social Studies Curriculum for the State of Michigan with the SE Curriculum Complex.

SEQUENCE OF STUDY



The Sonship Curriculum (Godly Edification)

(Accompanying Exhortations are in red)



- Structurally and conceptually, there is no difference. The only difference is the content taught by each “curriculum.” Just as one cannot jump right to geometry and algebra with first learning how to add and subtract SE is saying that one cannot properly understand I & II Thessalonians without having matriculated through the “curriculum” in the proper order.
- So according to SE, verses and passages are studied in light of their “sense and sequence” or location in the “curriculum.” For example, Paul will mention a doctrine in Romans but not fully expound it because the saint at the Romans level of edification is not yet ready for the “advanced” truth. Moving ahead in the “curriculum” is frowned upon because people will get doctrines out of “sequence” and will not be able handle them. Consequently, particular doctrines will not be able to effectually work in them.
 - “You could say that Level One concerns itself with Godly Thinking, Level Two concerns itself with Godly Living, and Level Three concerns Godly Labor. By saying it that way, I do not mean that you cannot labor with God in Level Two of sonship, of course you can. But once that education itself is over (Level Two) an entirely different role is filled by the son; that of being a father.” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment, Part 3 (01-02), page 2)

- To illustrate this “sense and sequence/curriculum” approach to Bible study please consider the following comments made by Mike McDaniel regarding the armor of God.
 - “Also, in Phase 2 of Level 2, you are, in view of the escalated attacks against you, told to put on the “whole armor of God.” It is not just “put on the armor of God,” but “put on the whole armor of God.” The reason it says it that way is because you already have on part of the armor.

You will have put on part of that armor back in Level 1, in Romans 13, where you put on the armor of light.

Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us **put on the armour of light.**

In Level 1, you need the armor of light, but in Level 2, you are told you will need the “whole” armor. You had part of it, but in Level 2, you will need it all. And that is because the attack is going to escalate to such a degree that you are going to need all of the armor.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation—Lesson 95, Page 6)

- Most importantly, this “sense and sequence” “curriculum” model of exposition is not specifically spoken in the Bible. In addition, it is also contrary to the “normal” hermeneutical practices of Bible study that led to the resurgence of the Pauline Grace Message in the first place: 1) literal reading, 2) comparing Scripture with Scripture, 3) dispensational approach. This “curriculum” approach actually serves to isolate words, concepts, contexts, and texts because of where they fall in the “sense and sequence” of the “curriculum.” Furthermore, despite constantly telling their audience not to “move ahead in the curriculum,” the major advocates for SE are constantly not heeding their advice by “moving people ahead” to teach doctrine. It appears that this rule can be broken by how one is properly edified.

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Sunday, October 5, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 147 Sonship Edification: General Timeline and Overview of Key Concepts, Part 3](#)

Note: These notes are a continuation of Lessons [145](#) and [146](#) Sonship Edification: General Timeline and Overview of Key Concepts, Parts 1 and 2

SE's Edification Curriculum, Cont.

- Mark Newbold has taught almost 2,800 lessons on the book of Romans. Mike McDaniel's totals equal the following:

○ Justification (began 8/1/2010)	44
○ Sanctification	46
○ Orientation	122
○ Establishment (1 & 2)	68
○ Establishment (3)	34
○ Establishment (4)	22
○ Education	44 as of a few weeks ago

- According to SE, one's position in the heavenly places ("creature") is directly related to the amount of Sonship Education they matriculate through in this life. In short, if one only makes it through Level 2 Phase 1, their position or "vocation" in eternity will directly correspond to how far they made it through the "curriculum." Those who do not know about SE or fail to take it seriously are not qualified to labor with the father in "his business" and are therefore not given positions of governmental authority in the creature.
 - "And here is the kicker, the vocation you are being offered is only going to become a reality for you based upon your getting equipped for it while you are here on earth. I know that is a bit of a surprise for most saints. They think that when they get to heaven they are going to get "filled in" on whatever they missed down here. You won't. There is no training class or remedial course in heaven for those who did not have the time or interest to gain the necessary skills under the Father's specific tutelage while here on earth. And one more thing, if you think that working at jobs here on earth, or developing "leadership skills," or formal or OTJ training is going to equip you to function out in the heavenly places, then you are in for the shock of your life." (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation (5-6), page 5)

- Consequently, believers are taught to seek more of their Sonship Education so as to further their position in eternity than to actively look for the arrival of their blessed hope, i.e., the rapture.
 - "Let me give you an example. I used to wish the rapture would come soon. I prayed for the rapture to happen. I thought how great it would be to get out of this sin-cursed world and into heaven with Jesus and I just wished the rapture would take place. Besides, who

wouldn't rather go out in a transforming blaze of glory and immortal life instead of dying a physical death?

But now that I understand sonship and the things involved with it, I'm not in such a hurry anymore. In fact, I'd rather get more of my sonship education before I go. So my "attitude" has been adjusted about that issue. Now, I'm very content to keep going down here. Instead of just waiting to be taken out at the Rapture, I'm busy getting my sonship education.

If you had told me that there was something in the Bible that, if I knew it and understood it, I wouldn't be in such a hurry for the Blessed Hope to take place, I could not have imagined what that would be. I would have denied that anything would take away my desire for the Rapture; but I would have been wrong. It's funny how proper doctrine changes your perspective (attitude) about things.

Instead of getting up every day and hoping for the Rapture, I get up every day wanting to further my sonship education." (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment (01-20), pages, 18-19)

The Goal of the Curriculum

- David Winston Busch states numerous times in *More Than Conquerors* that the goal of the "curriculum" is that the Spirit might dwell in believers according to Romans 8:9.
 - "This hearkens back to what he said in Romans 8 concerning the Spirit of God "dwelling" in you. **He will begin to expand upon that issue as that is the ultimate goal and object.**" (Busch, 70)
 - "Right from the beginning you are oriented to a certain object and goal: **namely, that the ultimate desired end is that God, by His Spirit, and through a particular process desires to be "dwelling" in you.** As we'll see, that "dwelling" concept is going to be very closely linked to the issue of being 'filled'." (Busch, 94)
 - "You already know that from your sonship instruction. You know that in connection with this work going on in your inner man, your object and goal is to have that Spirit and **very life of Christ "dwelling" in you through that process of education and edification.**" (Busch, 102)
 - "(Commenting on Ephesians 3:17) **That's the object. That's the goal you were introduced to in Romans 8 dealing with your "heart" and "if so be that the Spirit of God DWELL in you" (Rom. 8:9). This is the capstone.**" (Busch, 119)
 - "With the end of Romans, the foundation has been laid. You are now prepared to build upon it. You are now prepared to go on in your education, crying Abba Father and early looking for the things that will be made known to you in connection with the revealing of

the “the mystery” (Romans 16:25). **The goal of your sonship is for the Spirit of God to “dwell” in you (Romans 8:9). Through your “transforming” edification curriculum (Romans 12:2) you will be “learning Christ” (Ephesians 4:20).** You have been designed to be “living epistles” (II Corinthians 3:2-3) and as you “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16) the glorious end in view is that “Christ be formed in you” (Galatians 4:19). May it be so. Amen.” (Busch, 186)

Problems with the Sonship Edification (SE) Curriculum Complex

- First, the word “curriculum” does not occur anywhere in the Bible. There is no verse in Paul’s epistles where Paul tells his readers that they should view his letters as a rigid higher order “curriculum.”
- Second, there is no verse in Paul’s epistles that would instruct one to go back to the book of Proverbs to find a “table of contents” for Paul’s epistles.
- Third, there is nothing in Proverbs 1 that establishes the various Phases and Levels of the “curriculum” articulated by SE for “Sonship Education” even in Israel’s program. This all stems from a fabricated/private definition of Biblical Adoption that is then read into and imposed upon all parts the Bible, not just Paul’s epistles.
- Fourth, SE maintains that I & II Thessalonians comprise the highest level (Level 3) in the “curriculum.” Saints who have attained unto Level 3 of the “curriculum” are ascribed the two highest “appellatives” from Proverbs 1: “wise man” and “man of understanding.”
 - “Following Colossians, we are presented with the Thessalonian epistles. By the time you reach this point in the curriculum, you’ve been instructed in all the major components of you education. . . The Thessalonians are called “ensample” saints. These are mature saints. These are saints that have gone through the curriculum and have been fully prepared having had Christ “fully preached” to them. But, in light of that, they still had a “need.” That need will be filled by the Thessalonian epistles. But again, when you get to this point the purpose is not for the introduction of new doctrine. . . So again, the introduction and presentation of doctrine has already been “fully” done by the time you get to Thessalonians. . . Returning to the Thessalonians, they are the “ensample” for all those that are “growing” in Christ and coming to that “knowledge” of Christ and “learning” Christ. So in light of all that, they already “know” the material and the only issue is now hearkening back to those “things” that they already know.” (Busch, *More Than Conquerors*, 153-155)
 - “When he speaks to the Thessalonian saints, he is able to say “knowing your election and calling.” This is because they are “ensample” saints and have gone through the educational curriculum of Romans and Ephesians.” (Busch, *The Fulness of Christ*, 43)

- Fifth, given the fact that I Thessalonians is arguably either the first or second book Paul wrote, there is zero Scriptural reason for thinking that it corresponds with Level 3 (the highest) of the Sonship Curriculum. Paul did not even have anything close to a complete revelation of the doctrine pertaining to the body of Christ when he wrote I & II Thessalonians.
 - I Corinthians 13:9, 13—in I Corinthians which was written after I Thessalonians Paul is still saying that he only knows in part, i.e., he is still receiving revelation pertaining the church the body of Christ.
 - II Corinthians 12:1—Paul says that he “will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.” The verb “will come” is in the future tense. In other words, Paul knew when he was penning II Corinthians that he did not yet have a complete knowledge of all that Christ wanted his body to know.
 - II Corinthians 12:7—in II Corinthians, which was written after I Corinthians which was written after I Thessalonians which supposedly contains higher order Level 3 doctrine according to SE, Paul says that he received a thorn in the flesh on account of the “abundance of revelations” he had been receiving.
- Consequently, it makes absolutely no sense to say that I & II Thessalonians contain the highest Level of the “curriculum” when these were historically some of the first books Paul wrote. SE has the saints in Thessalonica “knowing things” when the so-called “curriculum” was only beginning to be written. Functionally this approach has the Thessalonians knowing things before Paul does.
- Sixth, SE anticipates this objection by maintaining that the Acts period gifts program (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, prophecy, tongues, and knowledge) ministering in Thessalonica would have taught the Thessalonians the doctrines contained in the Romans through Colossians portion of the “curriculum” (the greater content of which had not yet even been revealed to Paul much less written), thereby allowing the Thessalonians to attain unto the highest “appellatives” of the “curriculum” of “wise man” and “man of understanding” before Romans through Colossians were even written.
 - “As an aside, when it comes to the layout of Paul’s epistles, there are a host of connected issues dealing with the “gifts” and specifically edification gifts as they relate to the communication of the word of truth and how it was being communicated at that time versus now. We now have “that which is perfect;” that more excellent way unto edification. We have the full curriculum sitting in a book they did not. Rather, they were living during the time it was in the process of being produced. That is why we start at Romans even though Romans was not the first epistle written. But they went through the same process, and that’s really something to think about when you consider what Paul did with the Thessalonians in a rather short period of time. Those are the advanced mature saints. They didn’t go through these same books as we do, but they went through the same process.” (Busch, *More Than Conquerors*, 38-39)

- “With the arrival of “the prisoner of Jesus Christ,” Paul’s special “provocation” ministry is over, as are the sign gifts that accompanied that ministry. . . God “gave,” past tense, these edification gifts. You already know from your previous “in part” education they would be “done away”. . . There is great wisdom in how the Spirit has laid this out. For while the gifts have ceased, the corollary edification work still follows that pattern. When we reach Ephesians, the “foundation gift” has been laid both historically and doctrinally (Romans 1:1; 16:25; Ephesians 2:20; 4:11). Yes, we have “all” the knowledge,” but not until we reach this point in Ephesians. As far as the curriculum goes, if you are with the Corinthians, then you still only know “in part.” The edifying “work” that was being accomplished by the gifts still needs to be done, but it will now be done through the “more excellent way.” The saints will now labor and be “perfected” in “all wisdom” (I Corinthians 2:6; Ephesians 4:12; Colossians 1:28) in connection with the all knowledge curriculum that has been given to them through the gifts.” (Busch, *The Fulness of Christ*, 36-39)
- For me, all this is completely untenable. In order, for one to give mental assent to these notions one would have to maintain that via the functioning of the gifts in Thessalonica that the Thessalonians came to know the truths found in Romans through Colossians before they had even been revealed to Apostle of the Gentiles himself; much less written down in Paul’s epistles. This is beyond our ability to comprehend and flies in the face of a plain, common sense reading of I Corinthians 13:9, 13; II Corinthians 12:1, 7. SE’s Curriculum Complex is simply out of step with the totality of the Pauline revelation and runs contrary to the historical realities of the Acts period chronology.

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Sunday, October 12, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 148](#)
[Sonship Edification: Biblical Adoption According to Sonship](#)

Adoption According to Sonship

- As we saw in Lesson 143, the concept of “sonship” comes out of an understanding of “adoption” (Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5). Adoption is the spiritual process whereby believers are adopted into the family of God and given a position of fully grown adult sons. As such, God deals with them as adults and not as children who are under the tutor and governor system of the law. Most Bible teachers within the Grace Movement would offer a definition of Biblical Adoption that is similar to the explanation presented by C.R. Stam in *Two Minutes With the Bible* (follow link to read Stam’s statement).
- Please recall the following “short” definition of Biblical Adoption that we cited from the notes of Mike McDaniel of Millennium Bible Institute:
 - “A father adopted his son for the purpose of installing and instilling his wisdom into his son so that the son would labor with his father in all his business.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation, Lesson 5, Page 5)
- It is important to note that Sonship Edification’s (SE) understanding of Biblical adoption exhibited by McDaniel is different from Stam’s understanding cited above. There is an additional issue here that is not present in Stam’s explanation of the adoption/sonship. In order to understand this difference we need to consider the various types of “sons” identified in Scripture, according to SE.
- Both Newbold and McDaniel identify five different ways that the word “son” is used in Scripture:
 - *Paternal/Genetic Son*—A Paternal/Genetic Son—Genesis 4:17 (1st use); II Samuel 19:4; Acts 16:1
 - *The second Member of the Godhead*—the Son of God; the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—Matthew 11:27; 16:16; Luke 19:10
 - *A Son in the Faith*—Timothy & Titus—I Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4
 - *A Regenerated Son*—John 1:11-13—“Because of this passage, most believers only think of themselves as God’s sons in the sense of, or in connection with, belonging to the FAMILY OF GOD. . . It is a passage that has the basic issue of REGENERATION in view! These people (the remnant of Israel) are in the family of God; they are CHILDREN of God through regeneration.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 1-2, Page 3)
 - *Adopted Sons of God*—Romans 8:14-15; Galatians 4:5—“It is necessary for you to realize that sonship is not merely the issue of being a member of the ‘family of God!’ Along

with that, you have got to appreciate that the Father has two ways of dealing with His heir: 1) as a child and 2) as a son—an adopted son! Not only is their inheritance different, but the Father is going to deal with those two “heirs” very differently.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 1-2, Page 4) (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), Pages 167-169)

- See Appendix A for extensive quotations from Newbold and McDaniel on the subject of “Biblical Adoption.”
- SE makes a distinction between “children of God” in Romans 8:16 and “sons of God” in Romans 8:14. Practically, this means that all believers are CHIDLREN OF GOD but that not all believers are SONS OF GOD or at least that is the implication.
 - See Appendix B for extensive quotations from Newbold and McDaniel on the Difference Between “Children of God” and “Sons of God.”
- Whether wittingly or unwittingly Newbold and McDaniel have enunciated a position that maintains or at least implies that NOT ALL regenerated children of God are adopted sons of God. Following this confused logic would lead one to believe that some regenerated sons are still children in the sense that they ARE UNDER tutors and governors; meanwhile other regenerated sons are “adopted” and dealt with as adults and are therefore NOT UNDER tutors and governors. Consider the following quotations from McDaniel on the difference between “sons” in Romans 8:14 and “children” in Romans 8:16:

Quote 1	Quote 2
<p>“There are two items that tip you off that the use of the word “son” in verse 14 is different from what you saw in John 1:12. The first thing that indicates a different use of “son” is the phrase “as many as are led by the Spirit of God.” Notice, it does not say, “as many as have the Spirit of God.” If it had said that, then we would be talking about being regenerated and if that were the case, you could understand this use of the word “son” the same way that we saw it in John 1:12. But not every “child of God” is being “led by the Spirit of God.” And when you read that phrase, there is a natural thinking that comes into your mind that interprets that as some kind of “inner prompting” or “intuition” or some similar kind of “leading” aspect that the Spirit is doing in order to somehow direct us or steer us in the way or activity He wants us to go – and that is not at all what being “led by the Spirit” means. Now, we will get to that in due time, but I want to return to the point that got us off on that; there are some things that tip you off that this use of the word “son” is different from any other</p>	<p>“Now let’s make sure we are on track mentally. All of these things have to do with the use of the word “sons” in Romans 8:14 referring to an adopted son. We also see the use of “son” as it refers to an adopted son in Galatians 4. This is one of those places where Paul does explain some things pertaining to the issue of adoption as it applies to us in this dispensation of grace. To see this, let’s begin back in Galatians 3 where he begins his explanation by saying that “ye are all children of God.” . . . (Quotes Galatians 3:26)</p> <p>How is it that we are “children of God?” We are children of God by faith in Christ. That is regeneration. So it is true that when we trusted Christ, we became “children of God” and, as such, we are “in God’s family.” But now Paul is going to explain something about no longer being just children, but receiving the adoption of sons; he is going to take the issue further. . . (Quotes Galatians 4:1-7)</p>

way we have seen the word used. When you properly understand what being “led by the Spirit” means, then you know that this use of the word “son” does not just refer to being a regenerated son.

There is a second thing that connects to the issue of being the kind of “son” that Romans 8:14 refers to that differentiates this kind of son to be the product, not of regeneration, but of a specialized process. In other words, the “son” of Romans 8 is being referred to in a highly specialized way; a way that entails more than just being regenerated. So, if my understanding of this is correct (and I do not say it that way because I have any doubts about it) but if I am correct, then the kind of son being referred to in Romans 8 is a further or additional issue to that of being a regenerated son. . . (Quotes Romans 8:14-15)

The phrase that lets us know that the “sons” in these verses are more than just regenerated children of God is “ye have received the Spirit of adoption.” Adoption is the specialized process; a process that God had not ever done before, which makes us more than just members of the family of God. Unfortunately, if all you think about when you read in Romans 8 is that you are a part of the family of God, then this is not going to have the impact on you it is supposed to have and you are not going to “cry Abba Father.” In fact, you won’t even understand what that cry of “Abba, Father” is all about.

When I say that adoption is a specialized process that makes the “sons” of Romans 8:15 something different than just being “in the family of God” or being “children of God,” what I am emphasizing is that the adoption of sons is a dispensational matter.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 5-6, Pages 1-2)

As we covered last time, when you were a child, your Father treated you very differently than He does as a son. Those tutors and governors could only teach a child about the child’s father, but how much better it would be to be taken by the Father and have him instruct the son personally.

Let’s put this together and see what we have. When you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you became a “child of God.” And in that sense, you are called a son. That kind of son is JUEL. That is exactly what the little flock was being described as in John 1:12. They are saved, justified sons in the sense that they have been made part of the family of God. But in sanctification, there is a further issue of that being revealed to you.

So let me ask you, “You and me, in this dispensation of grace, are we also “sons” in the sense that we are part of God’s family?” Of course we are. We have been JUEL, we have been regenerated and we were made “sons” in the sense of being made part of God’s family when we trusted Christ as our all-sufficient Savior.

But now, in Romans 8, we are presented with something more than just being sons in the sense of being “children of God.” Now we are told that we are “sons” in the sense of being “adopted.” And if you know what biblical adoption is, then you realize that you are no longer being referred to as a child, but now you are being referred to as an adult, for a “son” can be a child or an adult. Now that is only one aspect of being an adopted son. It not only implies adulthood and the liberty that comes along with being an adult, the change in the relationship that comes from being an adult, but it also points to the fact that you are going to be extended the highest, most prestigious honor that could be offered to you; you are going to be identified with your heavenly Father in the most intimate way. He is going to take His adopted son under His wing and begin to teach him everything about His business including the business secrets that no other son will know. He is going to teach him how to think like Him, how to live like Him and how to labor like Him. He is going to do this through an organized, planned curriculum that will result in the Father putting His character into His son.

Biblical Adoption: A father adopted his son for the

	purpose of installing and instilling his wisdom into his son so that the son would labor with his father in all his business.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 5-6, Pages 4-6)
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- At best, this explanation is confused on account of the fact that in other places McDaniel implies that ALL believers are adopted sons but that not all believers respond to this knowledge appropriately by crying “Abba Father.” That others were confused by these statements is evident judging by the comments McDaniel made in Sonship Orientation Lesson 25 in which he stated:
 - “So the answer to the question as to how we are to get that godly edification is answered in God’s own curriculum. Sonship education is the process for godly edification. Sonship education is the means by which God no longer deals with you as child, but He now begins to deal with you as an adult son by that specialized process called “adoption.”

Today, in the dispensation of grace, every believer is automatically adopted by the Father, the very moment that person is saved or justified unto eternal life. It becomes then, a question of how you, as a believer in Christ, are going to respond to your adoption as a son of your heavenly Father.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation Lessons 25-26, Page 2)

- In other words, by a saint failing to be “suitably impressed” with what is being offered to him via their adoption some believers will not chose to cry “Abba Father”. Are those who fail to cry “Abba Father” not adopted or are they simply failing to respond to their adoption properly? At best SE is inconsistent on this point depending upon which lesson(s) one watches, or which set of notes one reads. At worst SE teachers are saying that not all “REGENERATED SONS” are “adopted” and therefore some are still CHILDREN and consequently under tutors and governors.
- What is clear is that one must respond properly to their Sonship Orientation, i.e., knowledge of having been adopted in Romans 8:14-15 by crying Abba Father in order to get their Sonship education properly underway. Crying Abba Father signifies to our heavenly Father that one is ready to be personally educated by God himself in his business, according to SE.
 - “It would be good for us to remind ourselves what we are doing and where this process is headed. Several sessions back we came to Romans 8:14-15:
 - Romans 8:14 – For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 – For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

In that verse we have only briefly mentioned that to be “led by the Spirit of God” refers to the Spirit leading you through the curriculum, as the adopted son that you are. The only other thing we have noted in these verses is the cry of “Abba, Father”. “Abba, Father” is the cry of a son who, realizing what is being offered to him and what is expected of him as an adopted son, wants to be taken and educated by his Father for the purpose of one day laboring with His Father in His business.

Abba, Father is saying “yes” to your Father’s invitation to be involved in everything that pertains to the adoption of sons. It is the official statement, so to speak, of the son who desires to enter into this intimate Father/son relationship that will groom the son for

participation in the Father's business. Just as in a (traditional) wedding ceremony, where both the husband and the wife are asked if they promise to fulfill certain responsibilities to each other for the rest of their lives, if they agree to make that commitment to each other, they say "I do." Well, Abba, Father is your "I do" to your heavenly Father.

Next, you should notice that Abba, Father is the cry of a son. The verse does not say "...whereby we say, Abba, Father." Neither does it say "...whereby we think, Abba, Father." It is a cry that comes out of your heart and your mind. When I say that cry comes out of more than just your heart, by that I mean that it is more than just a cry of excitement that you have been adopted. It is also more than just a cry of relief that your relationship with God is not one motivated by fear. I'm not saying that there won't be excitement or relief, but I am saying that the cry of Abba, Father has to be more than that.

Abba, Father is a cry that has knowledge to it. In fact, without that knowledge, that cry of Abba, Father cannot be fully made. It would be like saying "yes" to someone before you knew what they would ask of you. Therefore, the cry of Abba, Father has an intelligent commitment in view. There are things you have to know, things you have to understand, before you can really and truly make the kind of cry to your Father that He is looking for.

That is the reason we have taken the time to go back and look at all the things we have looked at, so that when we get back to Romans 8:14-15 you really can make that cry of Abba, Father in the fullness that your Father is looking for. Just to underscore the importance of this, the way I understand this works is like this: until you have all the components in place, you can mouth the words Abba, Father all you want, but it will not be what your heavenly Father is looking for in order to begin your sonship education and edification.

Think of it like this: you cannot just have someone mouth the words of a prayer to receive Christ as Savior and then think that they are saved just because they said the words. They have to understand what they are doing. There has to be some knowledge about what is being offered to them and what is expected (and not expected!) from them. It is only when a person understands the gospel of grace in its true form that they can "believe" in a way that is acceptable to God. For example, if they do not fully understand the gospel of grace, they might think that they must call on Jesus (to be saved) AND then they must live a good life (to stay saved). That is not true salvation and God does not acknowledge it as such.

In the same way, we are to cry Abba, Father in the way that is acceptable to our heavenly Father. That way, when you get back over to Romans 8:14-15, the cry that comes from you will be, in every way, what your Father was looking for in order to begin your education as a son.

Not to belabor the point, but to make sure that you have the proper knowledge operating in you to make that cry of Abba, Father, here is a short list of the necessary things you should already understand:

- You are under grace (no longer under tutors and governors)
- You are given great liberties as a son (i.e. – decision-making)
- Your relationship with God is love motivated (not fear)

- You are treated as an adult (not as a child)
- Your adoption is the offer of your Father to:
 - Educate you in godliness
 - God's wisdom vs. competing wisdoms
 - Only God's wisdom can properly educate you
 - Personally take over your education
 - Write the things in His heart on your heart
 - A man after God's own heart (first requirement)
 - Edify you to labor in His business in the heavenly places
- Adoption is the purpose behind your redemption (Galatians 4:5)
- Your adoption is THE big issue with God (not just a big issue)
 - Adoption is not confined to the dispensation of grace
 - God dealt with Adam as an adopted son
 - Everything God will do with Israel will be through adoption
 - Everything God will do with us will be through adoption
- You must desire to be educated
- God has given you a curriculum in His word
- His Spirit will lead you through the curriculum
- Your sonship will be opposed
 - By the evil man – the wisdom and evil of this world
 - By the strange woman – the policy of evil
- Abba, Father is the cry of a son (or daughter) who understands that God their heavenly Father is freely offering, by adoption, the opportunity to be personally educated by Him in godliness (think, live and labor like their Father) through an intimate, two-way Father/son relationship, for the purpose of (among other things) equipping them to labor with Him in His business out in the heavenly places for all eternity, and that the son not only desires his adoption, but he also understands what is being offered to him, he sees that adoption education for what it is, he thinks about it what his Father thinks about it, he values it as His heavenly Father values it (above all else) and he is willing to commit himself, his time and his effort to this education, this edification and this relationship.”
(McDaniel, Sonship Orientation Lessons 21-22, 1-2)

- See Appendix C for additional extensive quotations from Newbold and McDaniel on “Crying Abba Father”
- SE’s notion of “Biblical Adoption” appeals heavily to a cultural understanding of first century Greco-Roman adoption to sustain its definition. Appeals are made to extra biblical sources such as “ancient Syrian-Roman” law books to make this point yet no source citations are made substantiating these claims. I have spent hours reading extra biblical sources both primary and secondary on first century adoption and cannot locate even one source that would corroborate the claims of SE regarding “Biblical Adoption.”
 - See Appendix D for extensive quotations from Newbold and McDaniel on “1st Century Greco-Romans Adoption.”
- On the basis of Romans 9:4, SE views Israel’s adoption as setting a pattern for our own as members of the body of Christ living in the dispensation of grace. Both Newbold and McDaniel fill pages upon pages of notes discussing how the structure of adoption is the same for Israel and the body of Christ but that the specific doctrine is different. They apply their definition of Biblical Adoption to God and Adam, Jesse and David, and David and Solomon. Despite the fact that there is no clear verse of Scripture, both Newbold and McDaniel boldly proclaim that Jesse adopted David.
 - “So David is that “*man after mine own heart*” - **and Jesse adopted David** and taught David about God’s Jehovahness and grace.” (Newbold, Romans 8 (201-300), 228)

“(28:30) He not only begins to educate him as an adopted son, and we saw that thing in Proverbs 3, remember where David said “I was my father’s son and the only beloved of my mother”, remember? He was the only son that they adopted. Why? He’s the only one that had the heart for it. He’s the only one that had the right attitude about it, and what Jesse saw in him made him special and different from the other boys.

(29:00) Okay, so he’s adopted by Jesse; I believe that, where’s the verse that says Jesse adopted David? If you really understood biblical adoption, you know what you would know. Every father was looking for a son to adopt. It wasn’t the anomaly; it was the rule of the day.

If a father had a business, how was he going to carry on that business after him? By adopting a son or daughter and training them in the business. That’s how the business and the family name survived. You would be hard pressed to find anybody in the Bible that didn’t adopt somebody. So for me, I’m not going out on a limb when I say Jesse adopted David just ‘cause there’s not a verse that says that.

(29:48) You’d be going out on a limb to say that Jesse didn’t adopt any of his boys, and if you’re gonna choose one of his boys, well just look at ‘em. Which one do you think he chose? Who do you want to hand your business over to? Eliab, who’s standing up there and listening to a Philistine blaspheme him and his God and his nation and his uncle and everybody else, and he goes, “Well I just don’t really like that”? Or you gonna adopt David that says, “Give me five rocks, I’ll take care of him and his four brothers.” Who do you want in charge of the business?

(30:24) It’s not rocket science. So when I go, “I think Jesse adopted David”, I can almost guarantee ya he adopted somebody; and out of all of his boys, unless Jesse was just a

brain-dead, moron wrapped in an idiot, he adopted David. Excuse me, but I mean, I really think Jesse did better than that. I'm just trying to make a point.

(30:49) Now, David knows what time it is. What is that time? Right here *{interlude of mercy between Israel's first and second cycles of judgment}*. He knows the judgments have been rolled back. I'm not sure, now I didn't channel David so I don't really know for sure if he understood exactly why God was doing it when it got done, but he did understand, and we saw this last week, that's why we're not gonna go back through it; I'm just reminding you of it so we can take it up.

He understood some things about, what, about God had rolled those judgments back. He understood at least five of the compound Jehovah names because those things are already there and you can see them.

(31:36) Remember we talked about the Jehovah-Nissi, God our Conquering Hero? What does he say to Goliath? "God is going to deliver you into our hands." He understands that concept. He understands, he shows he understands at least five of the seven Jehovah compound names.

And so because he understands those and he has a heart, he's a man after God's own heart, he has that attitude in him; he has a desire for the things that are in his father's heart to be written on his heart (talking about Jesse), and he has a desire for the things his heavenly Father has in his heart to be written on his heart, and God looks at him and says, "That's the guy I want."

(32:10) And he's not just choosing him as King but he's saying, "Because that's King, that's how he's gonna labor with me in my business in eternity on this earth, so that's the guy I want." And even though David sinned, even though David had some failures in his life, listen carefully, that heart was always there. That's what God was looking for. (32:33) (McDaniel, [Sonship Orientation Lesson 17](#) YouTube Video 28:30 min through 32:33 min)

"David had been adopted and educated by Jesse." (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 17-18, Page 2)

- See Appendix E for extensive quotations from Newbold and McDaniel on Jesse's Adoption of David.
- Sonship Orientation spends weeks studying Israel's covenants, epically the New Covenant, in an attempt to explain how Biblical Adoption works and properly orients believers to their sonship status so that they can intelligently cry "Abba Father." An understanding of Israel's covenants is viewed as necessary to this process.
 - See Appendix F for extensive quotations on the example of David and Solomon in setting forth Israel's Sonship Curriculum.
- Given the fact that we have already taken up nine pages of notes on this subject matter and we have only scratched the surface of what SE has to say about the matter, we commend to you the following subjects, notes, and videos for your own consideration.

- Newbold—Israel’s adoption as a pattern for our own as well as his comments on the covenants and how they impact sonship—see Romans (101-200), Romans (201-300), and Romans (301-400).
- McDaniel—Israel’s adoption as a pattern for our own as well as his comments on the covenants and how they impact sonship—see the notes for Sonship Orientation Lessons 7-25 or view the lessons on YouTube.

Appendix A

Newbold and McDaniel on Biblical Adoption

Newbold	McDaniel
<p>“And perhaps the most astounding or shocking aspect of ancient adoption is the fact that adoption didn’t just pertain to sons that were outside the family and brought in from some other family—no—ancient adoption included the family’s own genetic sons by blood!</p> <p>. . . The father would want a very strong son—and most of all, he would want a son that would possess the wisdom and the thinking of his father.</p> <p>And the father would also want a son who would be able to take his business and carry on that business, not just any old way—but to carry it on exactly as the father, himself would!</p> <p>And so the father would look over his sons, and if he found one that was willing and able to be educated as his son, in his father’s business—then the father would adopt that son and begin personally teaching all about his business, along with the way he (the father) thought, and pass on all his wisdom and experience to his son—so that his son would take on his father’s thinking, and living, and then as he labored in his father’s business, all of his dealings were as if it were the father, himself who was engaged in the business.</p> <p>It would really be, “Like father, like son!”</p> <p>But sometimes the father would look over his own, natural born sons, and still not be able to find one with the will, the drive, and the ability to be educated properly as his son—and in that case the father could look outside the family and find a child that would fit the bill (so to speak), and he would then adopt that unnatural born son as his adopted son, and then educate him to enter into laboring with the father in all the father’s business.</p> <p>And this was done so that the integrity and the success and the character of the father and the father’s business could be successfully passed on from generation to generation—and it was a way to not only keep the integrity of the father’s name and</p>	<p>“Biblically, adoption was for the natural-born children of a family. That is, a Father would adopt His natural son or daughter. And this was not unusual, but rather, it was the rule. The primary motivation for adoption was not pit or some strong emotion of rescue, but it had in mind the welfare of the family’s name and the family’s business. It is true that on occasion, a man might adopt a son or daughter outside of his own natural children. It may be that he had no children of his own. There is another circumstance that may arise that would have a man adopting someone other than his natural children, but we will discuss that a little later. . .</p> <p>In adoption, the father would be looking for some specific traits in the son or daughter he would adopt. The father did not just want a son that would be able to carry on the family business, but one that would carry on that business with the same commitment and dedication that he had. The father would want a son that possessed his wisdom and way of thinking. In other words, the father wanted a son who would carry on the business exactly as the father himself would. To accomplish this adoption, the father would look over his sons, and if he found one that was willing and able to be educated in his father’s business, then the father would adopt that son and begin personally teaching all about his business. He would teach the son the way he (the father) thought, and pass on all his wisdom and experience to his son. This was so that his son would take on his father’s thinking, and living, and then as he labored in his father’s business, all of his dealings were as if it were the father, himself who was engaged in the business. It would really be, “Like father, like son!”</p> <p>But sometimes the father would look over his own, natural born sons, and still not be able to find one with the desire, the drive, and the ability to be educated properly as his son. In that case, the father could look outside the family and find a child that would fit the bill (so to speak), and he would then adopt a child that was not natural born. The father</p>

<p>the father's business strong, but to insure that it would continue getting even stronger and more powerful as time went on—in other words it was a way to insure the father's business against corruption and weakness and attack and ultimately, failure!" (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), Pages 171-173)</p>	<p>would take that son (or daughter) and begin to educate them so they could enter into laboring with father in all his business.</p> <p>This was done so that the integrity and the success and the character of the father and the father's business could be successfully passed on from generation to generation. It was a way to not only keep the integrity of the father's name and the father's business strong, but to insure that it would continue getting even stronger and more powerful as time went on. In other words, it is was a way to ensure the father's business against corruption, weakness, attack and ultimately, failure!" (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 1-2, 5-6)</p>
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Appendix B

Newbold and McDaniel on the Difference Between “Children of God” and “Sons of God”

Newbold	McDaniel
<p>“But it’s clear that Paul is NOT using <i>son</i> that way in Romans 8!</p> <p>Romans 8:14-17 (:16) - (:14) “<i>sons</i>” (ui`o,j—often times used to refer to an adult son) - (:16) “<i>children</i>” (te,knon)</p> <p>Paul is making a definite distinction between being a <i>child</i> of God and being a <i>son</i> of God—because as far as Paul is concerned, being a <i>child</i> and being a <i>son</i> AREN’T the same thing!</p> <p>In other words, we, in this dispensation of grace, we’re not only <i>children of God</i> (by being regenerated and members of the family of God) - but we’re something more than that: we’re <i>sons of God by means of a specialized process!</i></p> <p>The way the apostle Paul uses the word <i>son</i> here in Romans 8:14 is different than the way you find it in most other places in the Bible.</p> <p>And unfortunately when most people read what Paul says about us being <i>sons of God</i>—either in Romans 8 or over in Galatians 4—what most often comes to their minds is that passage in John 1:12</p> <p><i>12 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:</i></p> <p>But you DO need to recognize that God does, indeed, refer to you as a “son” in the Bible—but there is a very special issue in connection with it that sets it apart from anything else, and every other category of <i>son</i> that exists in the Bible!</p> <p>Here in Romans 8:14, Paul now brings up the issue of us being “<i>the sons of God</i>” - but as he does it, he makes it clear that it is a very special category of <i>sons</i>—not only because he distinguishes it from being a <i>child</i> of regeneration—but also because he attaches one very specialized issue on it that sets it</p>	<p>“But that is not the way Paul is using “sons” in Romans 8. Because of the change in terminology, we are made to understand that Paul is making a distinction between “sons” and “children.” Take a look at these verses.</p> <p>Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.</p> <p>Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:</p> <p>So let’s be clear about this; the apostle Paul does not consider “sons” and “children” as being the same thing. This distinction shows up in that we, in this dispensation of grace, are not only children of God (by being regenerated and members of the family of God,) but we’re something more than that: we’re sons of God by means of a specialized process.</p> <p>The way the apostle Paul uses the word <i>son</i> here in Romans 8:14 is different than the way you find it in most other places in the Bible. Unfortunately, when most people read what Paul says about us being sons of God, (either in Romans 8 or in Galatians 4) what most often comes to their minds is that passage in John 1:12. What you need to recognize is that God does indeed refer to you as a “son” in the Bible, but there is a very special issue in connection with it that sets it apart from anything else, and every other category of son that exists in the Bible.</p> <p>Here in Romans 8:14, Paul brings up the issue of us being “the sons of God,” but as he does it, he makes it clear that it is a very special category of sons, not only because he distinguishes it from being a child of regeneration, but also because he attaches one very specialized issue on it that sets it apart from all other aspects of being sons in God’s word. And it is a dispensational issue!” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 1-2, Pages 3-4)</p>

apart from all other aspects of being <i>sons</i> in God's word." (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), Pages 168-169)	
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Appendix C

Newbold and McDaniel on Crying Abba Father

Newbold	McDaniel
<p>“There is one other issue that I want to look at—another issue that will give you an appreciation for being treated as a son—for crying, “Abba Father!” when you have some appreciation for what it’s like to be treated as a child and the anticipation you should have for being treated as a son—and to have some measure (minimal though it may be) for the sonship concept as it has been made known throughout God’s program with Israel—is the issue of something God did for Israel and in Israel’s program that put on display His J-ness and grace to do for them what they couldn’t do for themselves.</p> <p>And these are just a couple of minimal requirements (so to speak); because YOU really need to go and study these things out on your own and pick up an understanding/appreciation for them yourself!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), Pages 190)</p> <p>“And to do that, I believe that it would be a big help to us to just get a gist appreciation of that Palestinian Covenant so that you see some of the details that God expected a properly educated Israelite (and a properly educated Christian today) to have so that it all the more enhances his understanding of being that adopted son and receiving <i>the adoption of sons</i> and being now treated as sons so that the crying of “Abba Father” has some real punch and some real zeal and some real enthusiasm that is based upon much more than the pastor trying to rev you up—but is based upon a realization that you, yourself have of the greatness of being treated as sons—that it really is GREAT to you!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), Page 192)</p> <p>“So much so, that by the time you get to Rom. 8:14 & 15, and you are told that the capstone of your godly sanctification in this dispensation of grace is that you “have received the Spirit of adoption” - that alone should be enough for your to cry, “Abba, Father!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (201-300), Page 201)</p> <p>“And this is important to us. Because one of the issues in crying, <i>Abba, Father</i>, (and one of the</p>	<p>“In Romans 8:14 we are told that we are “sons of God” and the fact that we have received that “Spirit of adoption” should result in our crying “Abba, Father.” And that cry is not some emotional outburst that comes from some experience, but it is the intelligent cry of a son or daughter who, upon understanding that they have been adopted as sons, cries out for the heavenly Father to teach them; to educate them.</p> <p>While a person may certainly feel emotion upon hearing of their adoption, since it is the most thrilling news that a person could hear, that cry is not out of gratitude, emotion, exuberance or any such thing. It is out of the heart’s desire of a son to now be educated by his heavenly Father in all that it means to be a “son of God.” That cry of “Abba, Father” is saying “yes” to your Father’s offer to educate you in His business. Actually, there are 3 components that you are going to learn about that cry of Abba Father, but for now all you should understand is that that cry indicates the desire of a son to be educated by his Father in all his business.</p> <p>But there is something more that your Father wants to do with you than just educate you in His business. He wants to install His very own godly character in you. Do you know why He wants to do that? He wants to do that because we represent Him and He wants it to be of such a nature that when we conduct business (here and now or in eternity) we do so with His integrity, making the same decisions that He would have made. That is having His godly character installed into us. The result of which is that we learn to think, live and labor with Him. And more than that, there are some by-products of being educated as a son of your heavenly Father such as having the ability to give wise counsel. Another by-product is wise decision-making skills. . . And just so you know, the installment of godly character is what every earthly Father should be working to put into their earthly sons and daughters. So, it makes perfect sense for your heavenly Father to install His character in us. And our cry of Abba, Father is the cry to say to Him that we want that, we desire for Him to do that with us.” (McDaniel, Sonship</p>

components that produces that cry in us), is to understand and appreciate just how BIG of an issue this sonship education and edification is to God—to the Father, Himself!!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (201-300), Page 238)

“And if all that is ‘ringing true’ and coming across ‘loud and clear’ - then in view of all that, I want to now look at one more issue that will start tying all these things together—that will (or it should) increase your joy and zeal and enthusiasm to a proper degree for you to be crying, “Abba, Father” — I want to look one more time at the ‘Perfect Son’ - the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and recognize that in His earthly humanity He was adopted as a Son, He was educated & edified as a Son, and He operated as a Son of His Father!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (201-300), Page 252)

“Now for the ‘kicker’ - If seeing the issue of God’s purpose and desire in creating man all along as being a Father to him, and him being His son—and creating man without being ‘*full of wisdom*’, but having to have wisdom from God’s heart imparted to his heart—to be educated by his Father—and if the issue of seeing that the Lord Jesus Himself was educated as a Son by His Father so that even in the final, grueling throws of His life, the sonship education and what it sought to achieve was the ultimate priority of **His** life— if that doesn’t just thrill you to know that you have the opportunity to be (as an adopted adult son yourself) to be put into that exact same curriculum of sonship education—to have the exact same **Instructor** that Christ Himself had—to have the exact same *Spirit of God* or *Spirit of adoption* to see to it that the information gets written on the right table of your heart at the right place and at the right time—and if you are not just exuberant and full of zeal & enthusiasm to get that education so that you, too, can enter into your Father’s business — if all that hasn’t produced the willingness to cry, “*Abba, Father*” yourself—then try this on for size . . . (speaks about the BOC educating angles in Eph. 3:1-10) You should now have at least a ‘minimal requirement’ (so to speak) type understanding and appreciation for a number of things about being adopted and educated by your Heavenly Father as His son that should now be generating in your inner man the proper zeal and exuberance and joy and enthusiasm to cry “*Abba, Father*” in response to you being told in Romans

Orientation: Lessons 3-4, Page 1-2)

“In that verse we have only briefly mentioned that to be “led by the Spirit of God” refers to the Spirit, leading you through the curriculum, as the adopted son that you are. The only other thing we have noted in these verses is the cry of “Abba, Father”. “Abba, Father” is the cry of a son who, realizing what is being offered to him and what is expected of him as an adopted son, wants to be taken and educated by his Father for the purpose of one day laboring with His Father in His business.

Abba, Father is saying “yes” to your Father’s invitation to be involved in everything that pertains to the adoption of sons. It is the official statement, so to speak, of the son who desires to enter into this intimate Father/son relationship that will groom the son for participation in the Father’s business. Just as in a (traditional) wedding ceremony, where both the husband and the wife are asked if they promise to fulfill certain responsibilities to each other for the rest of their lives, if they agree to make that commitment to each other, they say “I do.” Well, Abba, Father is your “I do” to your heavenly Father.

Next, you should notice that Abba, Father is the cry of a son. The verse does not say “...whereby we say, Abba, Father.” Neither does it say “...whereby we think, Abba, Father.” It is a cry that comes out of your heart and our mind. When I say that cry comes out of more than just your heart, by that I mean that it is more than just a cry of excitement that you have been adopted. It is also more than just a cry of relief that your relationship with God is not one motivated by fear. I’m not saying that there won’t be excitement or relief, but I am saying that the cry of Abba, Father has to be more than that.

Abba, Father is a cry that has knowledge to it. In fact, without that knowledge, that cry of Abba, Father cannot be fully made. It would be like saying “yes” to someone before you knew what they would ask of you. Therefore, the cry of Abba, Father has an intelligent commitment in view. There are things you have to know, things you have to understand, before you can really and truly make the kind of cry to your Father that He is looking for.

8:14-15.” (Newbold, Romans 8 (201-300), Pages 258-259)

That is the reason we have taken the time to go back and look at all the things we have looked at, so that when we get back to Romans 8:14-15 you really can make that cry of Abba, Father in the fullness that your Father is looking for. Just to underscore the importance of this, the way I understand this works is like this: until you have all the components in place, you can mouth the words Abba, Father all you want, but it will not be what your heavenly Father is looking for in order to begin your sonship education and edification.

Think of it like this: you cannot just have someone mouth the words of a prayer to receive Christ as Savior and then think that they are saved just because they said the words. They have to understand what they are doing. There has to be some knowledge about what is being offered to them and what is expected (and not expected!) from them. It is only when a person understands the gospel of grace in its true form that they can “believe” in a way that is acceptable to God.

For example, if they do not fully understand the gospel of grace, they might think that they must call on Jesus (to be saved) AND then they must live a good life (to stay saved). That is not true salvation and God does not acknowledge it as such.

In the same way, we are to cry Abba, Father in the way that is acceptable to our heavenly Father. That way, when you get back over to Romans 8:14-15, the cry that comes from you will be, in every way, what your Father was looking for in order to begin your education as a son. . .

Abba, Father is the cry of a son (or daughter) who understands that God their heavenly Father is freely offering, by adoption, the opportunity to be personally educated by Him in godliness (think, live and labor like their Father) through an intimate, 2-way Father/son relationship, for the purpose of (among other things) equipping them to labor with Him in His business out in the heavenly places for all eternity, and that the son not only desires his adoption, but he also understands what is being offered to him, he sees that adoption education for what it is, he thinks about it what his Father thinks about it, he values it as His heavenly Father values it (above all else) and he is willing to

	commit himself, his time and his effort to this education, this edification and this relationship.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 21-22, Page 1-2)
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Appendix D

Newbold and McDaniel on 1st Century Greco-Romans Adoption

Newbold	McDaniel
<p>“In the Greco-Roman world an unadopted child differed very little, oftentimes, from a slave.</p> <p>But when <i>adoption</i> took place, the change was dramatic!</p> <p>The adoption procedure was usually a pretty formal affair with a lot of symbolic tradition contained in it.</p> <p>It usually involved the child exchanging his clothing—the toga of his youth was taken off and he had put on him the toga virilis—the toga of his adulthood.</p> <p>The adopted son would receive his father’s ring—which gave him the same authority over his father’s business and holdings and money—and it gave him the same powerful stature as his father in the eyes of his country. (remember this had to be done, even with a natural born son!)</p> <p>And the result of all this ceremony of <i>adoption</i> was that the son would now enjoy all the rights and honor and privileges and liberty as that of the father.</p> <p>But perhaps one of the most striking aspect of being an adopted son in the ancient world had to do with the position that the son had only through being adopted—that is, (and this is critical), an adopted son had a far stronger position than a natural-born child—he had a permanently fixed, powerfully strong legal standing that was greater than any naturally-born son or heir that hadn’t been adopted!</p> <p>And that was a huge deal in connection with estates and wills and contracts and all the legal issues surrounding the father’s holdings and the father’s estate!</p> <p>In fact, an ancient Roman-Syrian lawbook lays down the principle that a father can never put away an adopted son, and he cannot put away a real (natural-born) son without good legal grounds.</p>	<p>“When I talk about “Bible-style” adoption, I am referring to adoption as it was understood and practiced by the Greeks and the Hebrew people. Adoption itself was different, the basis behind adoption was different and the “who” involved in adoption could be very different. . . The Adoption that Paul refers to is different. It usually does not involve a child from another family and it is not because a child has lost his parents and although there may be some “emotions” involved, that is far from the primary thought and feeling involved in the process.</p> <p>Biblically, adoption was for the natural-born children of a family. That is, a Father would adopt His natural son or daughter. And this was not unusual, but rather, it was the rule. . . In the Greco-Roman world, an unadopted child differed very little, oftentimes, from a slave. But when adoption took place, the change was dramatic! The adoption procedure was usually a pretty formal affair with a lot of symbolic tradition contained in it. It usually involved the child exchanging his clothing; the toga of his youth was taken off and he had put on him the toga virilis (the toga of his adulthood.)</p> <p>The adopted son would receive his father’s ring, which gave him the same authority over his father’s business, holdings and money and it gave him the same powerful stature as his father in the eyes of his country. (Remember this had to be done, even with a natural-born son!)</p> <p>The result of all this ceremony of adoption was that the son would now enjoy all the rights, the honor, the privileges and liberty as the father. But perhaps one of the most striking aspect of being an adopted son in the ancient world had to do with the position that the son had only through being adopted; that is, (and this is critical), an adopted son had a far stronger position than a natural-born child</p> <p>He had a permanently fixed, powerfully strong legal standing that was greater than any naturally born son or heir that hadn’t been adopted! That was very important when it came to dealing with</p>

And the remarkable fact is that the adopted son held a stronger position than the son by birth!

In fact, this Roman-Syrian lawbook actually gives an account of a natural-born son who had been put away by his father, and then restored to favor with his father—but then he did something to get himself put away a second time!

And in this account the natural-born son complains that this second rejection by his father is illegal—inasmuch as his restoration to favor put him on a level with an **adopted son** who cannot be turned away in that fashion!

And these are just some of the issues concerning the particular frame of mind behind the concept of *adoption* as it was used in the ancient world—and as it is being used by Paul in Romans 8.

But perhaps the most critical thing of all to keep in mind in dealing with being an adopted son of your Heavenly Father is that when a child gets adopted as a son—he's considered by the Father to be an **ADULT SON!** And therefore he now has greater privilege and greater advantages, and most of all he now has the **freedom** and **liberty** that goes along with being an adult son!

And that means that the Father is going to treat his adopted son **DIFFERENT** than He would treat his unadopted child!

And when we're talking about this Biblically, that difference has to do with how the child (during childhood) was being raised—and that was under the system of tutors and governors—and all that was how a child was raised under the law!" (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), Pages 173-174)

estates, wills, contracts and all the legal issues surrounding the father's holdings and the father's estate.

In fact, an ancient Roman-Syrian law book lays down the principle that a father can never put away an adopted son and he cannot put away a real (natural-born) son without good legal grounds. But the remarkable fact is that the adopted son held a stronger position by his adoption than a natural son had by birth. In fact, this Roman-Syrian law book actually gives an account of a natural-born son who had been put away by his father, and then restored to favor with his father, but then he did something to get himself put away a second time. In this account the natural-born son complains that this second rejection by his father is illegal inasmuch as his restoration to favor put him on a level with an adopted son who cannot be turned away in that fashion. It is interesting that the position he is turning to is the adopted position, not the natural-son position.

These are just some of the issues concerning the particular frame of mind behind the concept of adoption as it was used in the ancient world and this is exactly how it is being used by Paul in Romans 8." (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 1-2, 6-7)

Appendix E

Newbold and McDaniel on Jesse Adopting David

Newbold	McDaniel
<p>“None of which is to say that David’s father, Jesse, didn’t do a good job of educating David, because in fact he did.</p> <p>It’s fascinating to see that over in Isaiah when the doctrine of the Christ in connection with the Davidic covenant is being set before Israel, just how it is that God presents it to them:</p> <p>Isa. 11:1-4 - Notice that the Christ will come forth out of the “<i>stem of Jesse</i>” - and notice all the sonship terminology packed in these verses!</p> <p>It’s fascinating that God goes back one previous generation—even though the Davidic covenant calls the Christ David’s son—but the fascinating thing that God is doing here in Isa. 11 is that He is describing the fullness of the Son’s wisdom, and the fullness of the Son’s capacity to rule and to reign and judge <i>with equity for the meek of the earth</i> (which is a classic example of that critical, discerning judgment the Christ would have) — and in connection with all that, He’s that “<i>stem</i>” out of the root of Jesse.</p> <p>And really as God presents it here, He sees the foundation of all that in David’s own father!</p> <p>And David seems to be the only son, among all the sons of Jesse who responded to it - to his sonship education.</p> <p>David was the one son of Jesse that was “<i>a man after mine own heart</i>” - he had just what the Father was looking for in a son to adopt and educate as His own!</p> <p>So in the issue of sonship education, one of the first things the father is looking for in a son he will educate is this fundamental issue that he is “<i>a man after mine own heart</i>” — this son wants his father’s heart imparted to his heart — this son wants his father’s thinking; his father’s character; his father’s wisdom; his father’s integrity; his father’s understanding and so forth, to become one with him—all so that the ultimate goal of that son can be</p>	<p>“In view of that rejection, in I Samuel 16, Samuel is sent by God to a man called Jesse, the Bethlehemite, to anoint one of his sons as the next king of Israel. You already know that David was the one chosen, but why was David chosen instead of his brothers and why was David the one chosen as the example of sonship education? Let’s read the passage to see the answers to those questions. (Quotes I Sam. 16:1-13) . . .</p> <p>This happens because David fully educated his son, Solomon, throughout his childhood for all this adopted, adult-son type education. None of which is to say that David’s father, Jesse, didn’t do a good job of educating David, because in fact he did.</p> <p>In fact, you can see this over in Isaiah when the doctrine of the Christ in connection with the Davidic covenant is being set before Israel, just how it is that God presents it to them: (quotes Isaiah 11:1-4)</p> <p>Notice that the Christ will come forth out of the “<i>stem of Jesse.</i>” Did you notice all the sonship terminology packed in these verses? It’s interesting that God goes back one previous generation, even though the Davidic covenant says that the Christ is David’s son. But what I want you to notice is that the fascinating thing that God is doing here in Isaiah 11 is that He is describing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the fullness of the Son’s wisdom, and · the fullness of the Son’s capacity to rule and to reign and judge with equity for the meek of the earth (which is a classic example of that critical, discerning judgment the Christ would have) · and in connection with all that, He’s that “<i>stem</i>” out of the root of Jesse. · And really as God presents it here, He sees the foundation of all that in David’s own father.

<p>reached: to enter into all his father's business.</p> <p>And we've really been stressing this issue of a son's first 'marker' (so to speak) as one who is "after the heart" of his Father—and we can actually find that being described and dealt with in the curriculum for sonship education:</p> <p>Prov. 4—see what David himself says about it as it gets recorded by his son, Solomon.</p> <p>The opening 9 chapters of the book of Proverbs are really the proverbs that David gives to his son Solomon as he educates him as his son.</p> <p>And notice what David says about himself.... (:1-4)</p> <p>While this can be applied to God the Heavenly Father, the context is one of David speaking to his son Solomon and educating him—David is the one doing the speaking here—and also you need to catch what David says here about his own relationship with his father (that God knew all about) that helps us understand this concept of being a man after God's own heart.</p> <p>And this will go along with that issue we noted before that out of all of David's brothers, he was the only one who responded properly to his sonship education.</p> <p>That statement: David was "<i>a man after God's own heart</i>" is a sonship statement!</p> <p>And in this 'foretaste in advance' capacity, David was educated by his father, Jesse, and David will then function one day as a father, himself, and in turn, educate his son, Solomon.</p> <p>And there is a need to, when God puts the curriculum for sonship education down in writing, there is a need to have not one example of sonship, but to have an educated son, function as a father to his son and educate him!</p> <p>And, in fact, the truth of the matter is, God is going to have two (2) of David's sons dealt with as a father to a son:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Solomon 2) David's "greater" son—the Lord Jesus Christ, which is 'the man.' (see Matthew 1:1; 9:27; 12:22- 	<p>David seems to be the only son, among all the sons of Jesse, who responded to his sonship education. David was the one son of Jesse that was "a man after mine own heart." He had just what the Father was looking for in a son to adopt and educate as His own.</p> <p>So, in review, in the issue of sonship education, the first thing the father is looking for in a son he will educate is this fundamental issue that he is "a man after mine own heart." That fundamentally means that the son wants his father's heart imparted to his heart, the son wants his father's thinking; his father's character; his father's wisdom; his father's integrity; his father's understanding and so forth, to become one with him - all so that the ultimate goal of that son can be reached: to enter into all his father's business. (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation Lessons 13-14, 4, 12)</p> <p>Jesse must have done a pretty good job with David for David knew a lot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · He knew about God's Jehovahness and grace · He knew about God's Jehovah "name" · He knew something of God's business · David knew something about God's likes and dislikes <p>And just as aside, that is exactly what is supposed to happen in the "childhood" stage under the tutors and governors. That is the time that a child's education is supposed to accomplish some specific things in the child. We'll get to some of these shortly, but my point here is that Jesse did a pretty good job preparing David for something much greater to come.</p> <p>Now, let's go to I Samuel and observe the difference between David and his brothers (and everyone else, for that matter). Jesse has 8 sons and the 3 eldest sons are with Saul, preparing to fight the Philistines. Every day, Goliath comes out to challenge Israel to send out a champion to fight with him, winner take all. The Bible says that the men of Israel ran from the giant in fear</p>
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24; 12:42; 21:9; 22:41-46)” (Newbold, Romans 8 (201-300), 220-221)

and none would face him. There came a time when Jesse wants to know how his sons are doing and he decided to send David to check on them. . . One of the main reasons this story gets such a large amount of space in the Bible is because it is putting on display the attitude of “a man after God’s own heart,” which David was.

Evidently, David was the only one in the whole bunch that knew God’s heart on this matter—and that’s why David was the one God chose to utilize in that ‘interlude’ period whereby God was giving Israel a foretaste picture in advance of God being a Father to them and them being God’s sons!

That statement: David was “a man after God’s own heart” is a sonship statement! God graciously extends the interlude to Israel so that He can use David in this ‘foretaste in advance’ capacity. David was educated by his father, Jesse, and David will then function one day as a father, himself, and in turn, educate his son, Solomon.

So why doesn’t it stop with David? Did you ever wonder why God included the reign of Solomon in the interlude? There is a reason God does not just show David as a son, it is because when God puts the curriculum for sonship education down in writing, there is a need to have, not just the example of a son, but to also display that educated son functioning as a father to his son and educating him. That way, the entire process of sonship is put on display! There are several ways in sonship in which God says a son can (and should) function as a father. A son will one day function as a father to his own son. The man who serves in the office of bishop (pastor) not only is a son, but he will turn around and lead a local assembly through the curriculum as a father.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation Lessons 15-16, Pages 7-9)

Appendix F

Newbold and McDaniel on the David, Solomon, and Israel's Sonship Curriculum

Newbold	McDaniel
<p>“The first 9 chapters of the book of Proverbs is David adopting Solomon—giving Solomon the education that God, his Heavenly Father wants Solomon to have so that he can have “<i>wisdom and instruction</i>” he can “<i>perceive the words of understanding</i>” and he can “<i>receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity</i>” and so forth.</p> <p>And you can clearly see that (sonship education) going on: Pro. 3:1-6; 4:20-23; 6:20-21; 7:1-3 [all exhortations!] (this is that language we would expect to find when discussing sonship education and how it is supposed to be received) – and it sounds a lot like Jer. 31!</p> <p>Again, David, Solomon’s father’s heart was “<i>perfect</i>” and Solomon’s wasn’t as he nears the end of his life—David got doctrine from God his Heavenly Father—David imparts it through an educational curriculum and an edificational course to his son Solomon, and it gets recorded in these opening 9 chapters of the book of Proverbs.</p> <p>There’s a format to it—and a progress to it like you would expect to find—there’s going to be writing on these tables of your heart and it has to be written in order, and on the right table; and there has to be a form to it—and there is! (And it is the same curriculum for us as it is for them!)</p> <p>So when we are told by our apostle, the apostle Paul, that we are “<i>sons of God</i>” and we have received “<i>the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father</i>” — and then if we want to further our understanding and appreciation of what it all means to be adopted by our Heavenly Father—if we want to know the value and gravity of what adoption means to God and what it means in the Bible—then Paul tells us in (9:4) that “<i>to Israel pertaineth the adoption,</i>” — which means that we can go back into Israel’s program and find out what adoption is all about; and what the pattern or format or curriculum for a son’s education consists of — we don’t have to ‘guess’ at it at all—we can find a historical place where God put the spotlight (so to speak) on</p>	<p>“Thirdly, David is going to be treated as a son and along with his father, Jesse, and his son, Solomon, God is going to give a complete picture to Israel concerning their adoption and sonship. Jesse puts the things in David that results in the attitude of being a man after his earthly father’s and heavenly Father’s heart. David is selected and then educated. David was put into a position to begin putting that education into practice in His Father’s business. David educates his son Solomon as an adopted son. This is a very critical point, for what’s true of the Father-son relationship between God and Solomon is also true of the Father-Son relationship between God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ! Therefore, God utilized both David and Solomon to write down the sonship curriculum for Israel. That curriculum will be utilized by the believing remnant in the day of wrath along with doctrine contained in the books of Hebrews – Revelation.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation Lessons 17-18, 9)</p> <p>“During the interlude of blessing, God presents Israel with 2 examples of what they receive when they finally do get their adoption in the kingdom, and those are from David (the man of war) and Solomon (the man of peace and wisdom). Now, if it makes sense to you that the interlude of blessing is the place on the timeline when God deals with Israel’s adoption issue, and if you are confident that God uses Jesse, David and Solomon as the example of the complete sonship cycle, then the next thing for us to do is to narrow our search down and locate the exact book in which we are going to find the curriculum as it is laid out in detail.</p> <p>I will say that there is another reason that God needed to use both David and Solomon in the presentation of sonship that I don’t want to go through here, but as we go through the curriculum, you will see another aspect of your sonship that will make you look at this and</p>

sonship—in that glorious interlude of peace and prosperity between the 1st & 2nd Courses of Punishment—and we can have certainty and assurance that we can narrow that period down to the writings of one of the main characters utilized by God to put on display the sonship curriculum—(Solomon being educated by his father, David) - and then, of the writings of Solomon, the only one that deals with the written curriculum for a son being educated by his father is the book of Proverbs—and furthermore within the book of Proverbs, the only place where David is giving the sonship curriculum to Solomon occurs in the first 9 chapters of the book.” (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), Page 233)

“Therefore if you have David and Solomon as the main examples of sonship education given to Israel as the foretaste picture in advance of their own adoption as sons—it would stand to reason that you would naturally expect to find the curriculum for sonship education given **by** David **to** Solomon as it gets recorded in God’s word.

Maybe you could say that, well, I would expect to find the curriculum given by Jesse and recorded in the Bible as he gives it to David.

Ok, but when we look to find that, we really don’t have any place where that happens.

Jesse isn’t utilized by God as a writer of scripture!

But we do find a place where the whole issue of sonship education is given by David to his son Solomon.

And given the limited way God records what He does about Jesse, (not to minimize that, because as we noted before, God does include Jesse over there in Isaiah 11), — but God emphasizes David as the full example of a son having received his education from his father, and then passing that education on to his son Solomon.

And because of that—to me anyway—I would expect to find the curriculum being written down as it passed from David to Solomon; and that’s exactly what I do find.

So I believe we can confidently narrow down our

understand that it was necessary and proper for God to not just highlight David, but Solomon as well.

Now, if what we have established so far is true and accurate (and I believe it is) and if David really did give the sonship education to his son Solomon and God utilized Solomon to write down the sonship curriculum (and He did because we can locate it in the Bible) then we can accurately pinpoint the place in the Scripture where sits the sonship curriculum for Israel. As has already been said, we would expect to find the pattern or format or curriculum for sonship and that pattern or curriculum being utilized by God is the same for Israel (the remnant); for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and for us, the members of the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace. But let’s be clear; the pattern of the curriculum is the same, but the doctrine that gets written on the heart being different is in Israel’s program than in our program because the Father’s business is vastly different in each program. So, knowing that God utilized David and Solomon in the way which He did, where would we locate the basic structure of the sonship curriculum? When we look at all that Solomon wrote in the Scripture, the only place we find him writing down a pattern or form or curriculum for being educated as a son is in the book of Proverbs.

Therefore, we know that the general place we have to look is in that interlude between the 1st and 2nd cycles of punishment, but we also now know (in light of what God was doing with Solomon) that we have to specifically look in the book of Proverbs for the sonship curriculum. That is one of the reasons we know that the book of Proverbs contains the sonship curriculum. There is another reason which I’m going to reserve for a later time.

So here is the rundown:

- God is going to use David to educate Solomon
- God is going to give David doctrine—so that he, as Solomon’s physical father can impart doctrine (much like his own father, Jesse, did) that

search to limit it to the books that Solomon wrote because he is going to be utilized by God as a son who gets adopted and educated by an already existing educated son, David himself.

So when we're trying to narrow down the actual book in which the sonship curriculum is written down, we're going to have to look at the writings of Solomon—and just to verify and confirm and settle our thinking that it is found in the book of Proverbs—my understanding is that we can further rule out the book of Ecclesiastes since it is the account of a son who failed in his sonship education—that education being something already understood at that point.

And in Solomon's other book—the Song of Solomon, it deals with another aspect of already-educated sons—because it primarily deals with the members of the remnant of Israel who come under influence and attack of the Satanic plan/policy of evil and are delivered from it by her “Beloved.”

The S.o.S. is actually one in a trio of songs about God's “Beloved” (along with the 45th Psalm and Isa. 45) - and in the S.o.S., you've got the Shulamite Woman = the remnant (not the Church!); the Shulamite Woman's “Beloved” = the Lord Jesus Christ; and you've got another man who is trying to woo the Shulamite Woman away from her Beloved = Solomon himself representing the Satanic policy of evil!

So that really leaves us with only one book: The Proverbs!

And not only when we look there do we obviously find a son being educated by his father—but we can also narrow it down even further than that—because we can actually see in the way the book of Proverbs is structured that it opens up with information directly from David to Solomon.

Proverbs—notice how that the wording of 1:1 differs from the wording of 10:1—and the “My son” of (:9) and 2:1, 3:1, 5:1, 6:1, 7:1 — those first 9 chapters are actually the instruction of David, Solomon's father.

All of this is just more understanding and

will allow Solomon to function as a son of God (in that same kind of limited capacity that David did)—with wisdom, and discretion, and discernment—to rule and reign in Israel righteously and justly

· Solomon is going to function (as David did) as a son to whom has been imparted the wisdom of his father. Solomon is the one known as the wisest man who ever lived and there are examples of his wisdom given in the biblical record. I don't think we have to go over a lot of references to make the point being made here is that the wisdom that characterized Solomon is the result of his sonship education.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation Lessons 17-18, Pages 9-10)

appreciation of the Bible's sense & sequence— Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon.” (Newbold, Romans (201-300), 231-232)	
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Sunday, October 26, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 149](#)
[Sonship Edification: Evaluating SE’s Definition of Biblical Adoption](#)

Introduction/Review

- In Lesson 148 we discussed the teaching of Sonship Edification (SE) regarding “Biblical Adoption.” The goal of that lesson was to ascertain SE’s teaching on the matter and to demonstrate that its definition of “Biblical Adoption” is central to its curriculum apparatus.
- This morning we want to begin evaluating SE’s teaching regarding “Biblical Adoption.” In order to accomplish this purpose, we will consider the following four points:
 - 1st Century Greco-Roman adoption
 - Adoption in Romans 8
 - Adoption in Romans 9
 - Adoption in Galatians 4
- In this lesson we will limit our comments to the first point listed above: 1st Century Greco-Roman Adoption.

Note: The reason we are covering this is because secular 1st century Greco-Roman adoption is appealed to by SE to support their definition of “Biblical Adoption” – that a father adopted his own natural born son or daughter for the purpose of instructing him or her personally in the family business.

1st Century Greco-Roman Adoption

- SE appeals to 1st century Greco-Roman adoption to sustain its view that “Biblical Adoption” is a father selecting from his natural born children the one whom he would educate personally in “his business.”
 - “A father adopted his son for the purpose of installing and instilling his wisdom into his son so that the son would labor with his father in all his business.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation, Lesson 5, Page 5)
 - See Appendix A for more extensive quotations on SE’s definition of “Biblical Adoption.”
- First, in terms of scholarship it is important to note that not one reference to an extra-biblical source is offered to support this notion. Both Newbold and McDaniel appeal to a “Syrian-Roman Law Book” to sustain their notion of “Biblical Adoption,” however, neither of them provides anything by way of source citations that one could use to corroborate their claims.
 - See Appendix B for more extensive quotations on SE’s appeal to 1st Century Greco-Roman adoption.

- Second, after hours of reading extra-biblical sources from both secular and Christian authors on the adoption practices of Greco-Roman culture, we cannot find even ONE source that could be used to substantiate SE's definition of "Biblical Adoption." At this point in our research, it appears that SE's definition of "Biblical Adoption" has been completely manufactured and its appeal to 1st Century Greco-Roman Adoption to bolster their definition is an intellectual dead-end that serves to undermine their position.
- Third, given the fact that most of Paul's readers in the 1st century were slaves, it does not follow that EVERYONE understood adoption in the manner outlined by SE. In fact, it is highly probable that the majority of the Paul's readers DID NOT own family businesses and therefore had nothing to instruct their children in or anything to pass on to their progeny, according to SE's definition.
- Given the FACT that Paul does use the notion of Adoption (Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5) to illustrate a spiritual truth that pertains to the body of Christ, it follows that one must understand how adoption in the Roman world functioned in order to follow/understand Paul's teaching.

Basis in Roman Law

- "Adoption is the legal device found in many legal systems by which a person leaves his own family and enters the family of another." (Francis Lyall. "Roman Law in the Writings of Paul—Adoption.") "In the Roman law and culture of the first century A.D., an affluent but childless adult who wanted an heir would adopt a post-pubescent male, often a slave, to be his son. Though there were some instances of female adoptees, they were rare. Adoption was one of the few ways a slave could come into the *patria potestas*, the power of the father (R.W. Lee *The Elements of Roman Law*. Sweet & Maxwell, Limited: London, 1946, p. 60)." (Julien, *Coming Home: Adoption in Ephesians and Galatians*)
- "Roman adoption was a very serious matter because of the Roman *patria potestas* (the possession of the father.) The *patria potestas* was the father's power over his family; and this power was absolute; it was actually the power of absolute disposal and control, and in the early times of Rome it was actually the power of life and death. If a deformed child was born it was to be killed immediately. In the case of divorce, custody of the children would always defer to the father because of *patria potestas*. In relation to his father, a Roman son never came of age. No matter how old the son was, he was still under the *patria potestas*, in the absolute possession, and control of the father. Therefore, this made adoption into another family a very difficult and a very serious process." (Valnes, 1-2)

Reasons Romans Would Adopt

- "Lack of male descendants would be the main reason for Roman adoption. If, in a particular family, there were no one to pass the inheritance down to if there were only daughters, then adoption of a male would likely take place. Property was generally not handed down to daughters

since *patria potestas* was in effect. Females were rarely adopted, and would generally accompany a brother, for they would not be adopted by themselves...Many fathers would allow their sons to be adopted from their plebian (common) families in order to be eligible to run for the tribunal.

What is interesting to note is that the adoption of [infant] children appears to be a rarity at Rome. Much more common was “Adrogatio” – the adoption of a son who was of age, an adult.

How common was adoption in Roman culture? One number calculated was a rather larger figure of 8-9% of magistrates and decurions (members of the city senate) at Pompeii were identified as adoptees.

In adoption a person had to pass from one *patria potestas* to another. He had to pass out of the possession and control of one father into the equally absolute control and possession of another father.” (Valnes, 2-3; See also Hugh Lindsay’s *Adoption in the Roman World*. Pages 3, 5, and 217)

Adoption Process

- “There were two steps to a Roman adoption. Both of these steps were done in the presence of seven witnesses:
 - The first step was known as *mancipatio*, and it was carried out by a symbolic sale, in which copper and scales were symbolically used. Three times the symbolism of sale was carried out. Twice the father symbolically sold his son, and twice he bought him back; and the third time he did not buy him back and thus the *patria potestas* was held to be broken.

After the sale there followed a ceremony called *vindicatio*. The adopting father went to the Praetor, one of the Roman magistrates, and presented a legal case for the transference of the person to be adopted into his *patria potestas*. When this process was completed the adoption was complete. Clearly this was a serious and impressive step.” (Valnes, 3)

Consequences of Adoption

- “First, the adopted person lost all their rights in their old family. On the other hand they gained those exact same rights in their new family. They received a new name and a new family.

When we are adopted into the family of God at the time of our conversion, we received a new family and technically a new name. We received the name “child (or son) of God” and the family we became a part of is made up of all those that have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. . .

God becomes our *patria potestas*. So often it is hard to grasp that picture of God as our Father. Naturally many of us have a tendency to compare or understand God as our Father in light of our

own relationship with our own earthly fathers. The understanding of God as our “*patria potesta*” can help us picture God as the father he wants us to see himself as.

It is through the spirit of adoption that we come into assured fellowship with God the Father and awareness of this new relationship.” (Valnes, 4)

- “The second significance to Roman adoption was that the adopted child became heir to the new father’s estate.

Even if there were children born naturally to the Father after, the adopted son’s rights of inheritance were not affected in any way. He was equally a joint heir with those later born siblings.

Verse Romans 8:16 states: The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.

When we are adopted into God’s family, we became heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ. . . (Quotes Romans 8:17)

Our inheritance makes us a beneficiary of goods in which we would otherwise be deprived. Through our faith in Christ we become joint heirs with Christ and, as a result, we will be glorified together with Christ.” (Valnes, 4-5)

- “The third significant part of Roman adoption was that the old life of the adopted person was completely wiped out, they were regarded a new person entering a new life which the past had nothing to do with.

When Paul uses the imagery of adoption he is talking about how the Romans practiced it. In ancient Rome (just like worldwide today) the Roman family chose the child they wanted to adopt. As part of the adoption and, as we discussed previously, there was a special ceremony where the adopting father went to one of the Roman judges and presented a legal case to justify his right to adopt the child into his own household. Remember that this ceremony was called the “*vindicatio*”.

William Barclay says that when this ceremony was complete, in the eyes of the law the adoptee was a new person. So new... that even all debts and obligations connected with his previous family were abolished as if they had never existed.” (Barclay, 2002)

- In other words, once a person went through this *vindicatio* ceremony - every debt he ever had was erased as if it never existed.

This is where we get the English word “vindicate” from and our English dictionaries define vindicate as “to clear of accusation... to absolve... to justify.”

Who I was before I came into my new family had no effect on my new identity. I inherited a history of grandparents and great grandparents and a family history in God's family.

When we are adopted into God's family through the saving work of Christ on the cross, our sins and past are forgotten. We are a new person entering into a family with a clean slate. Our past is erased and we are a new person with a new name in a new family.

Another quote from William Barclay puts it this way: "It was Paul's picture that when a man became a Christian he entered into the very family of God. He did nothing to deserve it; God the great Father in his amazing love and mercy, has taken the lost, helpless, poverty-stricken, debt-laden sinner and adopted him into his own family, so that the debts are cancelled and the glory inherited." (Valnes, 4-5; See also William Barclay *The Letter to the Romans*)

- "The final significant part of Roman adoption was, in the eyes of the law, the adopted child was seen as an absolute child of the new father.

Roman history provides an excellent case of how literally this was held to be true. The Emperor Claudius adopted Nero, so that Nero would succeed him on the throne. They were not in any sense blood relatives. Claudius already had a child, his daughter, Octavia. To solidify the alliance Nero desired to marry Octavia. Now, Nero and Octavia were in no way true blood relatives; yet, in the eyes of the law, they were brother and sister; and before they could marry, the Roman Senate had to pass special legislation to enable Nero to marry a girl who was legally his own sister." (Valnes, 6)

Theological Implications

- First, Romans 8:14 states: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God", that is, we are in God's *Patria postestas*. We are the property of God, owned and possessed.
- Second, Romans 8:15 states "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" – this is an expression of an assured awareness of son-ship!
- Third, Romans 8:16 states, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" – here is the Eternal Holy Spirit that is a witness to our adoption as sons. We do not need seven witnesses when we have a witness that is eternal and is God.
- Fourth, Romans 8:17 states, "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" – we are joint heirs with Christ, equal in inheritance, and verse 29 also tells us that Christ is the firstborn among MANY brothers!

Concluding Thoughts

- The “Syrian-Roman Law Book” which is used to support SE’s definition of Biblical Adoption is, as of this date and to the best of our knowledge, not even available in English. This fifth century book is cited in William M. Ramsay’s 1965 publication *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*. The Law Book is first mentioned on page 338 along with the following footnote:
 - “[Mitteis, Reichsrecht und Volksrecht](#), p. 339 ff. The Law Book is published in Syriac and German by Bruns and Sachau *ein rOmischsyrisches Rechtsbuch des fünften Jahrhunderts.*” (Ramsay, 338)
- The Law Book does not prove SE’s definition of Biblical Adoption that a father would adopt his natural born child to be instructed in and run his business. The portion of the Law Book referenced by Newbold and McDaniel merely proves that an adopted son possessed a stronger legal position than a natural born son on account of the adoption process outlined above. In no way does the following passage prove/support the SE definition of Biblical Adoption.
 - “The Roman-Syrian Law-Book—which we have already quoted as an authority for the kind of legal ideas and customs that were obtained in an Eastern Province, where a formerly prevalent Greek law had persisted under the Roman Empire—well illustrates this passage of the Epistle. It actually lays down the principle that a man can never put away an adopted son, and that he cannot put away a real son without good ground. It is remarkable that the adopted son should have a stronger position than the son by birth; yet it was so. Mitteis illustrates this by a passage of Lucian where a son, who had been put away by his father, then restored to favour, and then put away a second time, complains that this second rejection is illegal, inasmuch as his restoration to favour put him on a level with an adopted son, who cannot be turned away in that fashion.” (Ramsay, 352-353)
- In fact, it is our contention that Ramsay’s *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians* does more to undermine SE’s position on adoption than it does to support it.
 - “Among the Jews, adoption had no importance, and hardly any existence. The perpetuity of the family, when a man died childless, was secured in another way, viz., the levii’ate. Only sons by blood were esteemed in the Hebrew view: only such sons could carry on the true succession, and be in a true sense heirs. From every point of view the thought in III 7 (Gal. 3:7) is abhorrent to Hebrew feeling. It is one of the passages which show how far removed Paul was from the mere Jewish way of thinking; he differed in the theory of life, and not merely in the religious view. Quite apart from the fact that the Jews naturally abhorred the idea that the Gentiles could become sons of Abraham, the very thought that the possessing of a man's property implied sonship was unnatural to them. Paul had grown up amid the surroundings and law of Greco-Roman society; otherwise the expression of III 7 (Gal. 3:7) could not come so lightly and easily from him.

Such passages as this have led some very learned Jewish scholars of my acquaintance, whose names I may not quote, to declare in conversation their conviction that the letters attributed to Paul were all forgeries, because no Jew of that age could write like that, whether he were Christian or no. So far as I may judge, they undervalue the cosmopolitan effect produced on the Jewish-Roman and Greek citizens living for generations in Greek and Roman cities, just as much as many distinguished European scholars do, when they fancy that Paul is a pure Jew, unaffected, except in the most superficial way, by Greek education.” (Ramsay, 341-342)

- SE has invented a definition of Biblical Adoption that cannot be substantiated by an extra-biblical understanding of 1st century Greco-Roman adoption, as they have attempted to do. Consequently, Paul’s use of the metaphor of “adoption” in Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians cannot be understood in a manner that is contrary to how his readers would have understood the concept. Furthermore, since the Jews had no concept of this Greco-Roman type adoption, SE is guilty of the worst type of scriptural exegesis by seeking to impose their private definition upon the Old Testament Wisdom Literature and thereby establish a curriculum for Israel’s Sonship Education.
- In the next lesson, we will look at more at Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5 in an attempt to establish a sound definition of Biblical Adoption.

Suggested Further Reading

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Dauids, P.H. “Adoption” entry in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology Second Edition*. Edited by Walter A. Elwell. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001.

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Julien, Sarah. “Coming Home: Adoption in Ephesians and Galatians.”
http://www.quodlibet.net/articles/murray-adoption.shtml#_edn4.

Ramsay, William. *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*.
<https://archive.org/details/historicalcommen00rams>.

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Appendix A

Newbold and McDaniel on Biblical Adoption

Newbold	McDaniel
<p>“And perhaps the most astounding or shocking aspect of ancient adoption is the fact that adoption didn’t just pertain to sons that were outside the family and brought in from some other family—no—ancient adoption included the family’s own genetic sons by blood!</p> <p>. . . The father would want a very strong son—and most of all, he would want a son that would possess the wisdom and the thinking of his father.</p> <p>And the father would also want a son who would be able to take his business and carry on that business, not just any old way—but to carry it on exactly as the father, himself would!</p> <p>And so the father would look over his sons, and if he found one that was willing and able to be educated as his son, in his father’s business—then the father would adopt that son and begin personally teaching all about his business, along with the way he (the father) thought, and pass on all his wisdom and experience to his son—so that his son would take on his father’s thinking, and living, and then as he labored in his father’s business, all of his dealings were as if it were the father, himself who was engaged in the business.</p> <p>It would really be, “Like father, like son!”</p> <p>But sometimes the father would look over his own, natural born sons, and still not be able to find one with the will, the drive, and the ability to be educated properly as his son—and in that case the father could look outside the family and find a child that would fit the bill (so to speak), and he would then adopt that unnatural born son as his adopted son, and then educate him to enter into laboring with the father in all the father’s business.</p> <p>And this was done so that the integrity and the success and the character of the father and the father’s business could be successfully passed on from generation to generation—and it was a way to not only keep the integrity of the father’s name and</p>	<p>“Biblically, adoption was for the natural-born children of a family. That is, a Father would adopt His natural son or daughter. And this was not unusual, but rather, it was the rule. The primary motivation for adoption was not pit or some strong emotion of rescue, but it had in mind the welfare of the family’s name and the family’s business. It is true that on occasion, a man might adopt a son or daughter outside of his own natural children. It may be that he had no children of his own. There is another circumstance that may arise that would have a man adopting someone other than his natural children, but we will discuss that a little later. . .</p> <p>In adoption, the father would be looking for some specific traits in the son or daughter he would adopt. The father did not just want a son that would be able to carry on the family business, but one that would carry on that business with the same commitment and dedication that he had. The father would want a son that possessed his wisdom and way of thinking. In other words, the father wanted a son who would carry on the business exactly as the father himself would. To accomplish this adoption, the father would look over his sons, and if he found one that was willing and able to be educated in his father’s business, then the father would adopt that son and begin personally teaching all about his business. He would teach the son the way he (the father) thought, and pass on all his wisdom and experience to his son. This was so that his son would take on his father’s thinking, and living, and then as he labored in his father’s business, all of his dealings were as if it were the father, himself who was engaged in the business. It would really be, “Like father, like son!”</p> <p>But sometimes the father would look over his own, natural born sons, and still not be able to find one with the desire, the drive, and the ability to be educated properly as his son. In that case, the father could look outside the family and find a child that would fit the bill (so to speak), and he would then adopt a child that was not natural born. The father</p>

<p>the father's business strong, but to insure that it would continue getting even stronger and more powerful as time went on—in other words it was a way to insure the father's business against corruption and weakness and attack and ultimately, failure!" (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), Pages 171-173)</p>	<p>would take that son (or daughter) and begin to educate them so they could enter into laboring with father in all his business.</p> <p>This was done so that the integrity and the success and the character of the father and the father's business could be successfully passed on from generation to generation. It was a way to not only keep the integrity of the father's name and the father's business strong, but to insure that it would continue getting even stronger and more powerful as time went on. In other words, it is was a way to ensure the father's business against corruption, weakness, attack and ultimately, failure!" (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 1-2, 5-6)</p>
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Appendix B

Newbold and McDaniel on 1st Century Greco-Romans Adoption

Newbold	McDaniel
<p>“In the Greco-Roman world an unadopted child differed very little, oftentimes, from a slave.</p> <p>But when <i>adoption</i> took place, the change was dramatic!</p> <p>The adoption procedure was usually a pretty formal affair with a lot of symbolic tradition contained in it.</p> <p>It usually involved the child exchanging his clothing—the toga of his youth was taken off and he had put on him the toga virilis—the toga of his adulthood.</p> <p>The adopted son would receive his father’s ring—which gave him the same authority over his father’s business and holdings and money—and it gave him the same powerful stature as his father in the eyes of his country. (Remember this had to be done, even with a natural born son!)</p> <p>And the result of all this ceremony of <i>adoption</i> was that the son would now enjoy all the rights and honor and privileges and liberty as that of the father.</p> <p>But perhaps one of the most striking aspect of being an adopted son in the ancient world had to do with the position that the son had only through being adopted—that is, (and this is critical), an adopted son had a far stronger position than a natural-born child—he had a permanently fixed, powerfully strong legal standing that was greater than any naturally-born son or heir that hadn’t been adopted!</p> <p>And that was a huge deal in connection with estates and wills and contracts and all the legal issues surrounding the father’s holdings and the father’s estate!</p> <p>In fact, an ancient Roman-Syrian Law Book lays down the principle that a father can never put away an adopted son, and he cannot put away a real (natural-born) son without good legal grounds.</p>	<p>“When I talk about “Bible-style” adoption, I am referring to adoption as it was understood and practiced by the Greeks and the Hebrew people. Adoption itself was different, the basis behind adoption was different and the “who” involved in adoption could be very different. . . The Adoption that Paul refers to is different. It usually does not involve a child from another family and it is not because a child has lost his parents and although there may be some “emotions” involved, that is far from the primary thought and feeling involved in the process.</p> <p>Biblically, adoption was for the natural-born children of a family. That is, a Father would adopt His natural son or daughter. And this was not unusual, but rather, it was the rule. . . In the Greco-Roman world, an unadopted child differed very little, oftentimes, from a slave. But when adoption took place, the change was dramatic! The adoption procedure was usually a pretty formal affair with a lot of symbolic tradition contained in it. It usually involved the child exchanging his clothing; the toga of his youth was taken off and he had put on him the toga virilis (the toga of his adulthood.)</p> <p>The adopted son would receive his father’s ring, which gave him the same authority over his father’s business, holdings and money and it gave him the same powerful stature as his father in the eyes of his country. (Remember this had to be done, even with a natural-born son!)</p> <p>The result of all this ceremony of adoption was that the son would now enjoy all the rights, the honor, the privileges and liberty as the father. But perhaps one of the most striking aspect of being an adopted son in the ancient world had to do with the position that the son had only through being adopted; that is, (and this is critical), an adopted son had a far stronger position than a natural-born child.</p> <p>He had a permanently fixed, powerfully strong legal standing that was greater than any naturally born son or heir that hadn’t been adopted! That was very important when it came to dealing with</p>

And the remarkable fact is that the adopted son held a stronger position than the son by birth!

In fact, this Roman-Syrian Law Book actually gives an account of a natural-born son who had been put away by his father, and then restored to favor with his father—but then he did something to get himself put away a second time!

And in this account the natural-born son complains that this second rejection by his father is illegal—inasmuch as his restoration to favor put him on a level with an **adopted son** who cannot be turned away in that fashion!

And these are just some of the issues concerning the particular frame of mind behind the concept of *adoption* as it was used in the ancient world—and as it is being used by Paul in Romans 8.

But perhaps the most critical thing of all to keep in mind in dealing with being an adopted son of your Heavenly Father is that when a child gets adopted as a son—he's considered by the Father to be an **ADULT SON!** And therefore he now has greater privilege and greater advantages, and most of all he now has the **freedom** and **liberty** that goes along with being an adult son!

And that means that the Father is going to treat his adopted son **DIFFERENT** than He would treat his unadopted child!

And when we're talking about this Biblically, that difference has to do with how the child (during childhood) was being raised—and that was under the system of tutors and governors—and all that was how a child was raised under the law!" (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), Pages 173-174)

estates, wills, contracts and all the legal issues surrounding the father's holdings and the father's estate.

In fact, an ancient Roman-Syrian Law Book lays down the principle that a father can never put away an adopted son and he cannot put away a real (natural-born) son without good legal grounds. But the remarkable fact is that the adopted son held a stronger position by his adoption than a natural son had by birth. In fact, this Roman-Syrian Law Book actually gives an account of a natural-born son who had been put away by his father, and then restored to favor with his father, but then he did something to get himself put away a second time. In this account the natural-born son complains that this second rejection by his father is illegal inasmuch as his restoration to favor put him on a level with an adopted son who cannot be turned away in that fashion. It is interesting that the position he is turning to is the adopted position, not the natural-son position.

These are just some of the issues concerning the particular frame of mind behind the concept of adoption as it was used in the ancient world and this is exactly how it is being used by Paul in Romans 8." (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 1-2, 6-7)

Sunday, November 2, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 150](#)
[Sonship Edification: Biblical Adoption According to Scripture](#)

Introduction

- In Lesson 148 we discussed the teaching of Sonship Edification (SE) regarding “Biblical Adoption.” The goal of that lesson was to ascertain SE’s teaching on the matter and to demonstrate that its definition of “Biblical Adoption” is central to its curriculum apparatus.
 - “A father adopted his son for the purpose of installing and instilling his wisdom into his son so that the son would labor with his father in all his business.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation, Lesson 5, Page 5)
- In Lesson 149 we discussed SE’s appeal to 1st Century Greco-Roman Adoption to substantiate its definition of “Biblical Adoption.”
- This morning we want to continue evaluating SE’s teaching regarding “Biblical Adoption.” In order to accomplish this purpose we will consider the final three of the four points identified in Lesson 149:
 - 1st Century Greco-Roman adoption
 - Adoption in Romans 8
 - Adoption in Romans 9
 - Adoption in Galatians 4

Adoption in Romans 8

- At the outset, it is once again important to note that Paul is the only Biblical writer to speak about “adoption” (*huiothesia* the Greek word occurs five times in the New Testament).
 - Romans 8:15—“. . . but ye have received the Spirit of **adoption**. . .”
 - Romans 8:23—“. . . waiting for the **adoption**, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.”
 - Romans 9:4—“. . . Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the **adoption**. . .”
 - Galatians 4:5—“. . . that we might receive the **adoption** of sons.”
 - Ephesians 1:5—“ Having predestinated us unto the **adoption** of children by Jesus Christ to himself . . .”
- The Greek word *huiothesia* is a compound word, *huio-thesia*:
 - *Huios*—son come of age
 - *Thesia*—a placing, or setting a person or thing in its place
- In his commentary *Romans: Verse by Verse*, William R. Newell states the following regarding the Greek word *huiothesia* rendered “adoption” in the King James Bible.

- In earthly affairs, “adoption” is the term applied to the selection as child and heir of one not born of us; and the execution of legal papers making such child our own, inheriting legal rights, etc. . . . But the word *huios* means, a child come of age; no longer “as a servant” (Galatians 4:7). And *huiiothesia* means God’s recognizing them in that position! This will be consummated fully at the coming of Christ, when our bodies, redeemed, and fashioned anew, shall be conformed to Christ’s glorious body. Meanwhile, because we are already adult sons (*huioi*), God has given us a spirit of adult-sonship! No Jew called God “Father,” or “Abba”; but “Jehovah.” (Indeed) fearfulness, even prevented, generally, the use by the Jews of God’s memorial-name—Jehovah—for that nation: they called Him *Adonai*—“Lord.” (Newell, 217-218)
- “This word *tekna* means “born-ones,” offspring (“children of God” in Romans 8:16). The several other Greek words for child are used accurately in Scripture: *brephos*,—an unborn child or a newborn child (Luke 1:44 and 2:12 and 16); *nēpios*, babes or small children—children not come of age . . . *huios*, which is the word of sonship, of adult understanding: Paul contrasts this word, with *nepios* in both Galatians 4:6, and I Corinthians 13:11, as adulthood over against childhood, or infancy.” (Newell, 219)
- A careful reading of Romans 8 reveals that believers have received the “Spirit of adoption” in Romans 8:15 as we wait for the “adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body” in Romans 8:23.
- Romans 8:23—defines “adoption” in this context as the “redemption of our body.” In verses 23-25, believers are plainly instructed to wait for the redemption of our bodies, i.e., our adoption. Is this a fools hope, or a well-founded one? It is well-founded because we already have as a present possession the “Spirit of adoption” in verse 15. Thus, in the context of Romans 8, the “Spirit of Adoption” in verse 15 is the down payment, or guarantee, of our future full adoption, i.e., when our bodies are redeemed from the “bondage of corruption” in verse 21.
- Ephesians 1:5—we have predestined unto the “adoption of children by Jesus Christ.”
- Ephesians 1:13—every believer upon belief in the gospel was “sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”
- Ephesians 1:14—the Holy Spirit with which you were sealed in verse 13 is the “earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” Every believer possesses the redemption of their inner man from the penalty of sin. Therefore, believers already are God’s “purchased possession,” in the sense that they are spiritually redeemed (v. 7) and sealed with “that Holy Spirit of promise.” But the Holy Spirit is the earnest, or down payment on our future physical redemption, i.e., adoption or redemption of our body.
- So, in Romans 8:15 we are given the “Spirit of adoption” while we wait for our actual “adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body” in Romans 8:23. The “Spirit of adoption” in verse 15 is the earnest, down payment, or guarantee securing our actual future “adoption” in verse 23.

- Romans 8:15—it is the “Spirit of adoption” within the believer that utters the cry of “Abba Father.” The verb translated “we cry” in verse 15 is a present indicative statement which means that the Spirit was already actively crying “Abba Father” on behalf of the Roman saints before Paul even penned the epistle. In short, this is not something we are to cry on account of being “suitably impressed” with our adoption status as SE has asserted, rather it is something the Spirit cried on behalf of the Romans irrespective of their knowledge of it.

Adoption in Romans 9, Part 1

- Romans 9:4—this is the first time we encounter the term “adoption” applied to Israel in Scripture. At first blush this is somewhat strange given that the term “adoption” does not appear in the Old Testament, the Gospels, or early Acts. Please recall that “adoption” is a strictly Pauline idea. However, here in Romans 9 Paul applies the term to Israel as her one key distinguishing characteristic.
- P.H. Davids stated the following regarding this phenomena in his entry on “Adoption” in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* edited by Walter A. Elwell. Davids states the following regarding “adoption:”
 - “The term *adoption* does not appear in the OT. There were not provisions for adoption in Israelite law, and the examples that do occur come from outside the Israelite culture (Eliezer, Genesis. 15:1-4; Moses, Exodus 2:10; Genubath, I Kings 11:20; Esther, Esther 2:7, 15). For Israelites, polygamy and levirate marriage were the more common solution to infertility. Yet adoption was not unknown in their literature (cf. Proverbs. 17:2; 19:10; 29:21, which may all refer to adoption of slaves), and it may have been the means by which children, fathered by a master and a slave mother, inherited property (Genesis 16:1-4; 21:1-10; 30:1-13). Outside of Israel, adoption was common enough to be regulated in the law codes of Babylon (e.g., the Code of Hammurabi #185-86), Nuzi and Ugarit. Not infrequently, these refer to the adoption of a slave as an heir.” (Elwell, 25)
- Given that Romans 8 identifies “adoption” as the “redemption of the body”, it would seem strange to think about “adoption” in Romans 9:4 in an altogether different manner than what was described in the previous chapter. That being said, I would like to consider Paul’s teaching on “adoption” in Galatians 4 before commenting further on Romans 9.

Adoption in Galatians 4

- Galatians 4:1-2—Paul says that an heir, even though he be lord of all, is no different from a servant when he is a child (*nēpios* i.e., an infant, little child, a minor, or one who is not of age). As a child, he is under “tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.”

- Galatians 4:3—“Even so we, when we were children (*nēpios*);” the verb rendered “we were” is in the imperfect tense and is thereby referring to a continuous or linear action in past time. The same is true for the second “were” in the verse. So whomever Paul is referring to in verse 3 in past time was in a continuous state of childhood and in a state of bondage under the elements of the world.
- Galatians 4:4—the word “but” introduces a contrast to the situation outlined in the previous verse. When the “fullness of the time was come,” i.e., when the time was correct in the outworking of God’s plan, He sent forth his Son “made of a woman (virgin birth), made under the law” (Matt. 5:17; Luke 2:21-27).
- Galatians 4:5—why was the Son “made under the law” in verse 4 – so that he might “redeem them that were under the law” in verse 5. These are some people who were under bondage to “the elements of the world” in verse 3.
- The people that Paul is speaking of in Galatians 4:3-5 have a history of being under the law. According to the Biblical record, who had a history of being under the law? Israel. Who did Christ come to redeem in his earthly ministry according to everything that had been revealed up to that point? Israel. Who did the law pertain to?
 - Romans 9:4—“Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, **and the giving of the law**, and the service *of God*, and the promises;”
- Back in 2009 and 2010 when I was teaching through the book of Galatians in the Sunday school hour, before I knew anything about SE, I said that noting the “we” sections in the book of Galatians was a key to understanding the book.
 - Galatians 2:15—“This is an extremely dispensational verse that needs to be understood. If you look at the verse, the use of the word “we” will determine who Paul is talking about throughout the rest of the passage. Paul clearly identifies the “we” as those who are Jews by nature. Consequently, throughout the rest of the chapter, when Paul uses the pronoun “we” he is including himself with Israel. As a result, it is clear that there are two different groups of people in verse 15, those who were Jews by nature and those who were sinners of the gentiles.” (Ross, [Galatians Study Chapter 2 Verses 15-18](#))
 - Galatians 4:3—““Even So”—this phrase connects this verse with the illustration of verses one and two. Also notice once again that Paul uses the word “we.” Remember that when Paul uses the word “we” in this epistle, he is referring to Israel. (Ross, [Galatians Study Chapter 4 Verses 1-7](#))
 - Galatians 4:5—“notice again the use of the word “we.” It was through the work of Christ that Israel was going to receive the adoption of sons.” (Ross, [Galatians Study Chapter 4 Verses 1-7](#))

- Galatians 4:5—Jesus Christ was “made of woman, made under the law” in verse 4 so that in verse 5 he could redeem Israel out from underneath the law so that “we (i.e., Israel) might receive the adoption of sons.” The Greek verb translated “might receive” is in the subjunctive mood, i.e., the mood of possibility and potentiality. The action described may or may not occur, depending upon circumstances.
 - Acts 3:20—the verb translated “shall send” is also in the subjunctive mood. Whether or not God the Father would send Jesus Christ back to set up the kingdom was contingent upon Israel’s repentance in verse 19.
- Israel was offered her redemption from the law, i.e., her “adoption” during the early Acts period but refused it.
- Galatians 4:6—note the shift from “we” to “ye.” The verb translated “ye are” is in the present tense and means to state that fact that all the believers in the churches of Galatia have already received the “adoption of sons” that Israel nationally is still waiting for.
 - Romans 8:14-15
 - Ephesians 1:5, 11
- It is on account of the FACT that members of the body of Christ already “are sons” (*huios*) that God “hath sent forth (past tense) the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying (present tense), Abba, Father.” Notice once again, that it is not us that cries Abba Father, but the Spirit within us that utters forth this cry on a continuous basis.
 - Please note that the “Spirit of his Son” was sent into the heart of every son. This fact coupled with Rom. 8:15 and Eph. 1:13-14 makes it difficult to see how believers would not be indwelt with the Holy Spirit as the proponents of SE have claimed. If the Holy Spirit has been sent into our hearts to cry Abba Father, how could believers not be indwelt with/by the Spirit of God?
- Biblical adoption has nothing to do with a father adopting “his son for the purpose of installing and instilling his wisdom into his son so that the son would labor with his father in all his business.” All believers today in the dispensation of grace are adopted in the sense that:
 - We are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
 - We have been given the Spirit of adoption that cries Abba Father on our behalf and serves as the down payment that secures our future physical redemption.
 - We are not under the tutor and governor principle of the law because we are not children (*nēpios*) but sons (*huios*).
 - We wait patiently for the completion of our “adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.”

Adoption in Romans 9, Part 1

- Romans 9:4--now that we have studied “adoption” in Galatians 4, I think we are in a better place to understand how the “adoption” pertains to Israel.
- Regarding Israel’s “adoption” P.H. Davids writes the following in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*:
 - “For Israel as a whole, there was a consciousness of having been chosen by God as his child (Isaiah 1:2; Jeremiah 3:19; Hosea 1:1). Since Israel had no myth of descent from the gods as the surrounding cultures did, adoption was the obvious category into which this act as well as the deliverance from slavery in Egypt would fit, as Paul indicates in Romans 9:4. Likewise the kings succeeding David were God’s “sons” (II Samuel 7:14; I Chronicles 28:6; Psalms 89:26-27). Psalms 2:7, for example, uses “You are my son,” which is probably the adoption formula used in the enthronement ceremony of each successive Davidic ruler. Together these ideas laid the basis for later NT usage of adoption imagery.” (Elwell, 25)
- According to Galatians 4, God intended to adopt Israel (“we”) and therefore, sent Christ, made of a woman, made under the law so that he could redeem them that were under the law and give them the adoption of sons. So God moves on Israel’s behalf by sending Christ under the conditions set forth in Galatians 4:4 for the purpose of accomplishing their redemption from the law in verse 5 so that they “might receive the adoption of sons.”
- What stood between Israel and their “adoption?” The law. Israel was under the law because she agreed of her own accord to keep it.
 - Exodus 19:1-8
- Consequently, God has to act on Israel’s behalf in Galatians 4:4 in order to accomplish her adoption.
- Exodus 4:22—this does not signify that Israel was a full grown son while in Egypt. It was in Egypt that the nation had been born. If this were so, God would not have sought to place the nation under the law following the Exodus.
 - Hosea 11:1
 - Jeremiah 31:32
- Until Israel came to the place where she could be given full sonship, God placed the nation under the tutors and governors of the law and its requirements. Israel, left to herself, would never have reached the place of adoption. Thank God that adoption does not depend primarily upon the son’s attainments, but upon the father’s will.

- Romans 11:7—Israel had become a rebellious son and even to this present time remains out of God’s favor. Consequently, Israel has yet to receive her adoption.

Concluding Remarks on Biblical Adoption

- Once again, Biblical adoption has nothing to do with a father adopting “his son for the purpose of installing and instilling his wisdom into his son so that the son would labor with his father in all his business.” All believers today in the dispensation of grace are adopted in the sense that:
 - We are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
 - We have been given the Spirit of adoption that cries Abba Father on our behalf and serves as the down payment that secures our future physical redemption.
 - We are not under the tutor and governor principle of the law because we are not children (*nēpios*) but sons (*huios*).
 - We wait patiently for the completion of our “adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.”
- Adoption . . . is not entirely a past event. The legal declaration may have been made and the Spirit may have been given as a down payment, but the consummation of the adoption awaits the future, for adoption includes “the redemption of the body” (Romans. 8:23). Thus, adoption is something hoped for as well as something already possessed. (P.H. Davids in Elwell, 25-26)
- Adoption then, is deliverance from the past (similar to regeneration and justification), a status and way of life in the present (walking by the Spirit, sanctification, not under tutors and governors), and a hope for the future (resurrection, the redemption of our body).
- Adoption describes the process of becoming a child/son of God and receiving an inheritance from God as one of his sons (Romans 8:17; Colossians 3:24).

Works Cited

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Sunday, November 9, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 151 Sonship Edification: Distinguishing Characteristics, Part 1 \(The 3 Stages of Sonship and the Creature\)](#)

Introduction

- Lessons 143 through 150 were primarily geared toward gaining a navigable understanding of Sonship Edification (SE) as a systematized theological system.
- In this lesson we want to begin focusing on some distinguishing characteristics of SE. These will include:
 - The Three Stages of Sonship
 - The Creature
 - Sonship Prayer
 - New Covenant
 - The Conditional Nature of Joint-Heirship

The Three Stages of Sonship

- In addition, to the 3 Levels and 2 Phases per Level and the appellatives (simple man, young man, wise man, and man of understanding) that comprise the curriculum complex of SE, Newbold and McDaniel also teach that there are 3 Stages to Sonship. *It is important to bear in mind that McDaniel is following Newbold.*
 - Newbold: 1) Declaration/Pronouncement, 2) Father and Son Laboring Together, 3) Manifestation of Sons (Romans 8 (701-800), 771)
 - McDaniel: 1) Declaration/Pronouncement, 2) Father and Son Laboring Together, 3) Manifestation of Sons (Sonship Establishment Lessons 43-44, Pages 8-10)
 - McDaniel: 1) Declaration/Education, 2) Apprenticeship Education, 3) Manifestation/Labor (Sonship Establishment Lessons 45-46, Pages 6-13)
- Both men see the goal of Sonship as “Manifestation.” “The manifestation of the sons of God” is what the “creature” is waiting for in Romans 8:19. According to Newbold and McDaniel the following things will be accomplished at the manifestation:
 - “1) Marks the end of your formal education as a son, 2) Results in your placement in the Father’s business, 3) Indicates the degree of your “joint-heir” inheritance, 4) Is the final stage and completion of your Adoption” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment: Lessons 45-46, 6-13—numbering added)
 - “. . . (manifestation) takes place at the end of this dispensation of grace following the rapture and the judgment seat of Christ when the Father makes it evident to the universe

that, ‘These are my sons—they’re qualified/equipped for these positions—they’ll do them just like I would do them!’

Therefore, depending on how you respond to this curriculum—and how it effectually works within you—that will determine what your *joint-inheritance* is going to be with Christ in the administration and managing of the affairs of *the creature*.

And when you’re *manifested as a son*—when you occupy the creature as the “*new creature*”—the issue will be: In this particular position in the creature, this son will handle it just exactly like I (the Father) would!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701–800), Page 771-772)

- For more extensive quotations from Newbold and McDaniel on the three Stages of Sonship please see Appendix A.

The Creature According to Scripture

- As alluded to in the previous point, SE has a unique understanding of the word “creature” in Romans 8, thereby making it one of the distinguishing characteristics of SE.
- The English word “creature” occurs four times in Romans 8.
 - Romans 8:19—“For the earnest expectation of the **creature** waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”
 - Romans 8:20—“For the **creature** was made subject to vanity. . .”
 - Romans 8:21—“Because the **creature** itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”
 - Romans 8:39—“. . . nor any other **creature**, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- According to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* the English word “creature” carries the following relevant meanings:
 - That which is created; every being besides the Creator, or everything not self-existent. The sun, moon and stars; the earth, animals, plants, light, darkness, air, water, etc., are the creatures of God.
 - In a restricted sense, an animal of any kind; a living being; a beast. In a more restricted sense, man. Thus we say, he was in trouble and no creature was present to aid him.

- The English word “creature” is a translation of the Greek word *ktisis* which occurs nineteen times in the *Textus Receptus*, the Greek Text supporting the King James Bible. Eleven times *ktisis* is translated as “creature” and six times it is rendered “creation” by King James translators. Many times *ktisis* is translated as both “creature” and “creation” within the same context.
 - Romans 8:19-21—“creature” 3 times
 - Romans 8:22—“creation” 1 time
 - Romans 1:20—“creation”
 - Romans 1:25—“creature”—the problem here is that mankind exchanged the worship that was due to the “Creator” and worshiped the “creature,” i.e., the “creation.” This is clearly evidenced by their changing of the “glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things,” in verse 23.
- In the Bible the English word “creature” is a synonym for the English word “creation.” Both English words come from the same Greek word *ktisis*. SE abandons the normal principles of sound Biblical exegesis in favor of their own private definition for the “creature.”

The Creature According to SE

Note: due to the extensive nature of SE’s teaching on the “creature” we will limit our comments in the main part of this lesson to the teaching notes of Mark Newbold. For more information regarding SE’s teaching on the “creature” interested parties will find further quotations from Mike McDaniel and David Winston Busch in Appendix B on page 17. Moreover, the Concluding Remarks portion of this lesson contains links to the written notes of Newbold as well as links to videos of McDaniel where the subject of the “creature” is discussed.

- SE defines/confines the meaning of the word “creature” to mean the second heaven, i.e., the heavenly places. Stated differently, the “creature” is not referring to the “creation” but to the heavenly places exclusively. Note the difference between the “creature” and “creation as a whole.” SE is maintaining a difference between those two words
 - “. . . then the program turns its attention to the dismantling of the various aspects in the **creature and creation as a whole** that were put into place as ‘prevention measures’ (so to speak) - and to destroy all remnants of that plan of evil.” (Newbold, Romans 8 (501-600), 503)
- SE’s definition also includes aspects that can only be viewed as science fiction. According to SE, the “creature” (the heavenly places) is a “living organism” that possesses a “soul” and a “will.” The “creature” is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God so that life can be brought to the heavenly places and the “creature” animated by the body of Christ.

Outer Space

- The “creature” is “outer space” of which there is no evidence apart from the word of God, according to Newbold. The “creature” is separate from the earth.
 - “. . . **there is no physical evidence that the *creature* even exists—that can’t be observed at all, and you’d never know that the heavenly places (outer space) are this *creature* unless God told you about it in His word! And by God making the creature subject to vanity—that means that anything by which it could give evidence of that creature being functionally alive, is now being restrained from being given.** . . . And these things we’ve been talking about (the constellations) are all things God did **after** the flood—**when He put the measures in place to keep and to separate the *creature* from the earth** so that man could not get up there and screw the whole thing up! (after the tower of Babel incident)” (Newbold, Romans 8 (501-600), 505, 508)
- The heavenly hosts, i.e., sun, moon, stars, and positions of governmental authority are the “creature,” according to SE. The heavenly hosts possess creature features, i.e., characteristics of any living creature.
 - “And we’ve already done a lot to identify the **creature as being the sun, moon, stars, and the host of heaven—the heavenly places—the structure of the heavenly places (principalities, powers, thrones, might, dominions, etc.). The creature isn’t the earth, per se.** The creature isn’t Satan, per se. . . .

Why “creature”? It is the heavenly host and the realm thereof, but why call it a “creature”? Why would the heavenly realm and all that abides in it be called the “creature”? Why does that matter?

Well, you can get some insight into it just by looking at the way the word is first used in your Bible: Genesis 1:20 (day 5) A creature “moves” and it “has life” - it’s living and moving. (At least, that’s the way it was designed.)

First of all, as its name suggests, it’s something that has been created (it has a Creator). Also, when we most commonly use the word creature, we use it in reference to something that is a living, breathing organism—it has life.

Therefore some fundamental thoughts about why the word creature? is that God designed the heavenly places/host to have creature features to it—to have moving, living, life to it!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), 756-757)

A Living Organism

- Newbold maintains that the “Heavenly Places” are both: “1) An architectural structure; and 2) A *creature*—a living organism.” (Newbold, Romans 8 (501-600), 504)
 - “And the 1st skill sets we receive are primarily designed for the ‘**living organism**’ aspect of it—which is why, when we’re first taught about the heavenly places where our Father’s business is now, we’re taught about **it being a living organism**, it’s a *creature*... And the kind of skills we receive through our sonship education is designed to deal with both aspects of that heavenly realm—because we’re going to be involved with both aspects of that realm:- **We’re going to be giving it its functional life as that creature; But we’re also going to be involved in administrating its corporate structure** (so to speak) - and dealing with its architectural structure (because there’s going to be some dismantling we’re to oversee and get accomplished by means of utilizing the angels to do the work).” (Newbold, Romans 8 (501-600), 504)
- The “creature,” i.e., heavenly places can think, live, labor, earnestly expect, and wait on account of the fact that it is a living organism. Moreover, the “creature” has a will, in addition to thoughts, feelings, and sentiments, according to prominent SE teachers.
 - **“And as such, it has the capacity of a living creature—it can therefore respond to things—it can interact with things—it can move about and function as a creature—even as a creature with a soul and spirit—it can function as a body!**

It has the capacity for intelligence—the capacity to think, to live, and to labor!

In fact, (:19) alone gives you features of *the creature*: it has the capacity to earnestly expect; it has the capacity to wait—those are features of a living creature, not of some inanimate object! (those aren’t anthropomorphisms either!)

What language! That thing is a living organism! (God talks about it like He’d talk about a man!!!)

And as we will see coming up in (:20) of Romans 8, it has a *will*—and since that’s so, God has designed it to function and carry out His will.” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), 758)

- “. . . The “**For**” is explanatory—it begins the process of giving us the further information necessary to make what is said in (:18) a living reality!

Notice how that this verse is filled with terminology that describes the creature’s **thinking**; and its **feelings**; and its **sentiments**—and that’s the first thing (and most basic/fundamental thing) that we’re told about *the creature*. And that’s by design.

Because our Father confronts us with the issue of the creature's thinking/feeling/sentiment—so that we get just as **impressed** with the grandeur and the glory of the creature's upcoming deliverance as the creature is to get it, and as the Father is to deliver it—and we are to get just as **thrilled** about it all as the *creature* itself is!

Notice the *creature*: “*Expects*” - and not only that, but it has a modifier added to it so that it intensifies that expectation: it sits out there in ***earnest expectation!***

And not only does it *earnestly expect*—but it ***waits!***

And you can't do those kinds of things without some **intelligence**: and that means that the *creature* can **think!** (It's a living organism!)

Now I realize that some Bible teachers will teach this verse as if these expressions of thought and feeling and sentiment as if they are nothing more than anthropopathisms (as language that's really not true or real, but language used to describe God's policy in terms that our finite minds can understand).

But if you do that—you totally **rob** the passage from it's intended job—which is to rock you back and cause you to realize that the heavenly places/host really is a *living creature* with all the attributes of a *living creature!*

. . . Now when our Father confronts us with His business—and with *the creature*, there's a lot in just this one verse to be suitably impressed with!

The first creature feature we're told about is that the creature earnestly expects—“*For the earnest expectation of the creature . . .*”

. . . Now by saying it this way—stating the truth and the reality of the fact that this thing called *the creature* (which is the heavenly places/host of heaven) isn't just some inanimate, inorganic mess of hot and cold rocks—but that this thing is a **living organism**—and more than that you're hit here with the fact that *the creature* is, at this present time, sitting in *earnest expectation . . . of you!*” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), 763-765)

- “***“not willingly”*** - it was as if the whole of the heavenly realm (the remainder of the kingdom of God—minus the intelligentsia—didn't want to be governed and ruled and administrated over by those henchmen of the Adversary with all their vain thinking and vain wisdom—but God subjected them to it anyway.

Again, “***not willingly***” is another one of those features that tells you that *the creature* is a living being—a living organism—because it has a will!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), 780)

Earth is the Inner Man of the Creature

- According to Newbold, God will dwell on the earth as the center of the creature while the heavenly places will act as the embodiment for the earth, or the inner man of the creature.
 - **“And it will do that by means of God dwelling on the earth (as the center of the creature) and the heavenly places acting as an embodiment for the earth (for the inner man) of the creature.**

And the creature being the body, and the earth being the inner man of the creature—is all supposed to function seamlessly and smoothly, and respond instantly (highly sensitive) to the inner man of the earth. . .” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), 758)

Properly Educated and Edified Sons are the Intelligentsia and Deliverer of the Creature

- The body of Christ is designed to be “the intelligence of the creature itself”, according to Newbold. Moreover, the church brings salvation and deliverance to the creature by “becoming the intelligentsia of that creature.”
 - “And the issue for us as sons in training for our heavenly vocation is that we (by means of our sonship education) we are designed to be **the intelligence of the creature itself!**

We are to bring salvation and deliverance to *the creature* by our becoming the intelligentsia of that *creature!*

When God uses that expression “*the creature*” He isn’t being purposefully vague or deliberately elusive or mysterious at all—(or even unreal)!

He knows that you can (by paying attention to what He has said in His word up to this point) - He knows that you can make the connection with this “*creature*” He’s talking about here in Romans 8 to the heavenly places.

. . . But by using the term *creature*, He’s having your thinking focus upon the unseen, invisible life-force of it—that it’s designed to be a living, moving body (embodiment for the earth) - but the real focus of attention is upon its functional life—and it sits there waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God to actuate its life by your will (by the will of the sons of God) - to activate it, to vitalize it, to arouse it to the life God designed for it to have from the beginning when He created it for His honor and glory!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), 778)

- According to Mark Newbold, the goal of one’s Sonship Education is to function in the “positions of intelligentsia in the creature.”
 - **“But when you think about what your sonship education is all about in the first place—what it’s ultimate objective is—that it’s your vocational education and training in order to one day function in one of those positions of intelligentsia in the creature—and therefore to be an administrator of God’s will, and His desire and design for what the creature is to do—and to be able to work with the angelic realm that is designed to function within the creature, and to be its mechanical life, and so forth —and you’re to function as one of those mini brains with real intelligent understanding of what God wants done, and how to get it done . . .”** (Newbold Romans 8 (301-400), 373)
 - “. . . these Corinthian saints were supposed to realize that every single thing they were being taught in their sonship education and everything they were supposed to be applying and making **use** of in every single detail of their lives was something that could be put into practice right now —and if they were smart enough & perceptive enough, they would see that **there’s a parallel between that and what is going to be going on when they function in the creature!**” (Newbold Romans 8 (301-400), 375)
 - **And they are being reprov’d for not taking advantage of having used their ‘spiritual money’ as a result of making their sonship education The Top Priority of their life—to purchase the godly skills and acquire the experience so as to get the fullness out of that education: which if they don’t, they will not qualify themselves to occupy one of those higher, and greater, and more demanding positions of intelligentsia within the creature.** (Newbold Romans 8 (301-400), 375)
- The Father is forming the “new creature,” i.e., the body of Christ to liberate the “creature” (heavenly places) which is currently “languishing in vanity and groaning in bondage,” according to SE.
 - “The creature becomes the focal point upon which the Father’s thinking and the Son’s thinking rests right now—and right now He’s going about the business of creating a new creature by which He is going to liberate the present creature who is languishing in vanity and groaning in bondage.

You see—His concern isn’t to manipulate and interfere and intervene into the goings-on in history right now—or in the external affairs of men right now—or in the climate of the earth right now—or in sickness, disease, crime, war, religions, —or governments and economics right now.

His concern is with His sons—and with their inner man—in order to get them educated, edified and qualified to be placed and promoted into management positions in the creature—for its liberation and His business operations out in that

creature! (That’s what the Father and Son are concerned with right now!)” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), 756)

- Nothing is to compare with Sonship education and vocational training because they are the means by which believers acquire the skills necessary to labor with the father in his business and “produce the creature’s deliverance.”
 - “So, to get back to Romans 8:19ff—what you’re told there is really, dazzling! It’s mind-blowing information! And behind it all is an **attitude** that you have to perceive is the attitude of your Father, and one that is beginning to develop in you, too.

Because at the exact same time you gain this awareness of this aspect of your Father’s business that we have participation in—that all is supposed to produce within you an impression upon you that **NOTHING COMPARES** in our lives to what we’re involved in, in our Father’s business—and **NOTHING COMPARES** with getting the education that we need to get with all the vocational training and all the experience and all the skill-acquisition that goes along with it—to be able to function as He’s designed us to function in His business—**and to produce the creature’s deliverance that’s spoken about here!**” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), 760)

“Any Other Creature” in Romans 8:39

- Having defined the “creature” in Romans 8 as the heavenly places, Romans 8:39 poses a bit of a problem for SE. Newbold, argues that the phrase “any other creature” is not referring to any other “created being” including one’s self, but the “creature” as it was defined earlier in Sonship Establishment, i.e., the heavenly places.
 - **“But what about “any other creature”? —isn’t that just talking about any other created thing on this earth (or even any other created thing in the universe)?**

In fact, most of the modern English translations say something along the lines of— ‘nor anything else in all creation’ - which is what you would say if you didn’t have a clue to what’s going here!

But notice the exact way that this is said: 39 *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature...*

Why does it not say: *Nor height, nor depth, nor any creature ... ?*

That would be the most natural way of saying it if all you wanted to do was to include ‘every created thing’ in the statement.

What’s that word “other” doing there?

And do you have any reason to think that the word “*creature*” now shifts to ‘a created thing’ or ‘created beings’—rather than thinking that it’s got something to do with something particularly said to you back up in the information that comprises your sonship establishment?

And you **were** told something about “*the creature*” back there, weren’t you?

And this is why it was so important to take the time and make sure that when Paul makes his final assessment of his sonship life under the influence of the Policy of Evil—that we made sure that we are convinced that he’s not just being ‘all-inclusive’ —**but that he’s got particular focus to each and every thing he says in** (:38 & 39)!

Because the truth of the matter is—if he’s not being that focused, then ‘*any other creature*’ could he be talking about any other created being—but you’ve got some big problems with that—because this is one single sentence—and that means Paul thinks about *death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present & things to come*—all as *creatures*!

Or all as ‘created things’—which, in the first place, **isn’t what it says**—and which just doesn’t fit with everything in that list! Nor does it fit with the context!

Again, each thing mentioned has a particular focus to it of being a **source** or delivery system through which the Satanic policy of evil will attempt to *separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus your Lord.*” (Newbold, Romans 8 (1101-1200), 1199-1200)

- In the notes for Romans 8:39, Newbold spends about thirteen pages talking about how there is a creature within a creature, instead of taking the plain common sense meaning of the term.
 - “**So then—my understanding is that when we come to this phrase, “*nor any other creature*” —let’s allow the context to dictate to us how to think about that.**

And even though it may not ‘feel’ quite right (or at the moment ‘sit well’ in our thinking [so to speak]) - instead of changing the meaning of a term like ‘*creature*’ to mean ‘created beings’ - (and I mean ‘changing’ the meaning, because that’s not what we’ve come to understand what the word *creature* is talking about in the context of our sonship establishment) —so for now, instead of changing the meaning of *creature* to something else, let’s allow it to mean just what we’ve come to understand and appreciate it to mean in the context of our sonship establishment.

And as you well know—we have had the term *creature* brought up; in fact, it is the **major** focus of our attention in sonship establishment when it comes to our Father making us aware of what His business with us is all about, the inheritance that comes out of that business, and what He’s going to do with us in that business, etc., etc. —

And so when we were dealing with “*the creature*” back in Romans 8:19-21, what did we come to understand and appreciate that *the creature* was?

Well, my understanding is that *any other creature* is talking about that same thing!

It's talking about the heavenly places! —It's not talking about any creatures or created beings on this earth!

And I not only understand that because of the contextual usage of the word *creature*—but far more than that, it's actually those two words that precede "*any other creature*"—the words *height* and *depth*!!

So, because of the nature of what the *height* and *depth* is talking about, plus the fact that I've already been given information concerning *the creature* (as being a major concern in sonship establishment) — therefore, my understanding is that *any other creature* refers to the fact that there are at least more than one *other creature* out there in "*the creature*"!" (Newbold, Romans 8 (1201-1215), 1201)

- "And the issue is, once again, to **not** get a technical, detailed, categorical, 'stem to stern' analysis of all this—but the issue is: All you need to understand right now is that, in view of the Adversary's policy of evil to try to *separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus*—the issue is that the Father's curriculum for our sonship education (to enable us to endure that policy of evil—& not succumb to it or be victimized by it—and to be *more than conquerors* in connection with it)—our Father's curriculum has taken into account everything that the Adversary can employ, **no matter from what is at his disposal (in either power base), to employ that policy of evil!** (No matter what position of strength he's able to employ it from!)

The whole range has been covered!!!

And that's all you need to know at this point. (detail-wise)

And that takes care of the *height* and the *depth*.

And that leaves that final phrase: *nor any other creature*.

And *the creature* as a whole is made up of these sub-systems that can, in and of themselves, be referred to as a *creature*.

And there's more than one other sub-system or sub-creature out there in *the creature* as a whole.

And the simplest way to say it for now—(and actually, it's perfectly sufficient to say it this way for now, and let it go at that for now) — the issue of *any other creature* pertains to everything that is in between the *height* and the *depth*.

And so you've got Paul's final grouping or fourth area/source from which the Adversary can and will deliver his attempts to separate us from *the love of Christ*: **39 *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature ...***" (Newbold, Romans 8 (1201-1215), 1213)

Concluding Remarks

- There are three phases in the process of Sonship Edification: 1) Declaration/Pronouncement, 2) Father and Son Laboring Together, 3) Manifestation of Sons. The goal of Sonship is the “manifestation” of the sons of God in the “creature,” according to Romans 8:19. The manifestation:
 - Marks the end of your formal education as a son
 - Results in your placement in the Father’s business
 - Indicates the degree of your “joint-heir” inheritance
 - Is the final stage and completion of your Adoption (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment: Lessons 45-46, 6-13)
- When believers are “manifested” and their adoption completed they will take up their position in their particular position in the “creature.” The position one occupies in the “creature” is directly commensurate with the level of educational and vocational training they received as determined by how much of the curriculum they completed.
- According to SE, the “creature” is not a synonym for “creation” but refers to the heavenly places exclusively. This conclusion is reached not by following standard common sense practices of Biblical exposition that gave rise the resurgence of Pauline truth and articulation of the mid-Acts Pauline Grace Message but by the formation of elaborate private definitions.
- In summation, we offer the following points regarding SE’s teaching on the “creature:”
 - The creature is outer space, i.e., the heavenly places including the sun, moon, stars, and other planetary bodies.
 - Outer space as a “creature” is a “living organism.”
 - As a “living organism” outer spaces possesses the following “creature features” and capacities:
 - A soul, spirit, will, feelings, sentiments
 - Capacity for intelligence, to think, to live, to labor, to earnestly expect, to wait, to interact with things
 - The Earth is the center of the “creature,” i.e., the inner man of the creature. The heavenly places are the embodiment of the Earth.
 - Based on Romans 8:39 there is a “creature within the creature,” or more than one sub-system or sub-creature in the entire creature.

- The New Creature of the body of Christ will liberate the “creature” from the “bondage of corruption” and give it its functional life and administer its corporate structure.
- Only properly educated and edified sons who have qualified themselves for the positions of intelligentsia in the creature (by following and taking seriously the SE curriculum) will produce and participate in the deliverance of “creature” at the manifestation of the sons of God.

Further Reading and Study

- For more information on SE’s explanation of the “creature” please visit the following links.
 - Newbold
 - [Romans 8 \(501-600\)](#)
 - [Romans 8 \(701-800\)](#)—see pages 736-800
 - [Romans 8 \(1101-1200\)](#)—see pages 1197-1200
 - [Romans 8 \(1201-1215\)](#)—see all 15 pages
 - McDaniel
 - Sonship Orientation(SO) Lessons [29](#) and [30](#)
 - SO Lessons [31](#) and [32](#)
 - SO Lessons [33](#) and [34](#)
 - SO Lessons [49](#) and [50](#)
 - SO Lessons [77](#) and [78](#)
 - SO Lessons [81](#) and [82](#)
 - SO Lessons [83](#) and [84](#)
 - Sonship Establishment Lessons [41](#) and [42](#) (all about the “creature” in Rom. 8:19)
 - Sonship Establishment Part 3 Lessons [33](#) and [34](#) (“creature” in Rom. 8:39)

Appendix A

Newbold and McDaniel on the 3 Stages of Sonship

Newbold	McDaniel
<p>“Because sonship is actually marked by 3 stages:</p> <p>1) <u>The declaration/pronouncement</u> that you’ve been adopted—when the Father said, ‘You will be to me a son, and I will be to you a Father’ - this is my son, and he’s now entering into business with me!’</p> <p>2) <u>When the Father and the son are laboring together</u>—the son is receiving the education—he’s not ready to labor all by himself yet.</p> <p>3) <u>Manifestation of sons</u>—that time when, (if it were a natural father and a natural son), the father would go outside and take down the sign that stood above the business for years, and then put up the new sign that reads, “Father & sons”.</p> <p>- It’s the time in which the Father <i>manifests</i> that His sons are now fully competent and fully qualified to run the business: they can do everything the father can do—and do it equally as well—so much so that it will be seamless as to if it’s the son or the father whose doing the job.</p> <p>- And #1 (the declaration) takes place when you believe in Christ as your only & all-sufficient Savior—#2 takes place when you get to Romans 8:14ff and runs over the span of your entire justified life on this earth—and then #3 (the manifestation of sons) takes place at the end of this dispensation of grace following the rapture and the judgment seat of Christ when the Father makes it evident to the universe that, ‘These are my sons—they’re qualified/equipped for these positions—they’ll do them just like I would do them!</p> <p>Therefore, depending on how you respond to this curriculum—and how it effectually works within you—that will determine what your <i>joint—inheritance</i> is going to be with Christ in the administration and managing of the affairs of <i>the creature</i>.</p> <p>— And when you’re <i>manifested as a son</i>—when you occupy the creature as the “<i>new creature</i>” —</p>	<p>“Sonship is marked by three stages:</p> <p>1) The declaration/pronouncement that you’ve been adopted (the public announcement that the son is entering into business with the Father)</p> <p>2) When the Father and the son begin laboring together (the son is receiving his education; he is not ready to labor all by himself yet.)</p> <p>3) Manifestation of sons (the education and apprenticeship are over, the Father puts up the new sign that reads, “Father & sons.”) . . .</p> <p>Stage 1 (the declaration) took place when you trusted Christ as your Savior. You were, at the point of your being justified unto eternal life, declared by your heavenly Father to be his adopted son.</p> <p>Stage 2 (the education) takes place for the duration of your life here on earth and only ends at your death or being caught out of this world at the event of the Blessed Hope.</p> <p>Stage 3 (the manifestation) takes place after the Blessed Hope and the Judgment Seat of Christ. The son receives his glorified body and the Father will publicly display to the entire universe His son’s position in the creature and declare the son’s capacity to run His business just as He would run it.</p> <p>It will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ that you will receive your placement in the creature as a principality, power, throne, might or dominion. It all depends on how your respond to the sonship curriculum and how it effectually works in you. This is your “joint-heir” inheritance which allows you to jointly administrate the affairs of the creature with Jesus Christ.” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment: Lessons 43-44, 8-10)</p>

<p>the issue will be: In this particular position in the creature, this son will handle it just exactly like I (the Father) would!</p> <p>— Whether it’s a Principality, Power, Throne, Might, or Dominion — at the judgment seat of Christ, when the <i>manifestation of the sons of God</i> takes place, the Father will say something to the effect of: This son is equipped to be a Might—or This son is equipped to be a Dominion — This son is qualified and has the capacity to function as a Principality—or Power.</p> <p>— And the issue is that when you’re placed in that position, (that is, when you’re “PLACED” as a son) the Father is <i>manifesting</i> that you’ll do it just as well as He would do it!</p> <p>— Your godly thinking is to such a degree that that position can be possessed & properly occupied by you to the emulation of your Father.” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), Page 771-772)</p>	<p>“In order to properly understand your adoption, you should view it as a status that you live out of for the rest of your life. But you should also understand it as a process made up of three stages:</p> <p>Stage 1 – The Declaration/Education:</p> <p>Declaration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point of Salvation • Age 12-18 <p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonship Orientation (Abba, Father) • Sonship Establishment • Sonship Education (Simple son) <p>Do you see what you are looking at in the Education part?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are looking at the first and second phase of Level 1 of your Sonship Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 would be orientation and establishment • Phase 2 would be the education in the four decision-making skills to become a “simple son” <p>Just as an earthly son would have an opportunity to be the “adopted son” simple because he is already part of the family, so our heavenly Father has extended an opportunity for every believer to an adopted son simply because they are “in the family” by means of justification.</p> <p>Just as not every earthly son has a willingness to enter into business with his earthly father, so not every “son of God” will have a desire to enter in business with their heavenly Father. Therefore, the “Declaration” and the subsequent education does not begin until the cry of “Abba, Father” is heard by the Father.</p> <p>Stage 2 – The Apprenticeship Education:</p> <p>Apprenticeship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to labor with your Father • Put your sonship education into practice
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 18-30 (the remainder of your time on earth) <p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add subtilty (young man) • Add knowledge and discretion (wise man) <p>Stage 3 – The Manifestation/Labor:</p> <p>Manifestation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgment Seat of Christ • Assigned position (principality, power, etc.) • Age 30 – rest of life (all of your time in eternity) <p>Labor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor to deliver the creature (times of restitution) • Labor to bring all things in heaven & earth into one under Jesus Christ (dispensation of the fullness of times) • Labor in the ages to come (eternity future) . . . <p>For you, your manifestation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marks the end of your formal education as a son • Results in your placement in the Father’s business • Indicates the degree of your “joint-heir” inheritance • Is the final stage and completion of your Adoption <p>When we are “manifested” as the sons of God, we will occupy the creature as the “new creature.” The manifestation of the sons of God is the last thing that happens before we move into the heavenly places and take up our positions there and begin laboring with our heavenly Father in all His business requires of us.</p> <p>That “manifestation” is what the creature is waiting for. The creature is waiting for your manifestation. And in some ways, so are you. But we will talk about that when we get down into verse 23.” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment: Lessons 45-46, 6-13)</p>
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Appendix B

McDaniel and Busch on the Creature

McDaniel	Busch
<p>“Now, does Paul explain anywhere in there what the creature is? Answer: he does not. What does that tell you? It tells you that you should already know what that creature is. And be sure, he is talking about a singular creature; a thing. It is a thing that God created which He calls a creature.</p> <p>Lots of preachers think this is talking about the earth, under the curse. Others would say this is the whole universe which is under the curse (“made subject to vanity”).</p> <p>But what I want you to notice is that this creature has a will, just as any living creature would have.</p> <p>Romans 8:20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.</p> <p>When sin entered the picture, “emptiness” (vanity) entered into that creature. But notice, “not willingly.” This creature has a will! What do have if you have a will? You have the ability to make a decision. And where does decision-making reside in a person? It is in the soul. This creature has a soul; an inner man.</p> <p>Later on, we are going to come back here and get some details of all this, but for now, let me just get to something specific. I want to give you just enough of this so that it grips you. But you should not just take my word for it. When we come back over here, we are going to have to prove and verify all the things in this passage and I’m not going to take the time to do that now.</p> <p>When God speaks in Genesis 1:1, what does He say?</p> <p>Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.</p> <p>Notice that God says “heaven” singular, not plural.</p>	<p>“So the name of the game is reconciliation, specifically the governmental “things” to be found in the “heavenly places.” But not just any reconciliation, for this reconciliation will provide Christ His “fullness.” With these two inheritances in Christ, God will reconcile all things for the administration of His righteousness and holiness which will display His character and essence of charity in “all things” for the “ages to come.” He will restore the haven and the earth to His original eternal purpose for them. Since He had kept it “hid” and it will involve us, the original purpose has obviously yet to be seen. The key to this will “the creature” which we may indeed see now, but with the eyes of faith.</p> <p>(quotes Rom. 8:23-25)</p> <p>Simply stated, in accordance with the functioning of the “heavenly places,” the earth is enveloped by a “creature” that is currently “cursed” and “corrupted.” As any creature, this heavenly creature has a “spirit” and “will” to it. It is currently suffering under the “bondage of corruption” (Rom. 8:20-21), experience both the “iniquity” produced by “corrupted wisdom” as well as God’s curse upon that wisdom in making it “subject to vanity” (Ezekiel 28:17-18; Romans 8:20-21) to display its true nature. It is not animated by God’s life, grace and peace, but rather death (Rom. 8:6). It is governed by the “prince of the power of the air” and is animated by a certain “spirit” of the “god of this world,” namely the one that we see “working” in the “children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2; 5:6; Col. 3:6) as they follow and emulate their “father” (John 8:44; Eph. 2:3). They are “children” and “sons” of a different sort and “walk” accordingly (Eph. 2:2; 4:17; 5:1).</p> <p>The functioning of this creature is intimately tied to how man conducts himself in matters of the spirit, having its various manifestations in the culture through the arts, entertainment, literature, music</p>

In the other passages throughout your Bible, you see things that lead you to understand that this has attributes of a creature. In the midst of this creature, God creates the earth. And God sees all of that which surrounds the earth as a creature.

When you get back to Romans 8, look at verses 21-22.

Romans 8:21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

Most of the time, preachers reverse the true order of this. They see the “creature” as the earth and the “whole creation” and the earth and the heavens.” But if you were paying attention as you read, you would see that the creature is the part that surrounds the earth (the outer part) and the whole creation is the creature plus the earth. The creature is the heavenly places. And it has a form to it. And the creature was created to be embodiment for the earth.

God views 2 main components to His creation; the heaven and the earth. Why did He do it that way? Well, think about this; if creature is that which surrounds and contains the earth, then what is it? Answer: it is a body. And what are you called in this dispensation of grace?

II Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

You are called a “new creature.” That is also why as the “body of Christ” you are going to be put into positions in the heavenly places (in the creature) you will function as the “body” of all of God’s creation. He determined for us to be the ones out there to carry out his instructions.

Look, if you have a creature that has a will, what has it got? A soul, right? God created the earth for Him to have a physical residence on. That earth is going to act as the “soul” and “spirit” sending out the messages that the body is going to respond to.

What you have to understand is that this whole

and so on. This spirit has its own corrupted “wisdom” and program for instruction and edification (Ezek. 28:17; I Cor. 1:18-31). When men are “filled” with that spirit, it too affects their “conversation” and “walk” of “faith” in the “course of this world” whereby that spirit produces not “fruit,” but “unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 2:2; 5:2-8, 18-19). When men have the “word” of that spirit “dwelling richly” in them, it too comes out in “signing” (Job 38:7; Ezek. 1:20-21; 28:13, 18). They “speak to themselves” and “teach and admonish” one another in accordance with that corrupted “wisdom” (Col. 3:16). . . This is what animate them and what they “walk” in accordance with (Eph. 2:2). The result is the “present evil world.”

. . . The creature will be liberated, we will glorify Christ in His heavenly kingdom and the proper relationship between heaven and earth will finally be restored as the two-fold purpose of God “in Christ” comes together in the “dispensation of the fullness of times” and manifests His life and spirit (Eph. 1:12-13, 18; 2 Tim. 4:18) for the “ages to come.” (Busch, *The Fullness of Christ: The Prisoner, the Creature & the Eternal Purpose of the Father of Glory*. Xulon Press: 2013, 56-58)

creation has not functioned properly from the beginning. But it will when we get out there. We will function as the intelligence that runs all the systems of the creature. As I write these words, my heart is beating and my lungs are breathing and they do it automatically without any thought or conscious action on my part. I don't even have to think about it. But there are impulses in my brain that carry that out on a 24/7 basis.

Here's another thing; it is all done with intelligence. When you move your arm, it with intelligence; coordination. Your leg doesn't move when you want to raise your hand, it knows how to operate. A body is made to move and have animation to it. This is the very reason the earth and the heavenly places have to reconciled back to God.

Every son, who has been properly educated to respond properly to the inner man of the creature, will be carrying out all the functions of the body of that creature. And what you are going to be looking at both in the heaven and on the earth is Christ; He is going to be **all in all**.

And we are going to be given the grand privilege of knowing what the inner man of this creature wants done and we will recognize it and carry it out. With the angels we will make judgments and decisions and this is going to go beyond anything you could ever imagine. This is where this is all going. This is what these Bible classes are aiming at.

And when you really see this in its fullness, you will know that there is not suffering you could ever endure that will compare with the glory that will be yours out there in the heavenly places. Now, don't come and ask me the details of all this. We have more to day about this when we get back here and this isn't all you will be taught about it. You will really be given the details of it when you get into level 2 of your education. But I just wanted you to begin seeing that there is a value to the wisdom and instruction that is being offered to you." (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 29-30, Pages 13-15)

"The creature is everything that God created in the creation week, minus the earth.

You could say that it is the entire **universe**, but the Bible does not use that terminology. Neither does it use the term “**outer space**.” But you get the idea I’m after; everything in the heaven is the creature. When you refer to both the heaven and the earth, that is “the **whole creation**.”

... You can see something else from this passage; how **the “creature” is separated out from “the whole creation.”** You have Paul talking about the creature 3 times and then at the end he refers to “the whole creation” which would include the earth.

Before we move on, there is something else I want you to notice about the creature. I want you to pay attention to the terminology used in the passage. The Bible uses terminology to indicate that **the creature really is a living creature**.

- It may not properly function,
- it may be subjected to vanity,
- it may be paralyzed,
- it may not be able to respond to the rest of its parts or the earth,
- but it is a living creature.

Verse 20 tells us the creature has a will.

- Only a living creature has a will.
- Even our dog has a will.
- Don’t get to thinking that these are “words of accommodation” or “anthropomorphisms.”
- This is a precise and accurate description of what is real and it is
- describing things exactly the way you are to understand them
- ignore these things to your own peril.

Verse 19 says the creature has an expectation. And what is that expectation?

- It expects to be delivered from that bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
- it expects to be delivered from its present predicament and
- it even knows who to look to for that deliverance!

Well, since all of that was a secret that was hidden from the foundation of the world, how did the creature come to know about that? And when did the creature first begin to have that expectation of deliverance? And how does the creature know about the “sons of God” who are going to liberate it?

The creature could not have known about its deliverance until it was preached by the apostle Paul; the mystery of Christ revealed. Now think about that for a minute.

- The creature is aware of the mystery! How aware is it?
- It is aware enough to know who is going to deliver it – the sons of God.
- It even knows these are “adopted sons.”
- The creature even knows when that deliverance will take place; when those sons are “manifested.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation: Lessons 83-84, Pages 1-2)

Regarding Romans 8:39 and the concept of “the creature within the creature” McDaniel states the following:

“Creature is one of those words we have seen used in a number of different ways. Here in Romans 8, we spent quite a bit of time on the creature, which is comprised of the sun, moon, stars and all the host of heaven. But I need to keep this basic, just as we did the first part of verse 39. Let me just say it this way: there are some things sitting back in your Bible that indicates some divisions and layers of government in that creature. That information will shed light upon why the word “creature” is used here. But this is not what you have to know in order to get your establishment working. You will come to know more about it later on, but right now there is a very simple way to look at this.

I am going to tell you what it is and then briefly explain how I came to this understanding. Here is the background:

- Verse 39 starts out with “height” which refers to the top position (throne/power

base) in the creature

- Verse 39 continues with “depth” which refers to the lowest (geographical, not in rank of power) power base in the earth
- What these have in common is that they are positions of power that allow Satan full access to anything he decides to use against us

Now we have to pay attention to the wording in this next phrase: Romans 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, **nor any other creature**, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The “giveaway” is the use of the word “other.” The use of the word “other” forces the last object to be something separate or different from the previously mentioned item or items and at the same time it is considered to be of the same “nature” as those items.

As for my first point: the next thing in the list cannot be a repeat of a previously mentioned item (especially within the grouping it is found in). Observe the definition in the Oxford English Dictionary: OED – “other” – used to refer to **a person or thing that is different** from one already mentioned or known.

Now for my second point: all of the things mentioned have to be of the same “ilk” or the same nature. For example, if you take all ten items in the list of Romans 8:38-39, they are all venues for the POE to carry out its attacks. While the groupings themselves may differ in nature from one another (for example, time is abstract while angels are very tangible) the items contained in each grouping must remain consistent in relation to each other. For example, angels principalities and powers are referring to things which are similar in nature. Life and death are also related to each other. Things present and things to come are of the same nature.

But especially when I use the word “other” I am referring back to previously mentioned things or persons, to point out a different thing or person. But within that group they must all be the same (as in they must all be a person or they must all be tangible thing or they must have some connection

by their nature.)

If I say, “Neither this, chair, nor that chair, nor any other chair will raise you up high enough to reach the ceiling,” that makes perfect sense because all the items agree in nature with each other.

So, here are my points:

- The “any other chair” refers to chairs which are different (separate) from the previously mentioned chairs
- Everything in the list is of the same nature; they are all chairs (not parts of chairs)

We do not use the phrase “any other _____” to speak of something of a different nature. For example, if I say, “Neither this chair, nor that chair, nor any other table will raise you high enough to reach the ceiling,” that does not make sense. There is no “table” from which to differentiate an “other” from. Now, let us apply these two principles to Romans 8:39. Since the “other” is used in conjunction with a “creature,” then the words “height and depth” must be referring to something of the same nature, but at the same time, something that is entirely different.

So what do we know that “height and depth” referred to? They were referring to positions of power that were occupied by Satan; supreme power bases that carried authority and capacity to the one who occupies the position. Therefore, when the next phrase says, “nor any other creature, then we know two things:

1. These two venues (height, depth) these two powerbases can rightfully be referred to as “creatures”

Let me illustrate how this is true even though Romans 8:39 does not call them creatures. I am going to make a statement similar to that of Romans 8:39 but I am not going to identify the first two items in the sentence (which would equate with “height” and “depth”) and I want you to tell me what they are – even though I am not going to name them.

Here goes: For I am persuaded that neither this (just suppose I am pointing at something but you

cannot see what I am pointing at), nor this, nor any other car shall be able to transport my entire family to church.

Now, you tell me: what were the first two things I was alluding to (or pointing at) even though you never saw them with your eyes? I was talking about two other cars. And you knew that. How did you know? Because when I used the phrase “any other car” then I was forcing you to know the first two were cars.

Let’s do it again, but this time I will fill in names for the first two items: “Neither a Ford, nor a Dodge, nor any other automobile shall be able to hold my entire family.” Even if you did not know what a “Ford” or “Dodge” was, if you knew what an “automobile” was, then you would know that Ford and Dodge are kinds of automobiles.

In the same way, when you read “any other creature,” you know that in some way, height and depth are considered to be “creatures.” And really, that should not shock you because you never saw the universe as a “creature” until Paul sprung it on you in Romans 1. So now, by use of the terminology, you see that these positions of power can also be referred to as “creatures.”

In my understanding, because of what I understand height and depth to be (Satan’s powerbase in the “height” of heaven and his powerbase in the “depth” of the earth) I do not see any of these referring to the creature we studied back up in Romans 8:19-21. Yes, one of these (height) is located “in” the creature, but it is not the creature. It is only one aspect of the creature and therefore is not synonymous with the creature any more than the state of Texas is a synonym for all 50 states. It is a part, but it does not represent the whole.

But there is another reason. Thus far I have been dogmatic about my understanding that the earth is not part of the creature (the one mentioned in vv. 19-21). Therefore, to make “height and depth” be “the creature” that we studied in the first part of our establishment, is either not correct (for the earth is not the creature, nor a part of the creature) or our understanding has to change to include the earth as part of the creature. And since the creature is the “body” component, and the earth, we understand to

be the “soul and spirit” in the midst of the body, the earth cannot be a part of the body (the creature). Either that is true, or “depth” cannot refer to anything in this earth, it must refer to something in the heavenly places, for that is where the “creature” (as we have come to know it) is found.

You have a body and you have a soul and spirit. Your body may die but your soul and spirit will live forever. One day, you will receive a new body, but not a new soul or a new spirit. They are different. In the same manner, the creature (the body) is different from the earth (soul and spirit). Even the terminology of creation attests to the difference by describing the creation as “the heavens and the earth” as though they are two separate things – which they are.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

It never says “God created the creature” and you were supposed to understand that both the heaven and the earth were being referred to. In fact, that combination of “heaven and earth” is used over 200 times in your Bible.

And you cannot just equate the “height” with the creature (vv. 19-21) and leave out the “depth” because now you have items of a different nature in a group together – and the word “other” will not allow that.

And that leads us to the second things we know:

2. By extrapolation, “any other creature” is referring to “any other powerbase which is available to Satan.”

When you use the word “other” you are comparing different things of the same kind. So, what kinds of things are verses 38-39 talking about? They are all talking about the various means (or systems, or venues) by which the Adversary can launch his attacks against us to make us quit our sonship.

Within the grouping of that last group, they are all “creature” that are found within the whole of creation; the heavens and the earth. That whole group (all three items) are referring to physical places in the creation, from which Satan is given

authority and capacity to carry out certain attacks against us. The first two (height and depth) refer to the main bases of operation in both realms: heaven and earth.

Therefore, “any other creature” refers to all the other physical places in creation that give Satan authority and capacity to function in various ways against us. Or to sum it up, we could say it like this: I am persuaded that neither...Satan’s main base of authority in the heavens, or Satan’s main base of authority on the earth, or any other base of authority he may have in all of the creation of heaven and earth shall be able to separate us...” Or to put it “geographically,” verse 39 is referring to Satan’s main base in the heavens, his main base on the earth and everything in between. And that is all you are supposed to understand about this as part of your sonship establishment.

But, as I said before, it is not all you will ever need to know. God did not just replace the seven categories of attacks with “anything Satan can do” nor did He replace the 10 venues for those attacks with “by any means and to any extent.” There is purpose behind not lumping everything together and just saying, “there is nothing Satan could ever do, by any means at his disposal, to separate you from the love of God...” But for the sake of establishment, that is the sense you need to understand. But later, those individual issues will get picked up and expanded and detailed and you are going to look back and see things in these verses that you cannot see right now – and the fact of the matter is, you did not need to see right now. (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment 3: Lessons 33-34, Pages 7-10)

Sunday, November 16, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 152](#)
[Sonship Edification: Distinguishing Characteristics, Part 2 \(Sonship Prayer\)](#)

Introduction

- Last week we began looking at some of the distinguishing characteristics of Sonship Edification (SE). In Lesson 151 we considered:
 - The Three Stages of Sonship
 - The Creature
- In this lesson we want to consider or look at another distinguishing aspect of SE by considering:
 - Sonship Prayer

Sonship Prayer

- At the outset, it is important to realize that Sonship Prayer (SP) is viewed as a special kind or type of prayer that functions in lockstep with SE’s curriculum apparatus. SP functions in accordance with all we have seen thus far regarding SE. Keith R. Blades makes this point in his notes titled [Sonship Prayer - In Connection with Being “led by the Spirit of God”](#)
 - “As was stated earlier, because we are God's adopted "sons” in this present dispensation, of all of God's people we should be the ones to whom prayer is the most meaningful and the most intimate. This is not only because of the close personal nature of our sonship relationship with God, but especially because of the edification in godliness that God has for us as His "sons." In truth, our edification in godliness demands that we have close, intimate communion with our Father. So if we deeply appreciate our sonship edification, then we should also deeply appreciate prayer.” (Blades, 1)
- SP is a byproduct of the Father/son relationship articulated by SE, according to Blades:
 - “As ‘sons’ we need to have with our Father the fullness of the interchange and exchange of the father-son relationship, for we cannot do without it. And as "sons" we not only have it, but are able to avail ourselves of it, through prayer.

Specifically for us, therefore, prayer should be the issue of us intelligently, deliberately, and with great focus, communing with our Father as ‘son to father and father to son.’

By prayer we should have intelligent and thoughtful heart-to-heart and mind-to-mind fellowship with Him about the education we are receiving from Him and the application of it in our lives, as He educates us as His ‘sons.’

We should thoughtfully, intently, and intelligently express to our Father matters of our own minds and hearts, being ones whose very minds and hearts are being brought into conformity to His mind and heart through the effectual working of His word within us.

Indeed this is something we should do intelligently; having keen awareness for what is taking place through prayer, along with having great desire for it taking place. We should understand and appreciate that through prayer, as we express our hearts to our Father, He `searches our hearts,' just as a father does when he communes with his son. He `searches our hearts' with the pure delight that it is for a father, who when he is educating his son, looks for and wants to find in his son's heart the effectual working of that education, and to hear from his son's mouth the fruits of it. . . (quotes Proverbs 23:5-6)

Moreover, our Father `searches our hearts' desiring not only to have such a level of intimate fellowship and communion with our own hearts and minds and to rejoice therein, but also to monitor and to gauge the progress of our edification in godliness and to respond to it accordingly.

He `searches our hearts' to know them and thereby to be able to give to us what our edification merits.

By the same token we also should engage in this intimate communion through prayer, because as `sons' we likewise should possess the eager desire to express to our Father what is on our minds or in our hearts.

As `sons' whom He is educating, we should want to prove to Him the effectual working of His word within us; tell Him what our mind is with regards to the issues of our lives and how precious His thoughts and His doctrines are to us.

Moreover we should want to benefit from Him `searching our hearts.'

Wherefore as `sons' prayer should be a most natural and indispensable part of our personal sonship relationship with God in this present dispensation. By it we should eagerly take the time in our daily lives to intelligently commune with our Father, both to enjoy and to profit from the benefits thereof.

We should be `instant' in prayer at the best of times, and at all others it should be an auto-response on our part. Engaging in it should be close to, if not, instinctive to us as `sons,' as we desire intimacy of communion with our Father and His searching of our hearts thereby.

Such is the basic understanding and appreciation that we as `sons' should have for prayer. Indeed the fundamental effectual working within us of the knowledge of our adoption as `sons,' (which ought to have us `crying, Abba, Father' in the first place), should initially produce within us the eager desire for having such a level of engaging communion and

fellowship with God our Father. The lack of such communion, or desire for it, is just plain unnatural for us as ‘sons.’

So then we should not only crave being edified by our Father through His word to us, we should also crave intelligently communing with Him about it through prayer. Such fellowship and communion is virtuous to Him, and He desires it with us being our ‘Father.’ We too, being His ‘sons,’ should possess the same Godly virtue of engaging in consistent, intelligent fellowship with Him.” (Blades, 1-3)

Note: Given the fact that Mark Newbold is the primary expounder/elaborator on the teachings of Blades and that Mike McDaniel follows Newbold, we will once again focus our comments regarding SP primarily (but not exclusively) to the teaching notes of Mark Newbold. Newbold’s explanation of SP commences when he reaches Romans 8:26-27 in the Sonship Establishment portion of the curriculum in Romans 8 (Rom. 8:16-39). Exposition of Romans 8:26-27 begins on page 815 of Newbold’s Notes on [Romans 8 \(801-900\)](#) and concludes on page 891 (76 total pages). All the numbers in parenthesis below are the page number citations for Newbold’s notes unless otherwise noted.

SP: General Information

- According to Newbold, Romans 8:26-27 is not designed to “define” our “infirmities” or “describe” the concept of “searching the hearts” because one is already supposed to know what they are. (815) Trouble understanding the “infirmities” comes from not getting the full benefit out of what it means to have a Father-son/daughter relationship as opposed to understanding prayer as a mere “concept of doctrine.” (839)
- Moreover, traditional “academic” understanding of prayer falls short whereas true understanding of the verses in question needs to come from the curriculum for our Sonship Education, i.e., the Father imparting his heart to his son. (816) Thus once again we see that the verses are to be understood based upon SE’s established curriculum apparatus instead of from the verses alone. Consequently, Newbold defines the “infirmities” in Romans 8:26 as “hindrances, impediments, or obstacles that might cause a son to become uncertain, doubtful, or skeptical about his education.” (817)
- There is no formula for prayer in Paul’s epistles; it is strictly a Sonship issue. (818) God the Father’s involvement in one’s Sonship education is engaged through SP. Thus SP is naturally known, realized, and understood on account of Sonship Orientation (Romans 8:14-15) and Romans 8:26-27 assumes that one is already familiar with the doctrines contained in these verses which explains why there is no description or definition offered in Romans 8:26-27 for SP. (819-820)
- Newbold argues that SP is different from other types of prayer in that only SP is “intelligent Sonship prayer takes the issue of communicating with God—not as Creator-God, but as our Father—and focuses the bulk of attention upon our relationship as Father-to-son/daughter and how we’re getting along in the sonship curriculum!” (827) This communion is what searching

the hearts in Romans 8:27 is about. Intimacy of fellowship with our Father, including SP is something that grows, develops, progresses, and matures through the effectual working of the curriculum. (840)

Sonship Prayer and the Attributes of God

- SE teaches that, in SP, God does not deal with his sons according to his omniscience so as to ensure that the father/son relationship is real.
 - “God certainly could just deal with you as the omniscient God that He is—but here’s the ‘kicker’ — God wants to be your Father so bad, that He’s placed limitations on Himself just to insure that this Father-son/daughter relationship is a REAL one!

He wants to function as your Father so bad that He’s created this special ministry for the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:26-27 to insure the uninterrupted communion and fellowship and communication between you and Him!” (836)
 - “And you realize therefore that under the normal circumstances of me knowing what to *pray for as I ought*—(when, say, you’re out in Level II and III) - and my *infirmities* become less and less—I’m going to find myself therefore where I intelligently know exactly what to pray for—and when I do pray for it, and make a request & a supplication—I know I’m not just sending it out there in ‘dead air’ (so to speak) - and I also know that I’m not sending it out there to my Father who expects me to think about it in connection with His omniscience and omnipotence and omnipresence—no—I’m going to talk to Him and tell Him some things and make requests & supplications, and I know that since He’s treating me as a son and He’s a Father to me—then He’s going to honestly assess my request—and in the course of my sonship prayer—before I say ‘Amen’ and bring the prayer to a conclusion—I’m looking for a RESPONSE—because He’s *searching my heart* for the purpose of **giving** me one!” (861-862)
 - “So when we sit down together—and He and I engage in sonship prayer, He’s expecting to hear those things out of me—and since He’s not going to operate upon His omniscience, He’s not going to respond to me by saying, ‘Yeah, I know, I know, I know that too.’ ” (869)
- Mike McDaniel also asserts that God does not deal with his sons according to his omniscience.
 - “And if you cannot pray for the right things, then you have a problem because your Father is not dealing with you out of His omniscience. He is not sitting there saying, ‘I know what you are going to say before you say it.’ I am not saying that He does not have the power to deal with you out of His omniscience, but that is not how He has chosen to deal with sons.

Instead, you are going to have a real Father/son relationship just as you would have with your earthly father. That means that you have to communicate or He does not know what you are thinking. That makes sonship prayer the essential thing that it is in order for you to learn ‘the knowledge of God.’ The ‘knowledge of God’ (Proverbs 2:5) includes the entire sonship curriculum.” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment Lessons 59-60, Page 1-2)

- “That last phrase in bold type makes prayer very different in God’s program with the little flock than with the body of Christ in the dispensation of grace. How it is that God can know what they have need of before they ask Him? He can because He dealt with them out of His omniscience. He is not dealing with you out of His omniscience. When you come to pray, He is keeping the knowledge of what you are going to ask for out of His mind and He has determined that if you do not tell Him about it, then He is not going to know it.” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment Lessons 59-60, Page 4)
- “That makes perfect sense, for if God is indeed dealing with us as a real father and son, apart from his omniscience and omnipotence, then it is necessary for us to provide the means and opportunity for Him to judge us; to evaluate us. We have to allow Him to see our advancement in the curriculum and that we are making full use of the things we have learned. The searching of the heart is what the Father does to make sure that the son is fully benefitting from the education and knows where to take the son next. This is ‘why’ the Father does the searching of the heart. And that should make us want to have Him search our hearts!” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment Lessons 59-60, Page 11)
- “This Father/son relationship that you have with your heavenly Father is not a pretend or contrived relationship. God so means to have this relationship with you that He has set aside His omniscience as the means of dealing with you, solely for the purpose of making sure this relationship was genuine in every way. This relationship you have is not one of Creator to creature, or as Almighty God to insignificant man. This is a relationship of Father and son/daughter.” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment Lessons 61-62, Page 2)
- “A man may be king and rule with an iron fist, but when his children come to him, they crawl up on his lap and put their arms around his neck and call him daddy. Their relationship is very different from anyone else’s. That is the way it should be and that is how your heavenly Father desires it to be. That is why He has set aside His omnipotence and omniscience, so He can enjoy the reality of a relationship that is dependent upon communication and time together.” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment Lessons 61-62, Page 4)
- “God wants to do far more with you than sit in heaven and perform miracles from a distance. He wants to instill His character in you through the intimacy of a Father/son relationship. God’s desire to be a Father to you is so real and so genuine that He has limited His own omniscience and omnipotence when it comes to dealing with you so that this relationship is real!” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment Lessons 61-62, Page 6-7)

- “Those infirmities that Paul mentions in Romans 8 are going to make it so that you need to ask your Father to do something for you, but you will not know what to ask for. That is a problem because He is not dealing with you out of His omniscience; if you do not tell Him, He will not know what to do. Do you see the problem?” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment Lessons 61-62, Page 10)

SP: Bi-Directional Learning and Communication

- SE is not passive (824) and therefore, one cannot succeed in their Sonship life without SP. (821) Sonship Prayer is “bi-directional” communication with your heavenly father. (819) Unless a Son is engaged in “bi-directional” interactive learning he or she will not learn what they need to learn. Sonship Education demands “bi-directional learning.” (823) One cannot succeed in their Sonship life without SP. (821) All of this is spelled out in the curriculum and table of contents back in Proverbs 1, according to Newbold. (822)
- The bi-directional interaction and communication that comprises SP includes the following, according to Newbold:
 - “The Father-son/daughter relationship is real, not pretense—hence you have to talk to your Father for Him to know your thoughts.

The Father needs to hear your requests and supplications in order to respond to them (and to assess and judge how the information He’s given you is working).

Going over your day with your Father—recapping it—how life becomes the framework to live your sonship life.

Dealing with the aims, goals, and objectives.

Progress, markers, checkpoints in the curriculum.

Gratitude.” (847)

SP: Functions According to the Curriculum

- Mike McDaniel, in his notes for Sonship Establishment Lessons 57 and 58, says that I Thessalonians 5:17 only applies to those saints who have attained unto Level III of the curriculum. Praying without ceasing is an advanced doctrine that ought not to be in the frame of reference of a saint who is at a Romans 8 level of education/understanding.
 - “To answer my question as to why believers have to pray, you may have avoided going back to the gospels to get your command to pray and instead you went to Paul’s epistles and pulled up something out of Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 5:17—Pray without ceasing.

But as we are only in Romans 8, what is written over in Thessalonians is not yet in our thinking. In fact, in the context of what is being written, this is actually sitting in some very advanced doctrine. There is quite a bit between Romans 8 and I Thessalonians 5 that cannot be overlooked if you are going to see the Thessalonians verse properly.” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment Lessons 57-58, Page 7)

- In short, the nature of SP changes as one progresses, or changes as one matriculates through the curriculum. Believers with a Romans 8 level of understanding are limited in their skills and abilities, so Romans 8:26-27 is designed to meet them where they are at in their Romans 8 level of maturity. (861) The intercessory ministry of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:26 is done for us in a **proxy-type** manner by the Holy Spirit himself—for our benefit—and also for the Father’s benefit—so that the bi-directional interaction between you and your Heavenly Father continues right on.” (845) This “proxy” ministry of the Holy Spirit is given to compensate for the lack of skill and ability in SP that a saint at a Romans 8 level of education possesses. Consequently, Romans 8:26-27 looks forward to the time when Sonship Establishment is over and the actual instruction in the Sonship curriculum gets underway. In the meantime, “the Father has provided for us to have the Spirit *intercede* for us and actually articulate to the Father what we need to ask for: but can’t—and then the Father can then do His part to provide for us what we need.” (844) By implication then, the intercessory ministry of the Holy Spirit is therefore temporary until one attains unto the higher levels of the curriculum.
- The full measure of SP will not and cannot be engaged in until a certain point in the curriculum is reached, i.e., when a Sonship Education proper is taken up in Romans 12. (841) In the meantime, Romans 8:26-27 and the searching of the hearts is in accordance with Sonship Orientation and Sonship Establishment. (841) Saints who attain unto Levels II and III of the curriculum will know how to pray on account of their advanced education thereby limiting their infirmities and reducing the need of the Holy Spirit to make intercession on their behalf. (861)

SP: The Searching of the Hearts

- Why does God our Father want to search our hearts? Newbold answers for “the same reason a natural father would search his natural son’s heart,” i.e., “to assess how well he’s learning what he needs to be learning.” (829) The Father “evaluates the measure of the effectual working of what his son has learned based upon what his son says to him.” (829) This in turn allows the Father to, “judge how next to deal with his son in connection with making further progress—not only in the advancement in the curriculum—but how to deal with his son when it comes to making sure his son can gain, and make full use out of the information he’s been given and the learning that he’s to acquire from that information (to put it into practice & apply it in the details of his life).” (830) SE maintains that “The searching of our hearts (Romans 8:27) is the means by which we get, and are assured ourselves, that we can get the full effectual working and benefits out of what our Father is teaching us.” (830)

- Psalm 139 is used to explain what the “searching of the hearts” is in Romans 8:27. (842) According to Psalm 139 there are two different responses or kinds of searching that the Father will give as he searches your heart in SP, according to Newbold. (871) The two ways the Father searches your heart are with respect to your decision making in two arenas: 1) reviewing your day, (840, 875) and 2) previewing the next day before it starts. (875) This second type of heart searching is particularly challenging at the outset of Sonship Life according to Newbold:
 - “But only one of those two parts—(from the Father’s perspective) — only one of the *searchings* can have some trouble in connection with it at the outset of the son’s life.

And it’s the **2nd searching**—in connection with previewing what’s coming up—the *searching* when the son sets before his Father and says, (more or less), ‘Here’s what I’m going to do tomorrow...’

And it’s in connection with ‘Here’s what I’m going to do tomorrow’ that the son is naturally going to make some requests & supplications.

And it’s in connection with that—when the son has, at the beginning of his education & life, the son has no frame of reference for ever having done that before—he has no skill sets put into place in connection with it—he has no experience upon which to base his participation in that intelligently—that he’s going to frequently *not know what to pray for as he ought*.

Nevertheless, the Father’s participation in that aspect of sonship prayer, and that aspect of communing with His son—He still needs to hear what it is that His son actually needs, **because tomorrow is still coming!** and His son is still going to have to make decisions!

Yet His son is in a position of being unable to express them adequately — he just can’t put them into words—he can’t intelligently express his needs to his Father — hence, the Spirit’s *help!*

And the Spirit *helps both* parties: for the son, He expresses those requests & supplications for him—the Father knows *what is the mind of the Spirit*—and He (Father) can go ahead and do His 2nd aspect of *searching*.” (876)

SP: The Father’s Response to the Searching of the Hearts

- **“Just how does the Father respond in the *searching of the heart* so that we know we have received confirmation (or not) about our plans and decisions to take the information He’s given us and utilize it in a particular way in the details of our lives? In other words, how does He (without doing so audibly) - how does He make us aware that our decisions are wise, sound, and proper— and therefore produce the contentment that what we’ve chosen to do is *that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God?*” (879)**

- Newbold offers the following answer to his own question:
 - “First of all—I think it’s important to just say this and to make this distinction in your thinking so that we don’t get off track — and that is that this issue of the *searching of the heart* that Romans 8:26-27 is after—(and that occurs at the end of the 139th Psalm) — **does not concern matters of the curriculum itself—it concerns matters of the relationship we have with our Father as we USE the curriculum** (and as it does its effectual job within us, and as we avail ourselves of the capacities and the abilities that it gives us)! **The curriculum is made up of information that’s designed to be used!**

And what we do in the fellowship of sonship prayer—is that we go over with our Father our **use** of that information.

And in a nutshell—what’s designed to take place in sonship prayer is that through all of the features and events that comprise what sonship prayer is— the end result of the whole thing is that it is designed to make it so that the son has the **confidence** that he **has** been using what he’s learned properly, and as he plans to use it on each succeeding day, he’s **confident** that he’s **going** to use it wisely and soundly and godly.

And let me say, along those lines—(in case I’ve either said it wrong outright in previous Bible classes, or I’ve given you the wrong impression in previous Bible classes) — that we’re concerned with simply proving *what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*—we’re not concerned with making *prudent* decisions or *discretionary* decisions or even making the most *excellent* decision—in other words, we’re only concerned with making either a **good** decision for the use of the information we’ve been given; or making a **bad** decision for the use of the information.

We’re not concerned with good, better, and best right now.

In fact, you don’t get to *approve* the *things that are excellent* until you get out there in Level II sonship education! (Phillipians 1:10)

And that’s NOT what David’s talking about here in the 139th Psa.

He’s only dealing with the difference of: ‘Am I doing what’s **right**, or am I doing what’s **wicked**?’

He’s only concerned with— ‘Is the path I’m on, and the path I’m going to choose to go on tomorrow, **right**, or **not**?’

And that’s the fundamental issue, **always**, when it comes to this issue of the *searching of the heart* that occurs at the end of sonship prayer.

It’s not an intricate analysis of every single thing that could potentially take place in connection with a decision you make! . . . So now the issue in having his Father come along and *search his heart* in connection with that decision—is to **confirm** in his heart that it’s a good path he’s chosen, or **not** a good path.

And therefore in light of that, David is asking God to *search his heart* in order to **confirm** to him that his decision to utilize the information God gave him—in the particular way in which David is going to use it on an upcoming day—is *good*, or *wicked*.

. . . And when you have someone else come along and listen to what you say, and agree with you—(especially when it’s your Father)— that’s a component of confidence—that’s re-assurance—that’s **confirmation** (to place a firm object right up against another firm object, and assert its firmness).

And so, the last question is: How is that affirmness asserted? (What do you expect to take place?)

And the answer to that is: There would be nothing in your own heart to indicate otherwise!

But why would you say that?

And the answer to that is: Because it’s what my Father taught me, and told me!

If your Father has already told you that He’s operating in this particular arena—and then you toss something into that arena—and you get nothing back in that arena—**that’s how He’s confirming to you that you’re making sound use of the information He’s given you!**

And if it’s the other end of the spectrum—that your use of the information isn’t sound—then it will be brought to your mind that, ‘That’s NOT what He taught me, that’s unsound use of the information He’s given me!’

In other words, something will be brought to your attention of the unwise, unsound use of the information.

Now, maybe that’s not good enough for you—maybe you need to have something said to you about **how** the unsoundness of the use of the information will be brought to your attention?” (879-882)

- The Father is going to impress upon the heart of his son his response to the searching of the son’s heart, “. . . you’re asking Him to *search your heart*—and that’s where the answer is going to be received.” (884) While Newbold is clear that God is not going to reply or offer his response in an audible voice he struggles to state exactly how the Father to son side of the bi-directional communication aspects of SP actually occurs.
 - “. . . my understanding is that as you sit there at the time you’re asking your Father to search your heart—you are sitting there thinking about it all—knowing that this is what’s going on — and if nothing comes to your attention in connection with that as you lay it against what your Father has taught you and told you are the things that are compatible with your sonship life — if nothing comes to your attention: then proceed on as purposed!

And by ‘sitting there’ — I don’t mean that something’s going to come out of the blue (so to speak) - like a bolt of lightning—or anything in an external-type manner! (Even though anytime you’re dealing with God, you’re dealing with the ‘supernatural’ — this isn’t ‘supernatural’ in any external sense at all).

No. — He’s still operating within the arena of your heart.

And in your heart, therefore is the capability to expose any unsoundness to what you have purposed—if there's unsoundness to it. (Therefore you have :24)

And see if there be any wicked way in me,—that's the heart being made aware of any unsoundness to what's been purposed—and the *seeing* is a knowing that it is 'wicked' — or if nothing comes to mind, it's an awareness that it is not *wicked*, it's a *good way*!

. . . And really (again) — what our Father is carrying out with us—and what we carry out with our Father — is all the same things that go on in normal, natural sonship.

The only difference is—there's not an audible conversation (so to speak) going on between the two of us.

But all of the features and events that go on in the fellowship and communion of sonship prayer take place nevertheless!!!

. . . that curriculum has also got the capacity, in view of what we've just learned from it, and how we've just utilized it—**to be utilized by HIM to give us the response to that searching!**

And the reason why that's so important to understand and appreciate is because that's where your **confidence** comes from! (That's where your confirmation/confidence comes from: **from that curriculum!**)

Since you know that HE can utilize the very information that you have utilized yourself when it came to formulating your decision making— you know that He can utilize it to *search* you; to *know your heart*; *try you*; *know your thoughts*; and **expose** anything that is there that would be inconsistent & unsound in connection with what you've planned & purposed to do.

Then when nothing is brought to your attention thereby—you have the confirmation you're looking for—and as natural fellowship & communion with the Father concludes—then you can say, '**Amen.**' (I'll proceed as planned.)" (885-887)

The Goal of SP: Success in Sonship Education

- The whole issue in SP is the success of your Sonship Education, according to Newbold. (831)
 - “In fact—the measure of the son's appreciation for sonship prayer is directly tied to the measure of appreciation for his sonship education.
 - Ex. If it's only 65% valuation for his sonship education—then that's the limit to which his valuation for sonship prayer can go to.” (831)

Summary of Sonship Prayer According to Newbold

- The following is a summary of Newbold’s exposition of SP found on pages 889 through 891 of his printed notes on Romans 8 (801-900). Please recall that SP is first introduced in Romans 8:26-27.
- Clause 1—Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:
 - “This *help* of the Spirit is a grace provision for us at the beginning of our sonship lives—especially in view is the time when we begin receiving the instruction of our four sonship decision-making skills in Romans 12:3ff.

What are our *infirmities*? and Why do we have them at the beginning of our sonship lives?” (889)

- Clause 2—“for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.”
 - “The issue isn’t that we don’t have a clue how to pray—the issue is very specific—that at the outset of our sonship lives, when it comes to knowing what to specifically ask *for* (or to request and supplicate our Father for) in connection with using the information we’ve learned outside of the environment we learned it, (for another application to some detail in our lives), we just don’t have enough experience yet to intelligently know what to *pray for as we ought*. (889)

And having these *infirmities* has been a plaguing problem that has troubled/bothered us from the time of our sonship orientation—and due to knowing the **absolute need** of the bi-directional communication of sonship prayer, we realize the seriousness of this problem and recognize that it could be the very reason for our Father’s curriculum to **fail** & therefore conclude that this sonship education **just won’t work!**

But our Father has anticipated this—and so has provided for us that we won’t be hindered at all by our *infirmities*—and so the next clause gives us His solution for our problem:”

- Clause 3—“but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”
 - “Now you know one of the very vital and important reasons for *giving* us the Spirit of God at the moment we were justified—as well as the importance of the *dwelling* of the Spirit—all of which is made possible by the New Covenant!

The Spirit steps in for us and, with *groanings* which we cannot utter, He makes *intercession* for us (*intercession* = He speaks for us; on our behalf) - and He makes the request and supplication to the Father for us.

But (:26) isn't good enough (on its own) to produce in us a total relaxed attitude about this situation—one other thing has to be addressed—and so (:27) gives additional information that specifically addresses the **root** of the problem: the possible failure in the area where the decision-making process is settled and where full assurance of the soundness of the decision is given by the Father to the son: the final aspect of sonship prayer—*the searching of the heart*—“ (890)

- Verse 27—“And he (the Father) that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he (the Spirit) maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.”
 - “Furthermore, the Father, since he can't know what our mind is in our *infirmities* unless we can **tell** Him (and we can't), turns to the Spirit's help—and since He knows *what is the mind of the Spirit*—He receives (and we can rest fully assured that He receives) accurate and proper information in the form of request & supplication from the Spirit's *mind*.

Therefore we have assurance in the accuracy of the information the Spirit **gives** to the Father—and we have assurance in knowing that the Father **receives** the information accurately and properly!

And on the basis of that—the Father has been told what we need, and therefore He can give us His answer that we're looking for!

Hence, we can have unperturbed constancy and godly contentment and satisfaction in sonship prayer—even at the outset of our sonship education, when, because of our *infirmities*, it would seem as though the entire educational system of our Father would break down and fail.

But it won't fail—**it will succeed!** And we can relax and enjoy our sonship education, and the successful putting of it into practice in the details of our lives, right from the get-go!” (891)

Further Reading and Study

- For more information on Sonship Prayer interested parties are encouraged to consider the following resources.
 - *Keith R. Blades*
 - [“Sonship Prayer - In Connection with Being “led by the Spirit of God”](#)
 - [“A Brief Look at Romans 8:26-27, at Prayer in General, and at Sonship Prayer in Particular”](#) in *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly* 1st Quarter, 2003
 - Mark Newbold
 - [Romans 8 \(801-900\)](#)
 - Mike McDaniel
 - Sonship Establishment Lessons [57](#) and [58](#)
 - Sonship Establishment Lessons [59](#) and [60](#)
 - Sonship Establishment Lesson [61](#) and [62](#)
 - David Winston Busch
 - [More Than Conquers: Sufferings, Prayer and the Intercessory Ministry of the Holy Spirit](#)
 - [Q&A: Sonship Prayer](#)

Sunday, November 23, 2013—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 153](#)
[Sonship Edification: Distinguishing Characteristics, Part 3 \(Indwelling Holy Spirit \(Romans 8:9\)\)](#)

Introduction

- In Lessons 151 and 152 we began looking at some of the distinguishing characteristics of Sonship Edification (SE). In those lessons we considered:
 - The Three Stages of Sonship
 - The Creature
 - Sonship Prayer
- In this third lesson in the sequence regarding the Distinguishing Characteristics of SE, we would like to touch on the following issue:
 - Spirit Dwelling in Romans 8:9

Thoughts on Romans 8:9

Note: These notes on Romans 8:9 are taken from a lesson titled [Bible Study Methods, Part 3](#) taught this past August at Grace Life Bible Church. Interested parties are encouraged to watch this lesson by following the provided link. A more detailed exposition of some of the points below is offered in this lesson.

- *Ye*—who are the “ye” in Rom. 8:9? The saints at Rome.
 - The greater context of the book of Romans defines who the “ye” constitutes in the verse. Romans. 1:6, 11, identifies who the “ye” are, i.e., the saints at Rome. “Ye” is not found again in Romans until Romans 6:3.
- *Are not in the flesh*—in English is this part of verse past, present, or future tense? Present, “ye,” i.e., the saints at Rome ARE NOT in the flesh.
 - The tense of the verb “are” in Greek is present indicative which indicates something that is occurring while the speaker is making the statement. So while Paul is writing to the saints at Rome (“ye”) they are already “not in the flesh.” All this does is confirm what is readily apparent in English, i.e., the saints at Rome were not, at the time of Paul's writing, in the state of being in the flesh.
- *But in the Spirit*—so the Romans are not presently in the flesh but in the Spirit.
 - Romans 7:5—the Greek word rendered “were” is in the imperfect tense thereby indicating a continuous or linear action in the past. In other words, the Romans before being found in the Spirit were in the continuous or linear state of being in their flesh.

- So the Romans used to be in flesh but now they are in the Spirit. How is that possible? What changed?
 - Romans 5:1—the Romans were justified by faith. As a result of their justification they were “given” the Holy Ghost, i.e., Spirit of God in verse 5.
 - Given—Bestowed; granted; conferred; imparted; admitted or supposed.

- *If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you*—the word “dwell” is once again present indicative active which indicates something which is occurring while the speaker is making the statement. In other words all the saints at Rome (“ye”) are not in the flesh but in the Spirit because they have the Spirit of God actively dwelling within them. How do we know that the Saints at Rome had God’s Spirit dwelling within them as a present reality? Because they had been “given” the Holy Ghost in Romans 5:5. How could they have been given the Spirit but not have the Spirit dwelling within them?
 - Clearly the “if so be” is not introducing a condition in the sense that not all the saints at Rome have the Spirit of God dwelling in them. Rather it is because they do have the Spirit of God dwelling in them that they are in the state of not being in the flesh.
 - Dwell—to abide as a permanent resident, or to inhabit for a time; to live in a place; to have a habitation for some time or permanence.
 - I Corinthians 3:16—“are the temple of God” is once again a present indicative active which means the saints in Corinth (“ye”) were already active the temple of God while Paul was penning the Epistle. Why? Because the Spirit of God dwelt within them. Yet again, “dwelleth” is present indicative active.
 - Ephesians 1:13—“ye were sealed”, 4:30—“ye are sealed”—both of these expressions are aorist indicative passive statements. Aorist indicative indicates an action that is not continuous, i.e., a one time event/occurrence.
 - At the moment of your justification believers are “given” the Holy Spirit which once and for all time “seals” the believer into the body of Christ. An unsaved man is in the flesh whereas a believer is in the Spirit because the Spirit of God dwells within him as a positional reality based upon one’s justification.

- *Now If Any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*—the word “have” is once again present indicative active which once again denotes something that is occurring while the speaker is speaking as is the verb “is” toward at the end of the verse. A man who does not presently have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him is “none of his” because he is still in his flesh, i.e., he is not a saved man.

- Have— 1) To possess; to hold in possession or power. 2) To possess, as something that is connected with, or belongs to one.
- What does it mean to “have not?” To not possess something or have power over it. So why would a man “have not the Spirit of Christ”? Because the spirit of Christ was never “given” to him. Why would a man not be “given” the Spirit of Christ? Because he is not a saved man and is therefore still in his flesh.
- Much is made by the supporters of SE about the conditional nature of the Spirit’s dwelling on account of the following verses in the Prison Epistles.
 - Ephesians 3:17—“dwell” in this verse is aorist infinitive and thereby refers to a punctiliar (describes a single event or moment in time, like when a ball hits the bat or a wave hits a boat) i.e., a non-continuous action.
 - Colossians 3:16—“dwell” is present active imperative which indicates a command to do something that involves continuous or repeated action.
- In these contexts the word “dwell” carries a different meaning than it did in Romans 8:9 and II Corinthians 3:16. Just because someone “dwells” in a fixed location does not mean they have been allowed to “make themselves at home.” This is what these passages are speaking about, allowing Christ to dwell in your heart in the sense that Christ is allowed to make himself at home in your life, i.e., the interior decorator of your inner man as it were.
 - Ephesians 5:18—“be filled” is once again in the imperative mood. Just as an intoxicated man is functionally controlled by the power of the alcohol, believers are to be controlled, i.e., filled to capacity, by the operating influence of God the Holy Spirit. Paul is not saying go be filled with the Spirit in the sense that the Ephesians do not have or possess the Spirit. Rather he is saying allow the Holy Spirit that you already possess (Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 4:30) to be the operating principal in your life.
- In these contexts, believers are entrusted to make the active choice of faith to allow Christ and his word to “dwell” within them in the functional/active sense. They are not saying maybe Christ dwells in you and maybe he does not in a positional sense.
- Just because all these verses contain the word “dwell” in the context of believers making choices does not mean that is how the word “dwell” is being used in Romans 8:9. Romans 8, is explaining the positional realities that make Ephesians 3:7, 5:18, and Colossians 3:16 possible in the believers life. If the Holy Spirit did not “indwell” members of the body of Christ based upon that power, could one ever chose to “walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”
- Words build sentences, sentences build verses, and verses build contexts. One cannot disregard the TEXTUAL FACTS of verses and think that they have adequately understood the CONTEXT.

SE on the Spirit “Dwelling” in Romans 8:9

Note: Once again we will primarily follow the teaching notes of Mark Newbold in the main section of this lesson. Parties interested in reviewing the comments of Mike McDaniel and/or David Winston Busch on this subject are encouraged to review Appendix A on page 15. Please recall from Lesson 147 that Brother Busch teaches that the Spirit dwelling according to Romans 8:9 is the “goal of the curriculum” (see Appendix A for documentation).

- In studying to teach this lesson we encountered something shocking that we did not expect. Namely, Newbold puts forth two different teachings in his printed notes with respect to dwelling of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:9. Early on in the notes from Romans 8 (101-200), Newbold stated unequivocally that all members of the body of Christ are permanently “indwelt” by God the Holy Spirit. Later on in Romans 8 (601-700), and without offering an explanation or correction of his former stance, Newbold reverses course and maintains that believers are not permanently indwelt by God the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit only indwells when certain conditions are met. Consequently, we need to compare and contrast Newbold’s early teaching on Romans 8:9 with his later teaching.

Newbold’s early Teaching on Romans 8:9

- Early on Newbold teaches the logical meaning of the English phrase “if so be” and its corresponding Greek word *eiper*.
 - “if so be” (*eiper*) (What a wonderful way to say it in the English!)= a 1st Class Conditional phrase = if, and it’s true! [*eiper*] = if indeed; if after all; if so be

You get three small, but very powerful English words that just kind of come along and underscore, or hammer home the issue in your thinking—an obvious issue, granted, but a very important one when it comes to the way confidence gets properly developed in the mind!

if (and it is true)

so (it is so—it is the reality of the situation)

be (it is the reality of my being—there is no ‘seeming’ or ‘seems to be that way’ about it at all!)

It is TRUE that it is **SO**; it is TRUE that it **BE**!

It is like, bang, bang, bang! ‘*If—so—be*’ ” (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), 28)

- Not only is this exactly how I explained the phrase “if so be” in my paper *Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17* but understanding these TEXTUAL FACTS

logically leads one to conclude in Romans 8:9 that all believers have the Spirit dwelling within them as a matter of FACT without any strings attached or conditions in play. Consider these further early statements by Newbold.

- “And this is not just some kind of silly, elementary issue—this is a huge issue, (fundamental, yes, but huge) - and it is so huge and so important to say (to bring to your attention) and to make use of as a confidence building issue, because the Holy Spirit dwelling in you is the ONLY means for your mortal body to get activated as you *walk after the Spirit under grace!*

And you’ve got to hear this—and you’ve got to know this beyond a shadow of a doubt!

Without the Spirit of God dwelling in you, as the active Member of the Godhead in charge of sanctification, — without Him, you don’t stand a snowball’s chance on an August day in North Carolina of ever having the capacity to do anything about your mortal body’s predicament it finds itself in, even though you **have** been justified unto eternal life!

. . . There’s no mystery or secret, deep meaning that we’re after here at all. (sorry) - The issue of the Holy Spirit indwelling you in this context is a straight-forward, fundamental issue. It’s not that the HS is dwelling is some specialized way or some deeply theological conceptualized way at all.

My understanding is that you are getting some very basic, fundamental, even obvious—but profound and powerful appreciation of, and confidence that you really do have all the necessary ‘tools’ you need in order for the reality that your mortal body is going to be dealt with by God’s J-ness & grace so that it can and will be functionally alive unto God!

My understanding is that *dwell* is to be taken in its primary, fundamental sense—to abide or live in a state or condition. And sanctification-wise, that’s the state or condition you’re in—you’ve got the Holy Spirit *dwelling* or living in you.

. . . The word *dwell* went through some pretty serious changes as it was brought into the English language—and over the course of Old English and Middle English, so that by the time it was being used in Modern English (at the time the KJ translators were working), the word *dwell* implied something not only staying, but **staying perpetually** —that is *dwell* indicates that whatever is dwelling is dwelling permanently! It’s not only taking up residence, but it’s taking up permanent residence!

And it’s that shade of meaning of being **permanent** that so well fits the context here of confidence-building.

That is, the Holy Spirit *dwells* in you—He indwells you; and by nature of *dwelling* , you know that it is a permanent arrangement—He will never leave you—you’re never going

to find yourself in a predicament where you are without Him; and if you've got Him *dwelling* in you, that means everything when it comes to putting your position in Christ into practice and when it comes to what goes on in your mind sanctification-wise and what goes on with your mortal body sanctification-wise!" (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), 126-130)

- Early on Newbold, taught that all believers were "indwelt" by God the Holy Spirit and that this reality was necessary for the Christian life.

Newbold's later Teaching on Romans 8:9

- In his notes on Romans 8 (601-700) Newbold inexplicably completely reverses course on his early teaching with respect to Romans 8:9. In these notes Newbold teaches that the word "indwelt" is not a Biblical word but a word of systematic theology that has no scriptural foundation. Moreover, Newbold's new position maintains that the spirit dwelling is not automatic or permanent unless certain conditions are met.
 - "And I'll tell you right up front what was one of the main things that tripped me up: it was terminology—in fact, it was one specific **word**: It was the word "*dwelt*" in verse 9!

Q: When a person gets saved (justified unto eternal life)—do they, at some time after that, do they receive the Holy Spirit? In other words, like the Pentecostals/Charismatics believe, do you have a 'second blessing' or at some other time do you get 'slain' in the Spirit?

No. of course not.

But what **do** we say—that is, what do we call it when you get saved and you get the Holy Spirit at the exact same time you're saved???

We would say that a person is at that time _____ what???

We would say that a person, at the same time he's saved, he gets indwelt by the Holy Spirit? Right?

We always said (were taught to believe) that: "All believers have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (permanent indwelling); but not all believers are '*filled with the Spirit*'." Right???

WRONG! That is absolutely wrong! And you can't prove it in the Bible! God never says that, and God never teaches you that — in fact, a man had to teach you that!

God doesn't use those words that way. That's not God's terminology and that's not God's phraseology!

And if you're going to learn this right—if it's going to effectually work in your inner man—you have to use God's words the way He uses them! (And if you do, you'll never go wrong!)

Let's prove this right off the bat—let's prove that God never uses the term “*dwelt*” or “indwelling” to call what happens when you get justified/saved in connection with you receiving the Holy Spirit at that exact same moment.

Truth is, the Bible never once uses the word ‘indwell’ at all!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (601-700), 625)

- Newbold teaches that believers have been “given” the Holy Spirit but the third member of the Godhead is not “dwelling” in believers.
 - “Romans 5:5— Q: What is the word God uses to describe the believer receiving the Holy Ghost (the 3rd member of the Godhead) at the moment he is justified/saved?

A: “*given*”

There's a difference between being “*given*” the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit ‘*dwelling*’ in you! It's NOT the same thing!!!

And there's a difference between the Holy Ghost being *given*—the Holy Spirit ‘dwelling’ in you—and the ‘*filling of the Spirit*’ mentioned in Ephesians 5:18 — those are NOT talking about the same things—those are all different things!!! (3 *different* things!)

This just points up the kind of sloppy thinking that comes from dishonest Bible handling—from systematic theology and ICE teaching—sloppy, shallow, and confusing Bible teaching!

The truth is, by the time you get to Romans 8—you've already been told that you were “*given*” the Holy Ghost (3rd member of the Godhead).

And that's the term God **wants** you to use—and that's the proper way to think about it when you want to describe the fact that every believer in this dispensation of grace in which we live automatically receives the Holy Ghost at the moment of salvation: you were “*given*” the Holy Ghost at the point of belief in Christ.

Get it straight: every believer is *given* the Holy Ghost, automatically, at the moment he/she believes in Christ!

The Holy Ghost didn't ‘indwell’ you—and in fact, He doesn't “*dwelt*” in you yet—not until something else takes place so He can “*dwelt*” in you!

And that takes us to a closer examination of Romans 8:9.

The truth is, if you follow the context and the logic of what Paul says in verses 5-8 (especially :8) — verse 8 really doesn't have any power or weight to it at all if you are automatically "*in the Spirit*" since "*the Spirit of God dwells in you*" — do you see that? do you see that the "*But*" in (:9) as well as the remainder of the first sentence doesn't make sense if that's the truth of the matter?"

Once you understand and appreciate the 1st Part to *walking after the Spirit*: i.e., that it's accomplished by *minding the things of the Spirit* and not by *minding the things of the flesh*—and then it can have that devastating subconclusion of (:8) "*So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*"

Then (:9) comes along and opens up with that "***But*** — and that one word alone tells you that you (as a believer in Christ) —you, as a believer/saint could either be *in the flesh* or you could be *in the Spirit*—and it all depends upon the condition found in the "***if***" conditional clause!

And that "***if***" is what most Christians don't want to acknowledge or deal with—an element of contingency (a possibility) - something that has to occur that qualifies you to be "*in the Spirit*"!

This same thing is going to occur in Romans 8:17—and most Bible teachers and most Christians read this (and change the reading and meaning in their head when they read it) to say and mean that all believers are "*joint-heirs with Christ*" - when they are NOT!" (Newbold, Romans 8(601-700), 626-627)

- . . . And that's the point—when certain conditions are met, the Spirit of God that you were ***given*** when you were saved begins dwelling in you because He wants to **do something**—He wants to do something specific (in this context) to your mortal body! (to produce functional life!)

. . . And that means that having the *Spirit of God dwell in you* is **NOT** an automatic/permanent thing! (That's where we part ways with unbiblical systematic theology—because they use the term "*dwell*" or *indwell* differently than God does—and that makes for a great deal of confusion and corrupted doctrine).

The correct, Biblical, godly term that God uses, and that He wants you to use for the permanent/automatic receiving of the Holy Ghost at the point of salvation is: "***given***" you—you're "*given*" the Holy Ghost at the moment you were saved, you were not 'indwelt' by Him!

All believers in Christ are *given* the Holy Ghost the moment they are saved/justified unto eternal life.

Not all believers are “*in the Spirit*” — you only become “*in the Spirit*” when *the Spirit of God dwells in you*.

The dwelling of the Spirit of God is not automatic nor is it permanent.” (Newbold, (Romans 8 (601-700), 629-630)

- On page 627 Newbold discusses how “if so be” is conditional instead of logical despite the fact that he admits that it is a first-class condition. Newbold now interprets the verse in accordance with the curriculum and abandons his former position without explanation.
 - “And even though you can go to the Greek and say, ‘Well, that “*if*” is a 1st class conditional clause—it means ‘if, and it’s true’” — well, yes it is a 1st class condition—but you have to keep that within the context of the passage—that is, for a saint who has the effectual working of all that’s been said up to this point, that **is** going to be true for them— but that doesn’t mean that it’s a true blanket statement across the board for any saint! Because like it or not (no matter how the conditional clauses go) you still have that word “if” sitting there!

In other words, the verse does NOT say, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit **because** the Spirit of God dwells in you.” Or “... **since** the Spirit of God dwells in you.” — no— it says, “**IF** THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN YOU.”

In fact, if that’s true—if you are ‘in the Spirit because/since the Spirit of God dwells in you at the moment of salvation’, then Paul wouldn’t have to say what he does in the second sentence at all! (misunderstanding that one word “*dwell*” throws a monkey wrench into the entire passage!)

Does God *dwell* in and *walk* in every justified member of the body of Christ? (this is where exists a lot of sloppiness in this doctrine caused by systematic/categorical doctrinal teaching).

II Corinthians 6 tells the saints (note they are already saints—they are already justified unto eternal life) —and yet he tells them and exhorts them to separate from unbelievers that they were yoked to so that God would ‘*dwell in them and walk in them*’ (see II Corinthians 6:14-16)

And if we hold to the idea (theory) that every person who gets justified is indwelt by the Holy Spirit—then you have to conclude that what it says down in (:11) applies to every believer! — that every believer experiences (at the moment of justification) the ‘quickenning of their mortal body by his Spirit that dwells in you’ — and you know that’s not the case — and that totally ruins the context of dealing here with the issue of sanctification and not the issue of justification (that has already been put to bed, so to speak at the end of chapter 5)!!!

Are all believers in Christ functionally alive unto God in time on planet earth in their mortal body???

That makes all this work we've been done senseless! If the whole issue of our sanctified walk is just an automatic thing—what's the point?\

In fact, very few Christians are functionally alive unto God with the Spirit of God dwelling in them producing fruit in their mortal bodies that God can accept—that's the extreme exception, not the rule!

So we have to realize and really appreciate that when God uses the term “ *dwell* ” He's not talking about anything that occurs automatically—either with the Spirit of God, or with God Himself!

And this means that there is another thing you're going to have to get used to in your thinking and your talking—and that is that the ‘dwelling’ or ‘indwelling’ of the Holy Spirit is NOT permanent!

In fact, He only dwells in you when certain conditions are met! (And they're all spelled out for you in the first 8 vs. of Romans 8)!

So when you're talking about the issue of “ *dwell* ” - of the *Spirit of God dwelling in you* —that issue of *dwell* is the issue of being at home, to abide in a place or state or condition to occupy as a place of residence” (Newbold, Romans 8 (601-700), 627-628)

- “And I just want to say again—if you go to the Greek to prove that the “ *if* ” clause (“ *if so be* ”) is a 1st class conditional clause = meaning if, and it's true, you are, and all believers are indwelled by the Spirit automatically and permanently at the moment of salvation—then you're going to run into a hornet's nest in vs. 11 — because you're going to have to say that all believers also permanently and automatically have their mortal bodies *quickened* — which is saying that all believers are functionally alive and able to produce fruit unto holiness automatically and permanently regardless of either sin in their life or living under the law! (being *in the flesh* and *carnal* : it doesn't matter)

And the only way around that is some fancy exegetical footwork: you're going to have to tamper with the words of God and you're going to have to alter the words of God to get yourself out of the mess you're in!!!

I'm not denying these are 1st class conditions—I'm just saying that there has to be some other way to understand the usage of 1st class conditions—(and there is) — because to do otherwise is to corrupt and deny the context of the entire passage!!!

... If you're *minding the things of the Spirit* (of who the Spirit of God has made you to be in Christ by baptizing you into Jesus Christ, just as 6:3-4 taught you) —if that's the life of your mind now, then the Spirit of God *dwells* in you”. (Newbold, Romans 8 (601-700), 631)

- McDaniel follows Newbold’s later teaching and actually states that “if so be” IS NOT a first-class condition.
 - “The “if so be” makes being “in the Spirit” conditional upon that which is about to follow. This is not one of those 1st class conditional “ifs” which is demonstrating the truth of one thing as compared to another. This is an “if” of: maybe you are and maybe you are not (in the Spirit).

So what is the condition that must be met in order for us to be “in the Spirit?”

Romans 8:9 ‘But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be **that the Spirit of God dwell in you**. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.’

The thing to pay attention to is the word “dwell.” We are so used to using Bible terminology carelessly and loosely. We have heard all our lives that we are “indwelt by the Spirit” from the moment we received Jesus Christ as our Savior. In this instance, we define the word “dwell” as meaning that the Spirit is “in” us. There is something right and something wrong with that understanding. Firstly, it is true that we were “given” the Holy Ghost the very moment we trusted Christ as our Savior. You were already told about that when you were educated as to your justification.” (McDaniel, Sonship Sanctification Lessons 43 and 44, Page 4)

- SE holds, that “if so be” is CONDITIONAL rather than LOGICAL. Newbold’s curriculum apparatus trumps the grammatical textual facts of the passages when it comes to expounding upon the text. In short, the SE’s curriculum complex led Newbold to teach Romans 8:9 differently than how he taught the verse originally. (Romans 8 (101-200)). The idea that “if so be” is ALWAYS conditional appears to have originated from the SE segment of the Grace Movement in an effort to strengthen their Probers 1 Curriculum Overlay.

Concluding Remarks

- The dwelling of the Spirit occurs as the Spirit of God leads one through the curriculum for Sonship edification, according to Newbold.
 - “Once the Spirit of God *dwells* in you by *mind*ing the things of the Spirit, then the believer BEGINS the process of being ‘filled with the Spirit.’ (the *filling of the Spirit* is **not** instantaneous!)

And once the Spirit of God *dwells* in you and you are *in the Spirit*, then you begin *drink*ing into that one Spirit—and you continue drinking until you are “filled”.

... Then once you are *mind*ing the things of the Spirit; and because of that, the Spirit of God *dwelling* in you, He is going to *quicken your mortal body by his Spirit that dwelleth in you* (:11).

And when that’s done, you are then ready to begin to *drink into that one Spirit*—**and how is that going to get done?**

That gets done when the Spirit of God *leads* you through the curriculum for sonship edification!” (Romans 8:14) (Newbold, Romans 8 (601-700), 630)

The “Joint-Heir View” of Northern California Grace Fellowship on Romans 8:9

- The “joint-heir view” of Northern California Grace Fellowship (NCGF) is a cousin of SE. While NCGF **DOES NOT** hold to SE’s Proverbs One Curriculum apparatus, or SE’s teaching on the creature or Sonship Prayer they are in agreement with SE regarding the conditional nature of the Spirit’s “dwelling” in Romans 8:9.
- In a video titled “Corporate vs. Individual 4 The Spirit Dwelling (1 Cor. 3:16)” from February 13, 2014 (click the link to view the video) NCGF argues that all believers are not “indwelt” with the Holy Spirit according to Romans 8:9. As the title suggests, this particular video argues that, based upon a distinction between what applies to the body of Christ corporately versus individually, all individual believers are not “indwelt” by God the Holy Spirit. The context of Romans 8 is defined as sanctification not justification. Verses speaking of believers being the “temple of God” on account of the Spirit dwelling in them such as I Corinthians 3:16, II Corinthians 6:19, and Ephesians 2:21-22 are taken to apply only to the corporate body of Christ and not the individual members of the body on account of the use of the plural word “ye”. It is asserted that if believers were already indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, Paul would not exhort the saints in Ephesians 3:17 (“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. . .”) and Colossians 3:16 “to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly”. It is argued on this basis that “If the Spirit was automatically dwelling in you” then believers would not be instructed to be filled with the Spirit and/or to “let the word of Christ dwell in them richly”. (For a written transcript of this video [click here](#).)
- On Monday, March 24, 2014, NCGF fellowship posted another YouTube video titled “Suffering WITH HIM!” in response to the publication of *Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17* on Monday, March 17, 2014. Aside from calling anyone who disagrees with the “joint-heir view” of NCGF heretics on account of not believing “all of Paul”, NCGF took exception to my teaching regarding the logical function of the phrase “if so be” in Romans 8:17. NCGF maintains that the phrase “if so be” is ALWAYS conditional and NEVER logical in its meaning and usage. Please consider the following exchange:
 - “The *If* Argument: The *if*; that is, the *if* in the passage is not conditional, they say, but more in the sense of Since; in other words, since we suffer, not *if so be that we suffer*, but Since we suffer. (25:26)

Ryan: Because

Ron: Because we suffer; again, simply falling back to the fact that because every member of the body of Christ suffers (since), every member is then a joint-heir; again, they are avoiding the true issue of suffer what? *With him*; whether it’s conditional or not, if it’s Since, then it has to be *with him*, but then that changes the whole thing ‘cause it’s not SINCE we suffer with him, it’s *if so be*. (25:52)

By the way, let me put that out there—he didn’t just say *if*, ‘cause earlier he says, *If children then heirs*; Paul says *If so be*, and let me tell you, I’ve done it; you do it; I’m gonna give you the verses – that set of words like that (*if it be so*), if it be so, is always conditional in the Bible, conditional, every mention of it. I did it myself. I did it before, I did it last night preparing for this, looked at the verses. I’m gonna give you the verses in a minute.

Every time *if so be*, is in that order, *if so be*, conditional; that means that's conditional (points to Bible). *If so be*. Let me show you something. In a minute we're gonna see the claim that all members suffer, from 1 Corinthians. 12:26, in a minute. I'll deal with that in a moment.

Although it is true that *if* can be used in the sense of Since, okay, in the Bible, it is; that is not how this *if* is used. It's used as *if so be*, and it's conditional. (27:03) *If so be* is a conditional use, and let me give you these verses:

Romans 8:17; Romans 8:9 – all sanctification issues.

Josh. 14:12; 2 Sam. 11:20; Jer. 21:2; Jer. 26:3; Jer. 51:8; Lam. 3:29; Hos. 8:7; Jonah 1:6; Matt. 8:13; 1 Cor. 15:15; 2 Cor. 5:3; Ephesians 4:21; 1 Pet. 2:3 – all use *if so be*, every last one of them conditional. (27:49)

Ryan: Especially 1 Corinthians 15

Ron: Especially 1 Corinthians 15; that's the one I want to quote, exactly; maybe on the way there we'll look at it, but that's important to Paul. So my point is, you can't just focus on the *if* and the *suffer* – it's the *suffer with him if so be* – if it be so. Think about what that means – *if so be* – if it be so, if this condition exists, then this is true; so if you suffer with Christ, then you'll be a joint-heir. (28:16) That tells me, if you DON'T suffer with Christ, then you won't be a joint-heir; you won't reign with him, that's what it's associated with." (For a written transcript of this video [click here](#).)

- No explanation is given for why “if so be” is ALWAYS conditional and NEVER logical, listeners are just supposed to take the pastor's word for it. Likewise, there is no acknowledgment of the grammatical and TEXTUAL FACTS that “if so be” is a first-class condition, in the form of “if” and it's true, i.e., logical. Rather the fact that Romans 8:9 and 8:17 are CONTEXTUALLY conditional sanctification issues MANDATES that “if so be” be viewed as conditional.
- That this is how NCGF wishes to be understood is evident from their published rebuttal to *Ifs, Ands, and Buts* titled [Wrongly Deriding Joint-Heirs With Christ](#). On page 11 the affiliates of NCGF once again take up a discussion of “if so be” in Romans 8:9 and 8:17. According to NCGF my understanding of “if so be” is flawed due “to a Greek based micro-evaluation of the verses” and a failure “to see the greater contextual forest before him in English!” (Stutzman and Jones, 11) In other words, “if so be” must be CONDITIONAL in Romans 8 because of the greater CONTEXT of conditional sanctification being discussed in Romans 7 and 8, according to NCGF. Again, no attempt is made to actually explain why “if so be” and its underlying Greek word *eiper* is NEVER logical and ALWAYS conditional other than an appeal to the context. Incidentally, the exact same argument/appeal to the context is made by teachers of SE from whom NCGF has sought to distance themselves.
- After stating early on that the “if so be” is a “1st Class Condition” Newbold argues in his later teaching that it has no bearing on the interpretation of Romans 8:9 on account of the CONTEXT being about conditional sanctification. Meanwhile, McDaniel denies the existence of the 1st Class Condition altogether in Romans 8:9 and summarily declares it to be a condition in the form of “maybe it is maybe it isn't” (3rd class condition) without offering any explanation for why. All of this makes one wonder where, the affiliates of NCGF were exposed to this type of CONTEXTUAL teaching/reasoning if not from listening to the teachers of SE? Interested parties

are encouraged to consult pages 11 through 16 of *Wrong Deriding* to ascertain the totality of NCGF's argument concerning Romans 8:9.

- The bottom line is that NCGF's "joint-heir view" is in agreement with SE when it comes to the "dwelling" of the Spirit in Romans 8:9. The Spirit's "dwelling" is conditional and not a present reality for every believer.

Further Reading and Study

- For more information on the teachings of SE or NCGF regarding the Indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9) please consider the following resources.
- Mark Newbold
 - [Romans 8 \(101-200\)](#)
 - [Romans 8 \(601-700\)](#)
- Mike McDaniel
 - Sonship Sanctification Lessons [43](#) and [44](#)
- David Winston Busch
 - [*More Than Conquers: Sufferings, Prayer and the Intercessory Ministry of the Holy Spirit*](#)
- Northern California Grace Fellowship
 - [Corporate vs. Individual 4 The Spirit Dwelling \(1 Cor. 3:16\)](#) (For a written transcript of this video [click here](#))
 - [Suffering WITH HIM](#) (For a written transcript of this video [click here](#).)
 - [*Wrongly Deriding Joint-Heirs With Christ*](#)
- Bryan C. Ross
 - [*Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17*](#)
 - [Foundations Under Fire](#)
 - [Bible Study Methods, Part 3](#)

Appendix A

Mike McDaniel and David Winston Busch on the Indwelling Holy Spirit (Roman 8:9)

McDaniel	Busch
<p>“The thing to pay attention to is the word “dwell.” We are so used to using Bible terminology carelessly and loosely. We have heard all our lives that we are “indwelt by the Spirit” from the moment we received Jesus Christ as our Savior. In this instance, we define the word “dwell” as meaning that the Spirit is “in” us. There is something right and something wrong with that understanding. Firstly, it is true that we were “given” the Holy Ghost the very moment we trusted Christ as our Savior. You were already told about that when you were educated as to your justification.</p> <p>Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.</p> <p>But what is NOT true is that the Holy Ghost being “given” is the same thing as the Spirit “dwelling” in you. Those terms are not synonymous, and they do not mean the same thing, neither do they describe the same thing.</p> <p>In the circles I ran in, it was talked about like these were “one in the same.” I was taught that every believer had the “indwelling of the Spirit” but not all believers were “filled with the Spirit.” That understanding is absolutely wrong. The Bible does not teach that at all.</p> <p>Let’s prove this now. Firstly, the word “indwelt” never appears one time in your Bible. The word “indwell” never appears one time in your Bible. The word “indwelled” never appears one time in your Bible. It’s funny how those are the words we use to describe what the Spirit does and yet, God never uses those words.</p> <p>There are only 2 verses in your Bible where the capital “S” Spirit is said to “dwell in you,” and they are both here in Romans 8; vs. 9 and vs. 11. And that is the beginning and the end of it.</p>	<p>“This hearkens back to what he said in Romans 8 concerning the Spirit of God “dwelling” in you. He will begin to expand upon that issue as that is the ultimate goal and object.” (Busch, <i>More Than Conquerors</i>, 70)</p> <p>“Right from the beginning you are oriented to a certain object and goal: namely, that the ultimate desired end is that God, by His Spirit, and through a particular process desires to be “dwelling” in you. As we’ll see, that “dwelling” concept is going to be very closely linked to the issue of being “filled.” (Busch, <i>More Than Conquerors</i>, 94)</p> <p>“You already know that from your sonship instruction. You know that in connection with this work going on in your inner man, your object and goal is to have that Spirit and very life of Christ “dwelling” in you through that process of education and edification.” (Busch, <i>More Than Conquerors</i>, 102)</p> <p>“(Commenting on Ephesians 3:17) That’s the object. That’s the goal you were introduced to in Romans 8 dealing with your “heart” and “if so be that the Spirit of God DWELL in you” (Rom. 8:9). This is the capstone.” (Busch, <i>More Than Conquerors</i>, 119)</p> <p>“With the end of Romans, the foundation has been laid. You are now prepared to build upon it. You are now prepared to go on in your education, crying Abba Father” and early looking for the things that will be made known to you in connection with the revealing of the “the mystery” (Rom. 16:25). The goal of your sonship is for the Spirit of God to “dwell” in you (Rom. 8:9). Through your “transforming” edification curriculum (Rom. 12:2) you be “learning Christ” (Ephesians 4:20). You have been designed to be “living epistles” (2 Cor. 3:2-3) and as you “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col. 3:16) the glorious end in view is that “Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). May it be so. Amen.” (Busch, <i>More Than Conquerors</i>, 186)</p>

And what's funny about the word "dwell" is that when we use the word, we mean something completely different from what God means when He uses the word "dwell."

Once again we learn the lesson that it is better to use God's terminology defined God's way. The use of our synonyms only confuse the issue and lead to faulty doctrine – and no effectual working!

So you were "given" the Holy Ghost when you were saved, BUT He did not "indwell" you at that time! In fact, He cannot "dwell in you" until something else takes place, something that makes it possible for Him to "dwell" in us.

Now, let's follow the logic that Paul is presenting. If the Spirit "dwelling in you," (as they like to say) was automatically accomplished when you trusted Christ (that being the same thing as the Holy Ghost being "given" to you), then verse 8 has absolutely nothing to do with you at all! If having the "Spirit of God dwell in you" is the same thing as having the Holy Ghost "given" to you when you got saved, then it would be impossible for you to "walk after the flesh," be "carnally minded," or be "in the flesh." And if that is true, then Paul has just wasted our time with all this stuff about "minding the things of the flesh" and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," for evidently, it is impossible for that to be the case for any believer **IF YOU CONFUSE THE HOLY GHOST BEING "GIVEN" AS BEING THE SAME AS THE SPIRIT "DWELLING IN YOU."**

Once you understand that "walking after the Spirit" is accomplished by "minding the things of the Spirit" and not the "things of the flesh," then it makes perfect sense for Paul to say in vs. 8, "So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

So, verse 9 tells you that there is an "if" attached to having the Spirit of God dwell in you. And you know that, as a believer, you can be "in the flesh" or you can be "in the Spirit. And which

one you are “in” depends on that “if” clause. Something has to occur before you can be “in the Spirit.” And I will tell you now that there are people who have been saved for decades, have gone to Bible college, have won souls, pastored churches, counseled members of their congregation and invested a fortune in books and conferences and have never been “in the Spirit” a day in their lives – not even for a moment. And some of those folks, as well-meaning as they were, have died and gone to heaven only to discover that their sacrificial service to God was “unto death” and was “enmity against God.” They didn’t mean for it to be that way but the adversary did! The “blindness” and “ignorance” that runs rampant through the body of Christ has been accomplished on purpose – under a strategy carefully crafted by the adversary to ensure that the blindness and ignorance continues (and even increases) under the tutelage and promotion of “good, godly men.” (And I say that in quotes.)

Just as he has covered up God’s program with the body of Christ, just as he is constantly trying to get saints in the dispensation of grace to integrate parts of Israel’s program into lives, just as he has fought to keep the mystery a secret, just as he has concealed right division to such an extent that you can’t find it taught in half a dozen Bible colleges in this country, just as he has convinced some to trust their works to save them, just as he has perverted the doctrine of the Blessed Hope by teachings that say we will go through the Tribulation before we are caught out, in that same way, it gives Satan such pleasure to see a member of the body of Christ live his whole life “in the dark” about his sanctification and what it really means to be “in the Spirit,” for the purpose of ridiculing God’s manifold wisdom and speaking reproachfully concerning us! And if those things don’t break your heart then I don’t know what will.

I’m telling you this so you will know that the reason I point out the misunderstanding of these verses is because the result is a travesty. I’m not glad for it and I’m not proud of it. It’s not about

“I know something you don’t know” or “everyone is stupid but me.” It’s about getting the truth out there so we can begin to function in the way we were intended to all along. It is about putting a stop to Satan’s plan of evil as it seeks to keep people blinded to the truth.

So let’s look at vs. 9 and discover what has been sitting there all along, just waiting for someone to read and understand. So far you know this; when God uses the term “dwell” He’s not talking about anything that occurs automatically, either with the Spirit of God, or with God Himself!

Now if that has sunk in, there is another thing you’re going to have to get used to in your thinking and your talking; the “dwelling in you” of the Spirit of God is NOT permanent! In fact, He only dwells in you when certain conditions are met and they’re all spelled out for you in the first 8 verses of Romans 8.

So what does it mean for the Spirit to “dwell” in you? When you talk about having the Spirit of God dwell in you, you are talking about the issue of Him (the 3rd person of the Godhead) occupying a place in order to do something or accomplish something from that place. This is the same sense we have when we are talking to someone and we say, “I want to dwell on this for a while.” It means that we want to stay here for a while (take up residence) because there is something we want to do. And that’s the point, when certain conditions are met, the Spirit of God that you were given when you were saved begins “dwelling in you” because He wants to do something. He wants to do something specific (in this context) to your mortal body (to produce functional life!). When you get all this straight, (all these uses of dwell -1x in vs.9; and then 2x in vs.11) they all match up perfectly!

So here is what we have so far:

1. A believer in Christ is not automatically in the Spirit.
2. The only way a believer in Christ can be in the Spirit is when the Spirit of God dwells in him.

3. The correct, Biblical, godly term for the permanent/automatic receiving of the Holy Ghost at the point of salvation is: “given;” you were “given” the Holy Ghost the moment you were saved; you were not ‘indwelt’ by Him!

4. All believers in Christ are given the Holy Ghost the moment they are saved/justified unto eternal life.

5. Not all believers are “in the Spirit” — you only become “in the Spirit” when the Spirit of God dwells in you.

6. The dwelling of the Spirit of God is not automatic nor is it permanent.

7. Once you begin “minding the things of the Spirit,” the Spirit of God dwells in you! Just as an aside, that is when the believer **BEGINS** the process of being ‘filled with the Spirit.’ (the filling of the Spirit is not instantaneous!). Now just exactly what is it that the Spirit wants to accomplish when He “dwells in you?” That is the subject matter of the next verses which we will look at in our next session.

It is as though the Scripture is anticipating the misunderstanding of the verse. The first part of the verse addresses the non-permanent, conditional aspect of being “in the Spirit.” You are “in the Spirit” when the Spirit of God “dwells in you.” Then, just to make sure that you are not confusing this with the Holy Ghost being “given” to you at salvation, the second part of the verse says if you don’t “have” the Spirit of Christ, then you are not saved.

The reason for including this last part of verse 9 is to make sure that there is no confusion; God is making sure that no one leaves vs. 9 thinking that all you need in order for the Spirit to “dwell in you” is for you to be saved.

It’s appropriate and necessary for Paul to say what he does in the last half of vs. 9 and the first half of vs. 10 because there’s a **BIG** difference between having the Spirit of Christ given to you

at the moment you got saved, and the Spirit of God dwelling in you. If you do not have (i.e., if you haven't been 'given') the Spirit of Christ, then you're none of his; you're not even saved/justified in the first place! What that does is make the distinction (a very vital and critical distinction) for us. It says, "Look, when we're talking about you walking after the Spirit in righteousness and putting your functional, sanctified life into practice successfully, we're not talking about merely having the Spirit that you were given at the moment you were saved, so don't confuse the issue!"

Functional life will never be produced merely by having been given the Spirit of Christ at salvation; instead, functional life will only be produced by the Spirit of God dwelling in you and quickening your mortal body! So if Paul doesn't say what he does in the second half of vs.9, then there is a real possibility for confusion and ambiguity (and the real danger: DOUBTFULNESS and uncertainty!).

There is something else to notice in this last part of verse 9. There are 3 different titles that have been used for the Spirit so far in this section. We went back to Romans 5 where we saw Him as the Holy Ghost that was "given" to us when we were saved/JUEL.

Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the **Holy Ghost** which is given unto us.

Then in the first part of verse 9, we say Him identified as "the Spirit of God." Finally, in the last part of verse 9, He bears the title "the Spirit of Christ." These terms are not used haphazardly. We often use Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit interchangeably, but not the Scripture.

I don't want to spend a lot of time on this, so let me give you the "Cliffs Notes" on it. The title, "Holy Ghost" is used when speaking of the person of the Spirit. The title, "Spirit" is used when referring to some ministry that He carries out or some function He performs.

In verse 9, we have Him identified as the Spirit but the prepositional phrase that follows is different. Again, I don't want to draw this out into a long affair so let me put it as briefly as I can. To be sure, there are plenty of verses to see and details to observe, but for now, I think we can keep things simple.

The "Spirit of Christ" is the ministry or function that the Spirit performed when He baptized you into Jesus Christ at the point of salvation. That is when you became "in Christ." Most recently, we saw this back in Romans 8:1.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to **them which are in Christ Jesus**, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The requirements for "no condemnation" are:

1. To be "in Christ Jesus" (JUEL/saved)
2. To walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh (sanctification)

The work of the Spirit in baptizing you into Jesus Christ (justifying you unto eternal life) makes Him bear the title, "the Spirit of Christ." That is the work He was performing; get it?

The title "Spirit of God" is still the same Spirit, but this time the title reflects His work (not in your justification) but in your sanctification as He "dwells in you." This is a specific work with regard to your sanctification. We will see these titles crop up again and it will give us insight to remember that when the word "Spirit" is used, it is in reference to ministry performed, not just to the person of the Holy Ghost. I guess another way to say it is, He is the Holy Ghost; that is who He is. When He justified you, the Holy Ghost functioned as the Spirit of Christ. When He dwells in you, He functions as the Spirit of God. .

The "Spirit of Christ" is what you received when the Holy Ghost was "given" to you at salvation. The "Spirit of God" is what is "dwelling" in you when you are "spiritually minded." Or, we

could say it this way: The “Spirit of Christ” involves the Spirit’s ministry in your justification and the “Spirit of God” involves the Spirit’s ministry in your sanctification.

I just want to add one more thing to this and explain why the latter utilizes the title “Spirit of God.” In your sanctification application, He is called “the Spirit of God” because the whole purpose behind the dwelling of the Spirit in you is to take the heart of God and impart His heart to your heart; the heart of the Father to the heart of the son! And that is the relationship; a real Father to a real son. I realize we haven’t talked about any of this yet, but we’ll see more about his a little later on in this chapter. The point is, the terminology of “Spirit of God” is exactly right in describing what the Spirit is doing.

So, to sum up verse 9, you are “in the Spirit” when the Spirit of God dwells in you. And, by the way, you cannot be “in the flesh” and “in the Spirit” at the same time. And while not every believer has the Spirit of God dwelling in them, every believer has the Spirit of Christ. It’s not 2 different “Spirits,” it is the 3rd person of the Godhead performing different duties!

We started out in Romans 8 with the understanding that the key to getting our sanctification put properly into practice was to have something established in our thinking. This was called “being spiritually minded.” But what happens in our thinking is just the first of 2 major issues that need to be dealt with.

. . . Verse 10 comes along and states the dilemma to the question you still have hanging in your thinking about how you are to live unto God in functional life (sanctification-wise). You’ve got a problem and a question about your mortal body because you were told that sin is still in the members of your mortal body back in chapter 6. The mind has been dealt with because, as you mind the things of the Spirit, the Spirit of God dwells in you in order to begin doing a whole bunch of things that are going to produce functional life and fruit unto God/holiness. But,

you may be wondering, what about my mortal body?" (McDaniel, Sonship Sanctification Lessons 43 and 44)	
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Sunday, December 7, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 154 Sonship Edification: Distinguishing Characteristics, Part 4 \(Conditional Nature of Joint-Heirship in Romans 8:17\)](#)

Introduction

- The past three lessons (151-153) have been dedicated to a consideration of the distinguishing characteristics of Sonship Edification (SE). In those lessons we considered:
 - The Three Stages of Sonship
 - The Creature
 - Sonship Prayer
 - Spirit Dwelling in Romans 8:9
- In this fourth and final lesson in the sequence regarding the Distinguishing Characteristics of SE, we would like to touch on the following issue:
 - Conditional Nature of Joint-Heirship in Romans 8:17
- As I stated in [Lesson 144](#), my first real awareness of SE came through my exposure to and participation in the “two-inheritance” controversy regarding Romans 8:17. Despite their recent claims of having had “no cognizance” of SE, the affiliates of Northern California Grace Fellowship (NCGF) were all over social media and the internet promoting their paper *Heirs of God or Joint-Heirs with Christ?* under the banner of SE, a point that is proven beyond doubt in Lesson 144. In fact, it was this handling of the *Heirs of God* paper on the internet that first prompted me to look into the teachings of SE. It was this investigation into the teachings of SE that led me to the teachings of Mark Newbold and Mike McDaniel.

(For a copy of the PDF notes for Lesson 144 [click here](#). For a copy of the PowerPoint [click here](#).)

- In this lesson we want to consider the teachings of SE on the conditional nature of joint-heirship in Romans 8:17. For further information on NCGF’s “joint-heir view” please see Appendix B beginning on page 11.

Joint-Heirship According to Sonship

- In March 2014, I released [Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17](#) in which I extensively documented the teachings of SE on the subject of joint-heirship in Romans 8:17. While the primary purpose of *Ifs, Ands, and Buts* was to respond to NCGF’s *Heirs of God or Joint-Heirs with Christ?* I did include lengthy quotations from both Mike McDaniel and Mark Newbold in the footnotes thereby setting forth SE’s teaching on the matter. Given the fact that I have already written extensively on SE’s teaching regarding Romans 8:17, we will limit our comments in this lesson to a few summary points. All of the pertinent footnotes from *Ifs, Ands, and Buts* regarding SE’s position on Romans 8:17 have been reproduced in Appendix A.

- On page 705 in his **original notes** (more on this later) on Romans 8 (701-800), Newbold stated the following about who qualifies for joint-heirship in Romans 8:17. Only those who: 1) realize their value as adopted sons, 2) understand and appreciate the Father’s business, 3) understand and appreciate the Father’s SE curriculum for proper edification, and 4) whole-heartedly commit to the SE curriculum, will be joint-heirs according to Newbold.
 - “A lot more could be said about being a *joint-heir with Christ*, but really the important benefit right now is to understand and appreciate that there is an inheritance that all believers get as *heirs of God*, **but** that heir-ship does **not** include anything about the Father’s business or the running of it, or the rewards and glory of it — all that is contained in another inheritance—a *joint-heir-ship with Christ*; **reserved only for the sons of God who have realized the value of their adoption as sons; understand and appreciate the worth of the Father’s business and the curriculum He’s written to properly edify you and educate you (which is the only place real spiritual growth and godly edification [the edification process] takes place); and then whole-heartedly commit to it!**” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), 705)
- As of March 2014 Newbold and McDaniel were in agreement on the following points regarding joint-heirship in Romans 8:17:
 - *The first “if” of Romans 8:17 is a 1st Class Condition thereby serving the logical function of furthering the argument.*
 - “The “if” is a 1st class condition = if, and we are the *children of God* by virtue of regeneration.” (Newbold, Romans 8 (601-700), 699)
 - Likewise McDaniel writes, “Following the colon that ends verse 16, we get “And if. . .” This is what is known as the first class conditional “if.” It is not saying “if” in the sense of maybe it is or maybe it isn’t. It is saying “if” in the sense of taking truth and certainty of the aforementioned truth and applying it to what is about to be said. In other words, “if this first thing (which we both know and agree about) is true, then this second thing is just as true.” (McDaniel, *Sonship Establishment: Lessons 1-20*, 36)
 - *Joint-Heirship is determined by one’s level of sanctification and/or one’s progression through the curriculum.* (See quote from Newbold above.)
 - “The “joint-heir” inheritance, which is connected to your sanctification (specifically the component of being an adopted son) is directly related to the Father’s business. This is how the Father begins to tell you some things about His business and your role in it, which is exactly what you should expect after coming out of the pronouncements of vv. 14-15.”(McDaniel, *Sonship Establishment—Lessons 1-20*, 39)

- *“If so be” is not a 1st Class Condition and places a condition upon being a joint-heir with Christ in the previous clause.*
 - “... if so be ...” = that’s not a 1st class condition “if and it’s true” - that’s an if of contingency or condition—in other words, you are a joint-heir with Christ only IF certain conditions are met! A dreaded “if” in the eyes of most Christians!” (Newbold, Romans 8 (701-800), 705) **Newbold, offers no explanation for why one should view the first “if” as logical and the second “if” as conditional.** No attempt is made to explain what is going on grammatically in the verse to justify this reading, students are just supposed to take his word for it.
- Once again, McDaniel follows suit by arguing that the second “if” is conditional after noting that the first “if” was logical, **a conclusion for which McDaniel offers no explanation in the following quotation:**
 - “The first “if” of verse 17 was that first-class conditional if that acknowledges the truth of a thing being carried forward to another thing. This is an “if” of condition. You can tell by the construction of the sentence which kind of “if” is used. Therefore, a saint can only be a joint-heir if certain conditions are met; in this case, that we ‘suffer with Christ.’”(McDaniel, Sonship Establishment—Lessons 1-20, 49)
- *Joint-heirship is tied to the participation in the Father’s Business.*
 - “Before we get into the final details of vs. 17, let me make sure we see the connection between the inheritance of being a “joint-heir” and the Father’s business. First of all, the (your!) inheritance comes out of the business. You can’t talk about the “joint-heir” inheritance unless you talk about the business, because the inheritance is integrally joined to the business. It’s part of the business; it’s where the inheritance comes from. If there was no business, there’d be no inheritance, even an “heir of God” inheritance. So, you need to think about your inheritance in eternity is going to come out of the business and specifically, your involvement in the business. So, how involved do you want to be?” (McDaniel, Sonship Establishment, Lessons 1-20, 39)

(See footnote 12 on page 15 of [Ifs, Ands, and Buts](#) for more on this point from the pen of Mike McDaniel.)
- *Joint-Heirship is contingent upon “suffering with him.”*
 - “When you read vv. 16-17, you do not yet know what those things are. You will know because before you get out of chapter 8, you are going to be informed about some of the things included in this suffering. You won’t be told about all of

it in Romans 8 because you don't need to know about all of it yet. What you do need to know is that through this suffering you will get a joint-heir inheritance that is greater than any suffering you will go through. You only need to know the first ones that you will encounter. What is being given to you is a foundation that will be built upon later on. What I will tell you now is this: 1. Everything in our Sonship Education/Edification (being conformed to the image of Christ) is tied to our "suffering with Him" in various manners that are equivalent to how Christ suffers today in this dispensation of grace. 2. The degree and extent of our heir-ship with Him (our joint-heir inheritance) will be determined at the judgment seat of Christ. 3. The basis for determining that inheritance will be by the amount of equivalency in our sonship lives to that which Christ is presently suffering. 4. The degree to which we "suffer with Him," is the degree of the reward of our inheritance. Just to put this into an application, if your response to the things which come your way are not to "suffer with Him," then there will be no joint-heir inheritance reward. If that improper response is your response every time, then you will get "zero" joint-heir inheritance. If you respond properly 50% of the time, then you will get half of the inheritance you could have had. I am saying it to you this way so you will see how critical the "if so be" of verse 17 is. Your entire joint-heir inheritance is based on this one thing. Therefore, this has to be a huge issue for a son. This is why you cannot decide to put off this sonship education because you think you will get it when you get to heaven. . . If a son waits until he has gone to the heavenly places to be educated in the Father's business or to be educated in godliness, then: 1. He will never obtain a joint-heir inheritance 2. He will never occupy a seat of authority in God's government in the heavenly places 3. He will not be glorified together with Christ 4. He will never be allowed to function in certain areas of the Father's business. All of the above benefits are bestowed upon a son based upon something he does while he is on this earth. During your earthly life is when you will either qualify for the things listed above, or you won't. But nothing you do in eternity is going to change any of those 4 things – ever. That is a big reason why you can't say, "I'll worry about this sonship stuff when I get to heaven." It is the Sonship Education and Edification during your lifetime on earth that qualifies you for the benefits of eternity." (McDaniel, *Sonship Establishment, Sessions. 1-20, 58-60*)

- In his notes on Romans 8, Mark Newbold offers essentially the exact same argument as McDaniel that we observed above. He writes, "The primary determining factor that qualifies us to be joint-heirs with Christ comes down, really, to the issue of what that expression involves when it talks about suffering with him. Everything that we are more or less involved with in our sonship edification/education that conforms us to His image, is going to be tied to suffering with Him in various manners and forms equivalent to how He does (suffer)— and the way in which He does in this dispensation of God's grace. And our heir-ship with Him—or the degree of it—or the extent of it that will be determined at the judgment seat of Christ—will be determined by the amount of

equivalency that there is in our sonship lives and through the effectual working of our sonship education, that has us suffering with Him. In other words, the degree to which we suffer with Him, is the degree of the reward of our inheritance! And if it's zero (nothing)—then we'll get nothing! And I say all this just to underscore for you the reality of, and the gravity of this element of contingency—this “if so be” — this issue that qualifies you for the reward of your inheritance with Christ as a joint-heir with Him! It's a huge thing to you as a son! This is one reason why you can't just say, “Well, we're all going to go to the same place when we die, so I'll worry about all that future stuff when I get there—I'll just get educated then.” (dead wrong!) You'll get educated—but you won't get this inheritance, and you won't be allowed to function in God's business, and you won't be “glorified together” with Christ in the Father's business! Now I know that you want some satisfaction and contentment as to what these sufferings are—(but the truth of the matter is, and the reason I'm hesitant to go into this is, that by the time you get to the end of (:17), you're supposed to have a natural wondering what suffering with Him is—or just how is it that I do that—and then (:18) begins to tell you that—and you get the first kind of the suffering with Him that you're expected to be involved in.) (There are other kinds that you're expected to be involved in, but you're not going to get them until you've got enough education to deal with them.) — beginning in (:18) is the first kind. So that alone should give you an understanding of the kind of suffering we're talking about. But for now—as a matter of our sonship establishment into this first virtuous attitude we're supposed to have in viewing our education as sons—we are to perceive by what's said to us here—we're supposed to have the beginning of the generation of some thinking that matches our Father's own thinking— about the thoroughness, and the perfection, and the capability of what the Father's going to teach us, so that we can have complete and total confidence in the Father and in His curriculum He's giving us—so that we can have complete conviction that it's going to do exactly what it's supposed to do— fully educate you; fully train you; fully qualify you for your sonship inheritance! (All the details are going to be given to you as the curriculum unfolds and progresses on.) In fact, you're not supposed to be able to understand all the details of either your joint-inheritance with Christ and all that is involved in that; or with what specific things we are going to suffer and endure as we suffer with Christ; or what are the details of the kind of glory we are going to be sharing with Christ as we are glorified together. The truth is, you can't possibly know all that right now—there's just no frame of reference for it yet—and all that's going on here is to get you established as a son—and this is just the first component that, - at the end of it all (at the end of sonship establishment), sonship establishment is designed to have it so that you understand and appreciate that you are not only in possession of a curriculum that accomplishes all this—but that you understand that the curriculum you possess is designed and composed and constructed so as to fully meet all of the objectives, and provides fully for obtaining of all of the goals and aims and attainments that are necessary,

from beginning to end, so that you suffer with the Lord Jesus Christ (or at least have the full opportunity to, if you so choose to) suffer with the Lord Jesus Christ in all the fullness that the Father has designed and provided for us to so do—and so, attain, therefore, the fullness of the inheritance of being a joint-heir with Christ.” (707-708)

- Subsequent to the publication of the first edition of *Ifs, Ands, and Buts* on Monday, March 17, 2014 and the April Grace School of the Bible meeting in Chicago, Brother Newbold has since come forward and admitted that he had been mistaken in teaching that there are two separate and distinct inheritances in Romans 8:17. This admission can be heard in an audio recording from a message delivered at Triangle Bible Church in Concord, North Carolina on [Sunday, May 11, 2014](#). While we applaud Brother Newbold for his honest and straightforward remarks, we still must disagree with his new position that joint-heirship with Christ constitutes a higher degree or portion of the one inheritance. The pertinent section of this message can be reviewed by listening to the first ten to fifteen minutes of the message accessible through the above link. Newbold’s two views can be summarized as follows:
 - [Original View](#)—two separate and distinct types of eternal inheritance: 1) heir of God, applies to all believers on account of justification, 2) joint-heir with Christ, only those believers how meet the conditions.
 - [New View](#)—one inheritance in two degrees or portions of the one inheritance: 1) heir of God portion, applies to all believers on account of justification, 2) joint-heir with Christ portion, only those believers how meet the conditions. (To read the written transcript of these comments made by Brother Newbold, [click here](#).)
- As of the date of this teaching (12/7/14), we are not aware of any such changes being made to Brother McDaniel’s views on joint-heirship in Romans 8:17.

Appendix A

Reproduced Footnotes Regarding SE's position on Romans 8:17 from, Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17 Revised 2nd Edition (June, 2014) by Bryan C. Ross

Footnote # 2 found on page 2—The purpose of this paper is not to provide a detailed discussion of Sonship Edification (SE). That could easily be the subject of another paper or book length work. Our purpose in bringing it up here is to alert the reader to the fact that there are many currently within the Grace Movement arguing that being a “joint-heir with Christ” is conditioned upon something even if they do not agree as to exactly what that condition is. SE adopts a framework for edification from the book of Proverbs that is then read back into [Paul's Epistles](#). Passages such as [Romans 8](#) are not expounded based upon the text of Scripture alone but on the text of Scripture filtered through the SE framework. For example, much is made by Mark Newbold and Michael McDaniel about “the Father’s Business” when expounding Romans 8:17 but that language is not found in the text of Romans 8. Interested parties are encouraged to see *Sonship Establishment Lessons 1-20 and 21-40* by Michael McDaniel and Mark Newbold’s notes on Romans pages [601](#) through [800](#) to substantiate the veracity of these statements.

Footnote # 7 found on page 6— Sonship Edification (SE) teachers Mark Newbold and Michael McDaniel agree that this first “if” in Romans 8:17 serves the logical function. Newbold states in his notes on Romans 8 that, “The “*if*” is a 1st class condition = if, and we are the *children of God* by virtue of regeneration.” (699) Likewise McDaniel writes, “Following the colon that ends verse 16, we get “And if. . .” This is what is known as the first class conditional “if.” It is not saying “if” in the sense of maybe it is or maybe it isn’t. It is saying “if” in the sense of taking truth and certainty of the aforementioned truth and applying it to what is about to be said. In other words, “if this first thing (which we both know and agree about) is true, then this second thing is just as true.” (*Sonship Establishment: Sessions 1-20*, 36)

Footnote # 8 found on page 7— Rather than allowing the verse, its context, and clear cross references define what it means to be a joint-heir, Sonship Edification teachers Newbold and McDaniel connect it to one’s knowledge of and commitment to what they call the Sonship Curriculum. In multiple places, Newbold ties the attainment of joint-heirship to the SE Curriculum: “. . . *joint-heir-ship with Christ*; reserved **only** for the sons of God who have realized the value of their adoption as sons; understand and appreciate the worth of the Father’s business and the curriculum He’s written to properly edify you and educate you (which is the **only** place real spiritual growth and godly edification [the edification process] takes place); and then whole-heartedly commit to it! The realization of the reality that there are 2 distinct inheritances, and that the only one that comes directly out of the Father’s business is our *joint-heir-ship with Christ*. . .” (705) Meanwhile, McDaniel ties the attainment of joint-heirship to the level of one’s sanctification in this life, “The “joint-heir” inheritance, which is connected to your sanctification (specifically the component of being an adopted son) is directly related to the Father’s business. This is how the Father begins to tell you some things about His business and your role in it, which is exactly what you should expect after coming out of the pronouncements of vv. 14-15.”(*Sonship Establishment—Sessions 1-20*, 39) According to either construct, joint-heirship is an earned inheritance based upon the level of one’s sanctification which is only achieved via knowledge of and commitment to the SE curriculum. The notion that joint-heirship is contingent upon one’s sanctification is shared by the supporters of the *Heirs of God or joint-heirs With Christ?* paper. This is evident when one considers the paper’s subtitle, *Sanctified Works in the Dispensation of Grace*.

Footnote # 11 found on pages 10 and 11— After correctly noting that the first “if” in Rom. 8:17 serves the logical function, SE teachers Mark Newbold and Michael McDaniel inexplicably teach that the “if” in the “if so be” portion of the verse introduces a condition upon being a “joint-heir with Christ” in the previous clause (see footnote 7 for an explanation of why this is false). Newbold writes, “. . . *if so be* . . .” = that’s not a 1st class condition “if and it’s true” - that’s an *if* of contingency or condition—in other

words, you are a *joint-heir with Christ* **only IF certain conditions are met!** A dreaded “*if*” in the eyes of most Christians!” (705) Newbold, offers no explanation for why one should view the first “if” as logical and the second “if” as conditional. No attempt is made to explain what is going on grammatically in the verse to justify this reading, students are just supposed to take his word for it. Once again, McDaniel follows suit by arguing that the second “if” is conditional after noting that the first “if” was logical, a conclusion for which McDaniel offers no explanation in the following quotation: “The first “if” of verse 17 was that first-class conditional if that acknowledges the truth of a thing being carried forward to another thing. This is an “if” of condition. You can tell by the construction of the sentence which kind of “if” is used. Therefore, a saint can only be a joint-heir if certain conditions are met; in this case, that we ‘suffer with Christ.’” (*Sonship Establishment—Sessions 1-20*, 49) This is poor Bible study and indicative of an attempt to make the text match one’s preconceived “curriculum” rather than adjusting one’s curriculum to match the text. Likewise, the author of the *Heirs of God or joint-heirs with Christ?* paper just pronounces to his readers that the “if so be” is conditional and offers no exegesis or exposition for why. No attempt is made to explain the underlying Greek word; his readers are just supposed to take his word for it that the statement is conditional. We have proved above and beyond doubt in both Greek (*ei per*) and English (if so be) that this portion of the verse is logical and not conditional.

Footnote 12 found on page 15—SE teachers Newbold and McDaniel have much to say about the “Father’s Business” when defining what it means to be a “joint-heir with Christ.” McDaniel ties joint-heirship to participation in the “Father’s Business:” “Before we get into the final details of vs. 17, let me make sure we see the connection between the inheritance of being a “joint-heir” and the Father’s business. First of all, the (your!) inheritance comes out of the business. You can’t talk about the “joint-heir” inheritance unless you talk about the business, because the inheritance is integrally joined to the business. It’s part of the business; it’s where the inheritance comes from. If there was no business, there’d be no inheritance, even an “heir of God” inheritance. So, you need to think about your inheritance in eternity is going to come out of the business and specifically, your involvement in the business. So, how involved do you want to be?” (*Sonship Establishment, Sessions 1-20*, 39) Nine pages later, McDaniel attempts to explain how being a “joint-heir with Christ” works by comparing it to the running of the Father’s business, “There is one last thing I want to cover with regard to these two inheritances and that has to do with how they are related to the Father’s business. It is true that both inheritances come “out” of the Father’s business. But the “heir of God” inheritance does not include anything to do with the running of that business, the rewards of that business or the glory of that business. Those are the things related to only the “joint-heir” inheritance. Think of it this way. Let’s say you own a very successful business. Through the years, that business has produced a personal wealth for you. Applying this illustration to the adoption of sons, you would divide up your personal wealth between all your children. That personal wealth came “out of the business.” It did not represent all that the business created, for much of the wealth was put back into the business. But whatever personal wealth there was, was produced by the business. The adopted son would get another inheritance; that which pertained to the business itself. As the business continued to produce greater and greater wealth, as the business itself became more and more valuable, only the adopted son would be the beneficiary of that. Not only would he have “personal wealth,” but additionally, he would have “business wealth.” That is the same difference between an “heir of God” and a “joint-heir with Christ.” Both are produced by the Father’s business, but only one of them will possess the ongoing wealth of the business.” (*Sonship Establishment, Sessions 1-20*, 48-49) As good as all this sounds, what in the world does it have to do with the TEXT of Romans 8? Where does the TEXT of Romans 8 say anything about “the Father’s Business?” This is great human viewpoint but it is not good Bible study. These quotes from the pen of McDaniel demonstrate yet again that SE is imposing its “curriculum” upon the text of Romans 8 instead expounding the text as it lies on the page. In our estimation SE is dangerous in this respect and should be rejected outright. Rather than going to the obvious cross references where the same Greek word translated “joint-heirs” occurs to help explain the concept they read the text through the lenses of their preconceived “curriculum.”

Endnote i found on pages 38 and 39--(Endnote from page 13) Regarding what it means to “suffer with him” in Romans 8:17, Mike McDaniel waxes on endlessly without ever saying what actually it means to suffer with Christ. In the end, McDaniel makes nebulous statements about how it is not the job of the SE curriculum in Romans 8 to say what it actually means to suffer with Christ because the student is not yet edified enough to receive that information according to the construct of the curriculum. Please consider McDaniel’s teaching in his own words, “So what is it that we are being told in vs. 17? You are being told: 1. There is a qualification for being a joint-heir with Christ 2. That qualification is that you “suffer with Him” 3. That suffering will result in being glorified together with Christ. And that’s it for now. No, you have not yet been told what that suffering is. You haven’t been told what He is suffering today in this dispensation of grace, but only that there is something that He is suffering that we are supposed to suffer “with Him.” Vs. 17 is not meant to begin taking you through a systematic study of suffering. I realize that by raising the issue, you want to know the details about the suffering, but that is not what you are given to know.” (*Sonship Establishment, Sessions. 1-20, 50*) So according to McDaniel, one’s ability to become a “joint-heir with Christ” is contingent upon suffering with Christ but it is not the job of the SE curriculum to teach one what that means in the only verse in the Bible that uses the expression “joint-heir,” according to McDaniel. After droning on and running all over the Bible for examples of suffering, eight pages later McDaniel writes, “When you read vv. 16-17, you do not yet know what those things are. You will know because before you get out of chapter 8, you are going to be informed about some of the things included in this suffering. You won’t be told about all of it in Romans 8 because you don’t need to know about all of it yet. What you do need to know is that through this suffering you will get a joint-heir inheritance that is greater than any suffering you will go through. You only need to know the first ones that you will encounter. What is being given to you is a foundation that will be built upon later on. What I will tell you now is this: 1. Everything in our Sonship Education/Edification (being conformed to the image of Christ) is tied to our “suffering with Him” in various manners that are equivalent to how Christ suffers today in this dispensation of grace. 2. The degree and extent of our heir-ship with Him (our joint-heir inheritance) will be determined at the judgment seat of Christ. 3. The basis for determining that inheritance will be by the amount of equivalency in our sonship lives to that which Christ is presently suffering. 4. The degree to which we “suffer with Him,” is the degree of the reward of our inheritance. Just to put this into an application, if your response to the things which come your way are not to “suffer with Him,” then there will be no joint-heir inheritance reward. If that improper response is your response every time, then you will get “zero” joint-heir inheritance. If you respond properly 50% of the time, then you will get half of the inheritance you could have had. I am saying it to you this way so you will see how critical the “if so be” of verse 17 is. Your entire joint-heir inheritance is based on this one thing. Therefore, this has to be a huge issue for a son. This is why you cannot decide to put off this sonship education because you think you will get it when you get to heaven. . . If a son waits until he has gone to the heavenly places to be educated in the Father’s business or to be educated in godliness, then: 1. He will never obtain a joint-heir inheritance 2. He will never occupy a seat of authority in God’s government in the heavenly places 3. He will not be glorified together with Christ 4. He will never be allowed to function in certain areas of the Father’s business. All of the above benefits are bestowed upon a son based upon something he does while he is on this earth. During your earthly life is when you will either qualify for the things listed above, or you won’t. But nothing you do in eternity is going to change any of those 4 things – ever. That is a big reason why you can’t say, “I’ll worry about this sonship stuff when I get to heaven.” It is the Sonship Education and Edification during your lifetime on earth that qualifies you for the benefits of eternity.” (*Sonship Establishment, Sessions. 1-20, 58-60*) Need we say any more? According to SE not all believers will be glorified with Christ in Romans 8:17 unless they “qualify for the benefits of eternity” by following and committing to the SE curriculum. Not only is this teaching failing to expound upon the text of Romans 8 it is establishing two or more classes of believers based upon a supposed curriculum from Proverbs that has been imposed upon the Pauline Epistles.

It is not our motive to tax the reader’s patience by including these lengthy footnotes on SE, however, it is essential that the body of Christ understands the nature of this teaching that has penetrated so deeply within the great Grace Community. In his notes on Romans 8, Mark Newbold offers essentially

the exact same argument as McDaniel that we observed above. He writes, “The primary determining factor that qualifies us to be *joint-heirs with Christ* comes down, really, to the issue of what that expression involves when it talks about suffering *with* him. Everything that we are more or less involved with in our sonship edification/education that conforms us to His image, is going to be tied to *suffering with Him* in various manners and forms equivalent to how He does (*suffer*)— and the way in which He does in this dispensation of God’s grace. And our heir-ship with Him—or the degree of it—or the extent of it that will be determined at the judgment seat of Christ—will be determined by the amount of equivalency that there is in our sonship lives and through the effectual working of our sonship education, that has us *suffering with Him*. In other words, the degree to which we *suffer with Him*, is the degree of the reward of our inheritance! And if it’s zero (nothing)—then we’ll get nothing! And I say all this just to underscore for you the reality of, and the gravity of this element of contingency—this “*if so be*” — this issue that qualifies you for the reward of your inheritance with Christ as a *joint-heir with Him*! It’s a **huge** thing to you as a son! This is one reason why you can’t just say, “Well, we’re all going to go to the same place when we die, so I’ll worry about all that future stuff when I get there—I’ll just get educated then.” (dead wrong!) You’ll get educated—but you won’t get this inheritance, and you won’t be allowed to function in God’s business, and you won’t be “*glorified together*” with Christ in the Father’s business! Now I know that you want some satisfaction and contentment as to what these sufferings are—(but the truth of the matter is, and the reason I’m hesitant to go into this is, that by the time you get to the end of (:17), you’re supposed to have a natural wondering what *suffering with Him* is—or just how is it that I do that—and then (:18) begins to tell you that—and you get the first kind of the *suffering with Him* that you’re expected to be involved in.) (There are other kinds that you’re expected to be involved in, but you’re not going to get them until you’ve got enough education to deal with them.) — beginning in (:18) is the first kind. So that alone should give you an understanding of the kind of suffering we’re talking about. But for now—as a matter of our sonship establishment into this first virtuous attitude we’re supposed to have in viewing our education as sons—we are to perceive by what’s said to us here—we’re supposed to have the beginning of the generation of some thinking that matches our Father’s own thinking— about the thoroughness, and the perfection, and the capability of what the Father’s going to teach us, so that we can have complete and total confidence in the Father and in His curriculum He’s giving us—so that we can have complete conviction that it’s going to do exactly what it’s supposed to do— fully educate you; fully train you; fully qualify you for your **sonship inheritance**! (All the details are going to be given to you as the curriculum unfolds and progresses on.) In fact, you’re not supposed to be able to understand all the details of either your *joint-inheritance with Christ* and all that is involved in that; or with what specific things we are going to *suffer* and endure as we *suffer with Christ*; or what are the details of the kind of *glory* we are going to be sharing with Christ as we *glorified together*. The truth is, you can’t possibly know all that right now—there’s just no frame of reference for it yet—and all that’s going on here is to get you **established** as a son—and this is just the first component that, - at the end of it all (at the end of sonship establishment), sonship establishment is designed to have it so that you understand and appreciate that you are not only in possession of a curriculum that accomplishes all this—but that you understand that the curriculum you possess is designed and composed and constructed so as to fully meet all of the objectives, and provides fully for obtaining of all of the goals and aims and attainments that are necessary, from beginning to end, so that you *suffer with the Lord Jesus Christ* (or at least have the full opportunity to, if you so choose to) *suffer with the Lord Jesus Christ* in all the fullness that the Father has designed and provided for us to so do—and so, attain, therefore, the fullness of the inheritance of being a *joint-heir with Christ*.” (707-708)

Careful readers of the *Heirs of God or joint-heirs with Christ?* paper will note that it is devoid of the explanatory language that is characteristic of SE such as, “Sonship Establishment, “Sonship Edification,” or “the Father’s Business.” The decision to leave out the more objectionable aspects of SE teaching regarding Romans 8:17 from the paper appears to have been a willful decision on the part of the author. We can only surmise that this was done to distance the paper from the clearly objectionable portions of the SE version of the “two inheritance” view. That is why this author views the paper as a permutation or cousin to the SE position on Romans 8.

Appendix B

The “Joint-Heir View” of Northern California Grace Fellowship on Romans 8:17

- The “joint-heir view” of Northern California Grace Fellowship (NCGF) is a cousin of SE. While NCGF **DOES NOT** hold to SE’s Proverbs One Curriculum apparatus or Sonship Prayer, they are in agreement with SE regarding the conditional nature of joint-heirship in Romans 8:17.
- Drafted in [2011 and early 2012](#) (at a time when its author and chief supporters claimed to have had “no cognizance” of SE) and published in late summer/early fall of 2012 NCGF’s paper, [Heirs of God or Joint-Heirs with Christ?](#) argues for “two separate types of eternal inheritance” in Romans 8:17. In short, all believers are “heirs of God” on account of the fact that they are justified; however, not all believers are “joint-heirs with Christ.” This constitutes a separate inheritance given “only to those who are sanctified.” (Stutzman, 6)
 - “If you read this verse carefully, you will note that there are actually two separate types of eternal inheritance that are being identified: heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. In other words, one is an inheritance given to all that are justified, and the other is an inheritance which is given *only* to those who are sanctified.

Everyone in the Church the Body of Christ is an heir of God. This is to say that all in the Church the Body of Christ are recipient heirs of eternal life in heaven:

(Quotes Galatians 3:29)

However, not everyone in the Church the Body of Christ will be declared a joint-heir with Christ. The reason being that joint-heirship is very much conditional, as the words "*If so be*" would attest.

What does it mean to suffer with Christ (*If so be that we suffer with him*)? How can we define the suffering which is spoken of here? There is a tendency that exists among the church today to view Christian suffering in vague and generalized terms. The common view is that *anyone* who believes in Christ is also, by default, suffering *for Christ*. While there is a very real suffering that comes from professing faith in Christ, this is not the type of suffering that Romans 8:17 refers to.

To this point, I submit for your consideration that the *suffering* with Christ referred to here, speaks of **a special kind of suffering that is inherent to the Pauline doctrine itself**. This is to say, **that this suffering is unique and exclusively appointed to saints who stand steadfast in a rightly divided paradigm of scripture**. This is because, it is only in rightly dividing the word that the saint is illuminated to the distinctiveness of Paul's mystery and it is **ONLY** through the doctrinal comprehension of that mystery that true and effectual sanctification of the believer is produced!" (Stutzman, 6-7)

- With this conditional understanding in mind, the above author then cross-references Romans 8:17 with II Timothy 2:12 to close the argument that “joint-heirs” are those who suffer with Christ for the truth of the mystery and are therefore granted a “reign” with Christ (i.e., joint-heir) while those who do not, remain only “heirs of God.” Regarding this piece of the “two inheritance” puzzle the author states:

- “As 2nd Timothy 2:12 suggests, there will be those in the Church the Body of Christ who deny Christ, and likewise, will also be denied *by* Christ. Of course, the context here speaks not of losing one's salvation (as verse 13 attests) but rather of one's inheritance being denied. Paul is warning us here that the inheritance and honor of reigning in eternity as joint-heirs with Christ, will not be granted to everyone in the Church the Body of Christ.” (Stutzman, 7)
- “Paul links the conditional *“if”* of suffering to rightly dividing God's word (compare verse 12 to verse 15).

Paul links this conditional *“if”* of suffering to reigning with Christ i.e. joint-heirship with Christ (compare verse 12 to Romans 8:17: *“if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together”*).

Paul states that those who do not suffer with Christ (i.e. do not build upon the doctrines of the mystery) shall be denied by Christ (denied joint-heirship with Christ at the judgment seat). Compare verse 12 to 1st Corinthians 3:10-17.” (Stutzman, 16)

- In addition to arguing that joint-heirship with Christ in Romans 8:17 is conditioned upon suffering for the “rightly divided paradigm of scripture” and that only “joint-heirs” so qualified will reign with Christ in II Timothy 2:12, the author goes on to make the following assertions that have much in common with the views expressed by SE in the previous section:
- *Reigning with Christ in the Heavenly Government is reserved only for those who are qualified to perform that function.*
 - “Christ is to be the recipient heir of Heaven and Earth. The Church the Body of Christ is His inheritance in the heavenly places. He has invited us to reign in that glory with Him. As mentioned, **this requires us to be qualified to perform that function.** In order to be qualified to reign, we must first be able to *“prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”* (Romans 12:2). We accomplish this by studying; *“study to shew thyself approved unto God...”* (2nd Timothy 2:15).” (Stutzman, 8)
 - **“Likewise, in order to be honored, we must also be sure to cross the finish line. We must finish the course that is put before us. These are the conditions that predicate and determine our joint-inheritance.”** (Stutzman, 17)

- *Sanctification is a progressive race against the deadline of time that qualifies one for joint-heirship.*
 - “Furthermore, lest we forget, the building process is exactly that: *a process*. **The progressive workmanship of God ceases when our study of His word ceases. Therefore, our sanctification process in this life can be viewed as a race against a deadline of time. It behooves us then to be continually fervent in study, allowing as much doctrine to be built up in our inner man as time permits.** What we allow God to build in us today will be that which we will abide in for eternity.” (Stutzman, 19)

(Some believers are not ready for the Rapture and the subsequent Judgment Seat of Christ according to the Pastor of NCGF. [Click here](#) to read the transcript from his message titled *The Judgment Seat of Christ* that was delivered at Twin Cities Grace Fellowship in July of 2013.)

- “Where the angelic host currently occupies the governmental positions of Heaven, that vocation will one day be turned over for the sanctified Body of Christ to administer. **This is what joint-heirship with Christ is all about. God the Father is inviting His children to run the Heavenly places with His beloved Son! Naturally, this honor of administration is only awarded to those sanctified in the body who have been made qualified to reign with Christ (after all, Heaven is 1/2 part of Christ's total inheritance; we must prove ourselves worthy stewards to govern His estate).**” (Stutzman, 29-30)
- *Only properly qualified “joint-heirs” will be glorified with Christ.*
 - “Therein lies the deeper aspect of what is conveyed in the *patience of hope*: For the joint-heir in Christ who has suffered faithfully for the truth of the mystery, the *blessed hope* of the rapture signifies something far more profound than deliverance into heaven: **it signifies the commencement of his/her glorification with Christ!** (This being the bestowment of the crown of joint-heirship at the judgment seat of Christ as cited in 2nd Timothy 4:8, 2nd Timothy 4:1 and Romans 8:17):” (Stutzman, 24)
 - “Yet, there is also a *generalized* category which is described in Ephesians as “*every name that is named*”. Is it reasonable to conclude that “*every name that is named*” **speaks of those in the Church the Body of Christ who have not been declared joint-heirs with Christ? They're obviously citizens of Heaven with eternal life (heirs of God) but they also seem to be left out from being given a specific title of authority (i.e. joint-heirs with Christ).** I'll leave that for the reader to decide.

Regardless, we can absolutely conclude that God's purpose for our sanctification is so that we might function as reigning administrators of His beloved Son's inheritance. What an incredible honor this is indeed!

Now then, it can be said that our **edification process has a direct impact and ministry to the angelic realm. Why is this? "Because the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. ...Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:19-21).**" (Stutzman, 30)

- *A believer's joint inheritance is something that can be spoiled.*
 - "Where God has spoiled the glory and honor that He had originally created in Satan, Satan in turn (through apostate teaching) seeks to spoil the glory and honor of Christ's inheritance in the saints. By extension, this includes spoiling the inheritance of the Body of Christ itself (hence the phrase "*joint-heirs*" with Christ)."

Quotes Colossians 2:8 and 2:18

Be not deceived about this reality. **Joint-inheritance with Christ is very much something that can be spoiled from you. In fact, it is being spoiled from right under the noses of most (if not all) in denominational Christendom today. When Paul speaks of *traditions of men and rudiments of the world* (Colossians 2:8), he is speaking inclusively of the apostate religious hegemony which dominates Christian teaching. He is speaking of those "*ten thousand instructors in Christ*" of 1st Corinthians 4:15. These are the tools by which Satan spoils the saint of his/her eternal reward.**

For any who may still insist on disputing the fact that joint-inheritance with Christ can indeed be spoiled, I ask you to consider this: For what purpose does Paul give such explicit and repeated warning when he speaks in context of the judgment seat of Christ?

The judgment seat of Christ is not a mere frivolous display of ceremonial pageantry, it is an appointment before the King by which all in the Church the Body of Christ will stand to give an account. **It is a day in which the saint will either be glorified or ashamed before their Lord.** Indeed, Paul is giving us warning for good reason; the judgments of Christ will be final and without our rebuttal." (Stutzman, 33-34)

- On Sunday, December 8, 2013, I preached a message here at Grace Life Bible Church (GLBC) titled "Is Saeed Abedini a Joint-Heir with Christ." This message was largely a critique of the idea that only those who suffer for "the rightly divided paradigm of scripture" are joint-heirs with Christ as asserted in NCGF's paper *Heirs of God or Joint-Heirs With Christ?* In January 2014, I withdrew this message from the internet due to some unfortunate comments made by me about the brothers responsible for the *Heirs of God* paper as well as some less than clear comments on my part regarding the mystery in the book of Romans. In conjunction with the removal of this message from all GLBC affiliated websites, I issued both public and private apologies to the brothers in question. (To read a copy of my Facebook apology [click here](#)).

- Prior to pulling this message from the internet it was “reviewed” by both Brother Matt Stutzman, the author of *Heirs of God*, as well as by Brother Ryan Michael Jones, a contributor and chief promoter of the paper on Facebook and the internet. (To read the review by Ryan Michael Jones [click here](#)).
- In his critique of my message from January 14, 2014, Brother Matt seeks to clarify the “semantics” of his paper when he states:
 - “In preface to this, I’d like to first clarify some of the semantics of my paper which I now believe may be causing some confusion here (particularly the use of the term “*two inheritances*”). For the record, I purposefully used the term *two inheritances* to delineate the two different portions that are incorporated within the singular word *inheritance*. The idea here would be paralleled to the precedent Old Testament principle of the inheritance (singular) as compared to the “*double portion*” of inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:16-17).

As the Bible student will recall, the double portion of the inheritance (otherwise known as the *birthright*) bestowed certain rights and privileges that were exclusively given to the firstborn son by his father. In addition to inheriting a double portion of the estate itself, these privileges also bestowed honor, authority, and exaltation of the firstborn son as the head over all the affairs of his family. Naturally, along with those privileges also came the responsibility to provide for those under his headship (specifically his mother until death and any of his unmarried sisters in the household). In other words we might suitably define this birthright inheritance with the words “reigning” or “governance”. In fact we can see this connection of the firstborn birthright and reigning clearly exhibited in the verse below:

(quotes II Chronicles 21:1-3)

Again, my assertion here (which was seemingly misunderstood in my paper) is that this Old Testament principle of inheritance and double portion of inheritance is mirrored in our present dispensation of grace. The essence of this parallel in our dispensation being that the heir of the single portion of inheritance (the heir of God) is bequeathed with both a glorified incorruptible body and full entitlement as a citizen in the Heavenly places of the Kingdom. In contrast, the second portion (i.e. *the reward of the inheritance* Col 3:24) is synonymous with reigning in the Heavenly places. As previously stated, Bryan Ross does not at this time dispute this assertion of the paper regarding 2 Timothy 2:12, i.e. that the qualification to reign in the Heavenly places is conditionally predicated upon a saints’ voluntary faithfulness to labor in and suffer for the Pauline gospel rightly divided.” (Stutzman, *Bryan Ross's video refutation of the joint-heir paper*, 1-2)

- The fact is that none of these verses nor this line of argumentation appears anywhere within Brother Stutzman’s afore referenced and quoted *Heirs of God* paper. While Brother Stutzman conceded that on “face value” he agreed with my explanation of the joint-heirship, he took

exception to my understanding based on what he calls the “two portions” of Christ’s inheritance. Stutzman then argues, based upon Psalms 16:5-10; 2:7-18, and Colossians 1:16-18, that Christ’s inheritance is comprised of “two portions” or parts: 1) a glorified body, and 2) reigning. (To read the review by Matt Stutzman [click here](#).)

- “At face value of Bryan's logical reasoning of a joint-heirship here I am inclined to agree. However, the difference between our perspectives is rooted in the details as to how we perceive and define the inheritance that Christ Himself receives. What is seemingly absent from Mr. Ross's evaluation of the word is that the inheritance that Christ Himself receives is also delineated into two portions. We can see both portions of Christ's inheritance delineated in the book of Psalms: (quotes Psalms 16:5-10)

As can be seen in this Messianic Psalm, the focus of Christ's inheritance in view here is centered in His faithful expectation that His flesh would not see corruption. This is to say that death (the tyrant king who had previously reigned supreme) would not thwart the resurrection of Jesus into everlasting life with a glorified and incorruptible body.

In contrast to this, the second portion of Christ's inheritance (i.e. the reigning) is exhibited in Psalms chapter 2: (quotes Psalms 2:7-8)

Here we can see the focus of Christ's inheritance being centered upon His preeminent position of reigning over people. In the context of prophecy, the *heathen* of course would be the Gentiles of the Kingdom who will one day be subject to the ordained governmental ruling of Israel (with Christ presiding as King of Kings) over all nations of the Earth.

Additionally, we can see the association of the firstborn to reigning in Colossians chapter 1: (quotes Colossians 1:16-18)

In light of these two-folds of Christ's inheritance (everlasting life and reigning), the question at hand remains: which portion of Christ's inheritance is contextually being referred to in Romans 8:17? I believe that the answer to that question is made clear in the last seven words of the verse: (quotes Romans 8:17)

Keep in mind that Christ has already received the first portion of His inheritance (a physical glorified body) but has not yet appropriated the second portion of His inheritance (the reigning). Given that Romans 8:17 makes it abundantly clear that the glorification spoken of is a simultaneous glorification (that we may be also glorified together), the verse therefore demands that this glorification must include the aspect of reigning. That's the only part of Christ's inheritance that has not yet been fulfilled!” (Stutzman, *Bryan Ross's video refutation of the joint-heir paper*, 3-4)

- Brother Stutzman’s rebuttal to my teaching refers back to the prophetic scriptures to define the meaning of joint-heirship in Paul’s epistles. If this is the way Paul intended for joint-heirship to be understood why does he not produce the same line of argumentation offered by Brother Matt?
- In addition, to buttress his claim, Brother Matt states the following regarding the context of Romans 8:
 - “Moreover, the verses that immediately follow Romans 8:17 also corroborate (in context) the fact that the glorification spoken of there is speaking with reference to reigning. (quotes Romans 8:18-21)

The particular use of the word "creature" here is referring to the higher sentient order of God's creation. This equally includes both angels and man (this phrasing being distinguished from the rest of God's "creation" spoken of in Romans 8:22).

Now as Romans 8:21 declares, the *creature* itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. In the context of our present dispensation, this bondage of corruption spoken of here is particularly and specifically referencing the present defilement of the Heavenly government by Satan and his fallen angels (Job 15:15). As such, God’s manifold wisdom of the mystery that has now been revealed to both angels and the church (Ephesians 3:10) becomes a welcomed proclamation of God’s remedy to resolve the age long standing question that has ailed and confounded the faithful of God’s angelic elect: the Heavens are not clean in His sight, how will He restore Heaven unto righteous governance?

Romans 8:21 provides the answer to that age long question. Naturally, the resolution here is in God’s plan to use the faithful saints of His Body (i.e. the joint-heirs found faithful in their labor in the mystery) for the purpose of supplanting the seats of government now currently occupied by the angelic host.” (Stutzman, *Bryan Ross's video refutation of the joint-heir paper*, 4-5)

- Notice how in explaining the context, Brother Matt reserves a specific meaning for the word “creature” that is different from the rest of God’s “creation” spoken of in Romans 8:22. Who else taught these verses in this manner? The SE teachers Mark Newbold and Mike McDaniel. In seeking to rebut my message Brother Stutzman asserts one of the distinguishing characteristics of SE, namely a distinction between the “creature” and the “creation” in Romans 8:18-21.
- In June 2014, Matt Stutzman and Ryan Michael Jones released a “rebuttal” to my paper *Ifs, Ands, and Buts* titled [Wrongly Deriding Joint-Heirs with Christ](#). In a section titled, “Unpacking the Inheritance As Defined by the Bible” on pages 40 to 45, Stutzman and Jones restate in slightly expanded and augmented form the same reasoning set forth by Matt in his January 14, 2014 review of my message from December 8, 2013. Specifically, it is argued there is a “singular inheritance received by the family in two parts” based upon Deuteronomy 21:15-17, II Chronicles 21:1-3, Colossians 1:16-18, Psalms 16:5-10, Psalms 2:7-8, and Romans 8:17. (Stutzman and

Jones, 40) The firstborn son is granted a “double portion” of the inheritance given his “birthright” which thereby enables him to reign over the affairs of the family. There are two aspects to Christ’s inheritance: 1) resurrected glorified body, and 2) firstborn exalted unto reigning. Once again these Old Testament passages are used to prove a difference between “heirs of God” and “joint-heirs with Christ” in Romans 8:17.

- Any reference to the “creature” is conspicuously missing from the June 2014 publication of *Wrongly Deriding*. This is interesting given the fact that its authors state in no uncertain terms on page 2 of *Wrongly Deriding* that they had absolutely “no cognizance of Sonship Edification” when drafting their first paper *Heirs of God*. (Stutzman and Jones, 2) This claim is made despite the clear historical record of promoting *Heirs of God* under the banner of SE on Facebook and the internet as established in GHP Lesson 144. It is made despite Stutzman’s January 2014 rebuttal referring the “creature” as distinct from the “creation”. Above all, the claim is made despite certain pieces of private correspondence that I have in my possession reaching all the way back to 2011 when the *Heirs of God* paper was being drafted. These emails originated from the personal email account of one of the authors of *Wrongly Deriding* and clearly indicate not only an awareness of SE but its active promotion and recommendation to other saints with his “highest recommendation.”
- On page 1 of *Wrongly Deriding* its authors state, “As I have originally asserted in the Joint-Heir paper and still continue to maintain, there are in fact two different elements incorporated within the singular use of the word “inheritance.” (Stutzman and Jones, 1) **The problem with this statement is that this is not the position advocated for in *Heirs of God*.**
 - “If you read this verse carefully, you will note that there are actually two separate types of eternal inheritance that are being identified: heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. In other words, one is an inheritance given to all that are justified, and the other is an inheritance which is given *only* to those who are sanctified.” (Stutzman, 6)
- ***Heirs of God* argued for “two separate types of eternal inheritance” whereas *Wrongly Deriding* argues for one singular inheritance in “two parts.”** The FACT is that these two positions are not same. Yet both papers are allowed to stand on NCGF’s websites and are being promoted on Facebook and the internet without proper edits/revision to correct the discrepancy. If one were to read NCGF’s first paper, *Heirs of God*, they would get what appears to now be an outdated explanation of joint-heirship. I am confused as to what exactly NCGF’s position regarding joint-heirship in Romans 8:17 actually is. I find this duplicity particularly troubling given the fact that I am ridiculed on pages 1 and 2 of *Wrongly Deriding* for not acknowledging Brother Matt’s January 2014 review in the March publication of my *Ifs, Ands, and Buts*. If I was to take Matt’s January explanation/alteration of his position set forth in his paper *Heirs of God* to be reflective of his current thinking, should he not have edited, revised, or updated his paper to reflect these new explanations? However, even at this hour *Heirs of God* reads as it did prior to both the Brother Stutzman’s January review and the co-authored June release of *Wrongly Deriding*. Meanwhile, I am ridiculed on page 5 of *Wrongly Deriding* for leaving open the

possibility that *Ifs, Ands, and Buts* might need to be revised/updated given insights gained from further study.

- Lastly, NCGF’s **most recent view that there is one inheritance in two portions** based upon the Old Testament passages outlined above is out of step with the reasons given by one of the authors of *Wrongly Deriding* recently on Facebook. On [November 13, 2014](#) Brother Jones stated that the reason he ceased listening to Mike McDaniel was on account of “his stance on reading grace back into prophecy.” Yet now, Brother Jones is the coauthor of a paper that has done this exact thing in seeking to understand the nature of joint-heirship in Romans 8:17, that is in order to understand joint-heirship in Romans 8:17 one must understand Deuteronomy 21, II Chronicles 21, Psalms 16, and Psalms 2.
- I Timothy 2:5—how does one become an heir of God? By trusting in and becoming identified with the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. How can one be an heir of God without being a joint-heir with Christ?

Works Cited for Appendix B

Ross, Bryan C. *Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17*. 2nd Edition June 2014.

Stutzman, Matt. *Heirs of God or Joint-Heirs with Christ?*

Stutzman, Matt. *Bryan Ross's video refutation of the joint-heir paper*. January 2014.

Stutzman, Matt and Ryan Michael Jones. *Wrongly Deriding Joint-Heirs With Christ*. June 2014.

Sunday, December 14, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 155 Sonship Edification: Distinguishing Characteristics, Part 5 \(The New Covenant\) and Precursors to SE](#)

Introduction

- The past four lessons (151-154) have been dedicated to a consideration of the distinguishing characteristics of Sonship Edification (SE). In those lessons we considered:
 - The Three Stages of Sonship
 - The Creature
 - Sonship Prayer
 - Spirit Dwelling in Romans 8:9
 - Conditional Nature of Joint-heirship in Romans 8:17
- In this fifth and final lesson in the sequence regarding the Distinguishing Characteristics of SE, we would like to touch on the following issue:
 - The New Covenant

SE on the New Covenant

- Proponents of SE have much to say about the nature of the New Covenant and its role and impact upon the body of Christ in general and their concept of Sonship specifically. An exhaustive study of SE's teaching on the New Covenant could easily take up multiple hours of teaching. For the sake of brevity, I would like to focus on only two aspects of SE's teaching regarding the New Covenant: 1) there are no physical provisions in the New Covenant and 2) nature of the law that is written on the hearts of the recipients of the New Covenant.

No Physical Provisions

- According to SE teachers, the New Covenant (NC) pertains to spiritual things exclusively and contains no physical provisions.
 - “Jeremiah 31:31-34

First and foremost, the NC does NOT covenant for any land, king, throne, kingdom, or anything along those lines at all!!!

The ONLY thing that the New Covenant covenants for are SPIRITUAL THINGS—AND SPIRITUAL THINGS ONLY!

The NC has five things to it mentioned here: 1) “*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;*” 2) “*and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*” 3) “*they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying,*

Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them,” 4) *“I will forgive their iniquity,”* 5) *“I will remember their sin no more.”* (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

You’ve got five primary things or components to the NC—and every one of them is SPIRITUAL—they’re all spiritual things!!!!!!!!!!” (Newbold, Romans 8(101-200), 193)

- “When it comes to the New Covenant, you and I are beneficiaries of the New Covenant even though we are not under that covenant as a nation or as Israelites or in conjunction with the rest of the covenants. It is clear in the Scripture that the New Covenant is given to Israel. But it is also clear in the Apostle Paul’s writings that every single aspect of the New Covenant is also provided for us.

The New Covenant and the Old Covenant have a relationship in that neither one of them have to do with land, a king, a kingdom, a name, material blessings, a throne, the repossession of the earth or any of the things that the other covenants do include. They both deal with what has to be “inside a person” that qualifies him to be used by God in His business. The difference is that one of those covenants provides for you to produce it and the other one provides for God to produce it.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation Lessons 7 and 8, Page 6)

- “Nothing in the New Covenant has to do with physical, material things. It only covenants for spiritual things. Paul realizes that he has to be an able minister of the New Testament because the thing you have to have to be utilized by God as a son is the Spiritual Fitness that the new covenant covenants for”. (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation Lessons 9 and 10, Page 2)
- “Now, we left off our examination of the New Covenant to see the Palestinian (or God’s Jehovahness) Covenant. Let’s return there just to make sure that you have a proper appreciation for what the New Covenant covenants for.

By this time you should understand that: The NC does NOT covenant for any land, king, throne, kingdom, or anything along those lines at all

The ONLY thing that the New Covenant covenants for are SPIRITUAL THINGS.

The NC has five components: 1) “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in in their hearts” 2) “and will be their God, and they shall be my people” 3) “they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them” 4) “I will forgive their iniquity” 5) “I will remember their sin no more”

No matter who you are, no matter what program you live in, if you are going to be fit to be utilized by God and enter into doing business with Him, you have to have those five things and that means we have to have them too.

There are two major mistakes that are made with regard to the covenants: 1) The idea that we are in a covenant relationship with God and that the covenants are for us; 2) The idea that even the New Covenant has nothing to do with us at all.

It is true that we are not “under” the New Covenant, but we are beneficiaries of the things in the New Covenant. The New Covenant is a must for spiritual fitness; no matter which program you are a part of. The reason they object to being beneficiaries of the New Covenant is because it is given under Israel’s program. I’m not saying that we shouldn’t be careful about those things, but think about this; the Cross took place under Israel’s program too. Does that mean that you are not a beneficiary of what took place there? If not, then you are in real trouble. . .

This matches the 1st component of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31. Jeremiah 31:33–
But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and **write it in their hearts**; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Notice that this is Paul’s lead-in to telling them that he is “an able minister of the new testament.”

2 Corinthians 3:6–Who also hath made us **able ministers of the New Testament**; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

I can tell you that all five components of the New Covenant are taught to us by our apostle in his epistles. I am tempted to take you through them, but for now I’m just going to leave it at that. I have shown you the first component of the new covenant as it pertains to us in 2 Corinthians 3:2-3. The other four components of the New Covenant are found in that same book. We aren’t going to go through them now, but we may sometime in the future when we are going through the book of 2 Corinthians.” (McDaniel, Sonship Orientation Lessons 11 and 12, Pages 4-5)

- Not only do many of the above concepts/comments remind one of Progressive Dispensationalism’s suppositions with respect to the New Covenant, but SE’s statements on this matter are simply FALSE. Ezekiel 36:22-29, a clear cross reference to Jeremiah 31, does indicate that land promises/blessings are included in the New Covenant.

What Law is Written on Israel's Heart?

- Newbold and McDaniel both teach that the law being written on the heart in Jeremiah 31 is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” from Romans 8:2.

- “NC = “*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;*” (Jer. 31:33)

Note: most Bible writers and teachers really screw this all up because of that word “*law*” — this is NOT talking about taking the Law of Moses (that Old Covenant law contract) and writing it in the hearts of God’s people!!!

The Old Covenant is an “if/then” contract—and that is totally inconsistent with the NC—and you would know that if you properly had understood and appreciated the **Palestinian Covenant** in the first place! (The covenant for God to provide spiritual fitness by His J-ness and grace).

The “*law*” being spoken of is a law as it was used by Paul in Romans 6-8—not the Law of Moses, but the law of Righteousness—the law of Christ; the *law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*—which is all so you can think like God does!!!

And in both programs, all these issues get taught to the proper recipients in the proper way—Israel gets it taught to them by Christ Himself with all His corrective doctrine in the gospel accounts; the remnant get it taught to them in the books of Hebrews through Revelations — and we get it taught to us in the epistles of Paul.” (Newbold, Romans 8 (101-200), 200)

- With respect to the “*law*” in Jeremiah 31:33 Mike McDaniel states the following:
 - “Normally, what do you think of when you read the word “*law*”. But as you know, many words in your Bible have more than one meaning. This “*law*” is not the “Law of Moses.” This is referring to a law “sanctification-wise” and you should already know about it because you have been through the first thirteen verses of Romans 8.

Romans 8:2—For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The “*law*” referred to in Jeremiah 31:33 (and in Romans 8:2) is the never-failing truth (law) that sets you free from the “law of sin and death” which is the old covenant.

Next, with regard to their sanctification, God is going to write that law on their hearts. Then, the next component is that He “will be their God and they shall be [His] people.” We are going to talk about these and you will need to know about “heart-writing” because that is going to be going on with you as an adopted son. But for

now, what I want to draw your attention to is contained in the next verse.”
(McDaniel, Sonship Orientation Lessons 9-10, Page 6-7)

Further Reading and Study

- For more information on SE’s teaching regarding the New Covenant please consult the following resources.
 - Mark Newbold
 - [Romans 8 \(101-200\)](#)
 - [Romans 8 \(201-300\)](#)
 - Mike McDaniel
 - Sonship Orientation Lessons [7](#) and [8](#)
 - Sonship Orientation Lessons [9](#) and [10](#)
 - Sonship Orientation Lessons [11](#) and [12](#)

Precursors to Sonship

- In the first lesson I taught regarding Sonship (Lesson 143) I stated:
 - “you ought not to assume that you understand how a person is using that term. The terms “adoption” and “sonship” have widely varied meanings depending on who is using them.”
- In Lesson 143 we looked at a variety of different ways throughout church history that the concepts of sonship and adoption have been understood and explained. As part of that process we considered the following:
 - Occurrences of the Greek word *huiiothesia* (“adoption” in the KJB) and how the word was translated in various versions.
 - The writings of C.H. Mackintosh on sonship from the 1860s in *Notes on Genesis*.
 - Modern mainline Evangelical Christianity by looking at the entry on “Adoption” by William E. Brown in the popular Evangelical reference work *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* edited by Walter A. Elwell
 - Pastor C.R. Stam’s short piece on adoption/sonship from *Two Minutes With the Bible* titled the “The Spirit of Sonship.”
 - Dr. Jake Miller and World Harvest Mission
 - SE teachers Mark Newbold and Mike McDaniel

- While Sonship Edification as a system of Biblical interpretation is a new development within the Grace Movement over the past fifteen to twenty years, finding its point of origin within the writing ministry of Keith Blades, aspects of SE are observable to varying degrees throughout church history.
- Due to the fact that so much of SE's doctrinal platform is CONDITIONAL (indwelling Holy Spirit, conditional progressive sanctification, and Joint-heirship for example) tracing the precursors of SE, while not easy, generally involves identifying groups or men who expounded upon key passages in similar ways.
- While the Grace History Project in no way claims to be exhaustive in its identification of the doctrinal forebears of SE, there are some notable precursors of the system that bear mentioning. These include the following:
 - 1884—*The Theocratic Kingdom* by George N.H. Peters—3 Volumes
 - 1935—*The Berean Expositor, Volume XXV* by Charles Welch
 - 1936—*Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks* by G.H. Lang
 - 1972—*Edification Complex of the Soul* by R. B. Thieme, Jr.
 - 1981—*The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* by Zane Hodges
- The majority of these writers seek to connect Romans 8:17 with II Timothy 2:12 to maintain their position that joint-heirship with Christ and/or reigning with Christ in eternity is CONDITIONAL. Likewise, every one of these writers appeals to passages outside of the Pauline epistles such as Revelation 2:26-27; 3:11-12, 20-21 as well as others to support their positions. In short, they do not rightly divide the word of truth according to the manner set forth in Paul's epistles nor do they recognize GRACE as God's operating principle for both justification and sanctification during the current dispensation. What are we to conclude from these factual realities? One thing is certain, all these writers view reigning with Christ (II Timothy 2:12) or becoming a joint-heir with Christ (Romans 8:17) as conditioned upon something that believers must strive to attain in some fashion. In other words, reigning and joint-heirship are tied to the believer's works and/or sanctification in order to qualify them for the honor. Ironically, on this point it appears that SE has more in common with the works based sanctification mind set of denominational Christianity than they do with the Grace Message taught by our Apostle Paul.

N.H. Peters

- N.H Peters was born in Berlin, PA and graduated from Wittenburg College, and pastored a number of Lutheran churches in Ohio. Originally published by Funk & Wagnalls in 1884, Peters' three Volume magnum opus *The Theocratic Kingdom* is used by Zane Hodges in the 2nd edition of *The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* (1992) to buttress his argument that there is a double inheritance spoken of in Romans 8:17 and that only those qualified will co-reign with Christ. After reading the pertinent sections of Peters, I am convinced that Hodges is playing a bit fast and loose with Peters work. Peters' argumentation is not as cut and dry as Hodges lets on. In fact, in my estimation, Peters makes many seemingly contradictory statements and can only be viewed as muddled at best.

- Spanning all three volumes, Peters offers 206 Propositions regarding the nature of the kingdom of God. Proposition 90, found in volume one and titled “Members of the Church, who are faithful are promised this Kingdom” contains statements indicating that only faithful believers will co-reign with Christ.
 - “Only believers are promised this Kingdom. **Faith and its fruits are essential to its inheritance.** This is pointedly declared in Scripture, as e.g. Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5, etc. If the Jews were accounted unworthy because of lack of faith, etc., to receive this Kingdom—if they were rejected and a seed must be raised up unto Abraham, we may rest assured that it will be, it must be, “a righteous seed.” This becomes the more necessary in view of the position that this seed is to occupy in the Coming Kingdom, viz.: **that of co-rulers with Christ. Therefore the Word assures us that even out of “the many” but “few” will be chosen, and those only because they are believing and faithful.**” (Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom Vol. I.*, 601)
- Proposition 90 directs its readers to also consider Proposition 154, titled “This Theocratic Kingdom includes the visible reign of the risen and glorified saints here on earth.” It is in Proposition 154 that many seemingly conflicting statements are made by Peters. First, Peters seems to state plainly that all believers are “joint-heirs with Christ” based on the normal use of grammar.
 - “This reigning, whatever it is, is the Lord’s appointment and not ours; and hence to ascertain its true meaning, that which God has said concerning it ought to be diligently compared. And when the **plain grammatical meaning undoubtedly teaches** just such a reign as we advocate, it ill becomes the believer in the Word, even if he rejects the teaching, to speak or write disrespectfully of it. . . **This the words plainly denote a real, substantial elevation to rulership, great exalted honor and authority in the coming Kingdom, then language itself has no precise, adequate meaning. This the words plain denote, and, however much we may feel that such a position is far above our deserts, the astonishing grace of God will bestow it. Grace adopts us as sons, and as such we become “heirs of God,” and consequently “joint heirs with Christ. . .”** (Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom Vol. II.*, 571)
- Elsewhere within Proposition 154, one encounters language that is less clear regarding the believer’s joint-heirship and subsequent reign with Christ. Hodges quotes this statement in his footnotes to support his notion that only those “accounted worthy of rulership” are “joint-heirs with Christ.”
 - “Let the Davidic Kingdom be restored as predicted, and, in the very nature of the case, to verify the promise, the Theocratic king **will also have His associate rulers** assuring the most perfect admonition of the laws, and securing the most perfect government, productive peace, prosperity, and happiness, such as the world has never yet witnessed. **The word emphatically teaches that those thus chosen, accounted worthy of this rulership, are the saints. They are “joint-heirs” (Romans 8:17) with the Christ, who graciously divides without marring his own superiority and supremacy (but rather exalts it thereby), His own inheritance with them.**” (Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom Vol. II.*, 570)

- Given that these two quotes from Peters can be found on subsequent pages (pages 570 and 571), his argumentation appears unclear. Meanwhile, Hodges seems to be seizing upon the one statement on page 570 that he feels supports his position while failing to cite the second on page 571.
- Later in Proposition 154, Peters quotes a lengthy passage from Graff's "Lay Sermons # 6" which definitely indicates being a part of God's "ruling class" is a "reward of good works that is superadded to salvation," i.e., only the qualified faithful will co-rule with Christ.
 - "Graff ("Greybeard") in his "Lay Sermons," No. 6, truly observes that "the present or ecclesiastical dispensation may therefore be said to be allotted to the development of Christ' aristocracy, the nobility of His Kingdom, the ruling class in the world to come." After urging that humility precedes exaltation he says: "If Christians were not forgetful of the distinguished honors which await them in the future, they would be less concerned about the honors and emoluments of the present." Pregnant words; but alas, how few heed the lesson imparted. In No. 13 he has some thoughtful words on **"the Reward of Good Works that is superadded (added over and above) to Salvation,"** in which the following sentence: "And although the literature of the Church abounds in 'crowns for the departed,' it is not improbable that there will be many crownless heads on the day when the Lord shall appear to receive them, inasmuch as the three crowns (whatever they may typify) designated in the Scriptures are mentioned in each case as the reward of some special service or merit. . . Whatever may be thought of this attempted distinction of crowns, the idea of loss, of simple salvation, is a correct one, as e.g. evidenced by the apostles teaching in I Corinthians 3:8-15. The principle of being thus rewarded by Jesus, e.g. when He addressed His disciples, prefacing the "and I appoint unto you a kingdom," etc. by the declaration, giving a reason for the same: "you are they which have continued with Me in my (trials) temptations," Luke 22:28-29. The unspeakable honor thus conferred explains why the demands of God in reference to supreme love to Him unreserved surrender to His Will, etc., are, **as required in this dispensation, not fanatical requirements (as unbelief suggests), but essential in view of qualifying the saints for this rulership. Hence the Scriptures inform us that we should receive our trials and even tribulation joyfully, because if we endure the testing, these things shall give us a fitness for the special honor of kingship and priesthood.**" (Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom Vol. II.*, 591-592)
- In this passage Peters seems clear that only those who are properly "qualified" are "fit" for the honor of rulership, kingship, and priesthood. In short, one must qualify himself or herself for the honor of co-reigning with Christ; it is not automatically bestowed as a result of salvation but is "superadded" to it. While this is not the exact same argument being offered by SE, the premise is the same. The believer must in some way, shape, manner, or form attain unto this "special honor."
- In the next lesson we will continue consideration of the precursors of SE.

Works Cited

Peters, N.H. *The Theocratic Kingdom Vol. I & II.* New York: Funk and Wagnall's, 1884.

Sunday, December 21, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 156 Sonship Edification: Precursors to Sonship, Part 2](#)

Introduction

- Last week, in Lesson 155, we finished up our five part mini-series on the Distinguishing Characteristics of Sonship Edification (SE) by looking at the teaching of Newbold and McDaniel on the New Covenant.
- In the second half of Lesson 155 we began discussing the following historical precursors to Sonship Edification (SE).
 - 1884—*The Theocratic Kingdom* by George N.H. Peters—3 Volumes
 - 1935—*The Berean Expositor, Volume XXV* by Charles Welch
 - 1936—*Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks* by G.H. Lang
 - 1972—*Edification Complex of the Soul* by R. B. Thieme, Jr.
 - 1981—*The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* by Zane Hodges
- Last week we only had time to look at the comments of N.H. Peters. While the writings of Peters were something of a mixed bag, we did observe the following: Peters appears to be arguing that only those who are properly “qualified” are “fit” for the honor of rulership, kingship, and priesthood. In short, one must qualify himself or herself for the honor of co-reigning with Christ; it is not automatically bestowed as a result of salvation but is “superadded” to it. While this is not the exact same argument being offered by SE, the premise is the same. The believer must in some way, shape, manner, or form attain unto this “special honor.”
- This week we want to continue our investigation into the precursors of SE by focusing our attention on the teachings of Charles H. Welch and G.H. Lang.

Precursors to Sonship Continued

Charles H. Welch

- Charles H. Welch is a precursor to SE in that he taught two separate and distinct inheritances in Romans 8:17. Students of the Grace History Project should recall from Lessons 80 and 81 that Welch was the great champion for the Acts 28 dispensational position in the 20th century. Welch was the editor of the monthly Bible study periodical *The Berean Expositor* as well as the author of numerous books on a host of theological subjects. In addition, Welch was the Principal of the Chapel of the Open Book in London, England until his death in 1967. Upon his death he was succeed by his understudy Stuart Allen.

- In 1948, Welch published his commentary on Romans titled *Just, and the Justifier* in which he teaches that there is a difference between being an “heir of God” and a “joint-heir with Christ” in Romans 8:17. The section of Charles H. Welch’s *Just, and the Justifier* that contains his comments on Romans 8:17 originally appeared in [Volume XXV](#) of *The Berean Expositor* which was published in 1935. This was not an uncommon practice for Welch, many of his book length works were originally written in serial form for *The Berean Expositor*. Welch begins his exposition of Romans 8:17 as follows:

- (2) Heirs and Joint-Heirs (viii. 17-21).

The epistle to the Ephesians reveals the “hope of our calling,” while the epistle to the Philippians reveals the “prize of the high calling.” Hope is associated with grace; the Prize with reward. Hope is ours because we are in Christ; the Prize will be ours, “if so be we suffer with Him.” **From this it follows that an heir of God is not necessarily also a joint-heir with Christ.** It was “to him that overcometh” that the promise was made that he should sit with Me upon the throne (Rev. 3:21). “If we suffer,” said apostle Paul, “we shall also reign with Him” (II Tim. ii:12). The doctrine has changed from “in Christ Jesus” to “with Christ.” We do not meet the preposition *sun*, “with,” in Romans viii until verse 16, where it occurs in the word *summartureo*, “bear witness together.” After that we have *sugkleronomos*, “joint-heirs;” *sumpashco*, “jointly suffer;” *sundoxazomai*, “jointly glorified.” The next occurrences are in verse 22, *sustenazo* “groan together” and *sunodini*, “travail together,” and in the latter half of the chapter, there are two or three more compounds of *sun*.

This use of the words “heir,” and “joint-heir,” the one standing in pure grace, the other associated with faithfulness and possible suffering, is found in the epistle to the Colossians:

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance (*kleros*, the allotment) of the saints in the light” (Col i:12).

“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance (*kleronomia*, the allotted portion): for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col. iii:24).

In the first instance the child of God has been “made meet,” in the second there is introduced “reward,” “service,” and even “receiving wrong,” showing that the two subjects are on different grounds, the one being followed by reference to the forgiveness of sins, the other by a reference to what the servant has done. So in Romans viii “If children, then heirs, heirs of God” is parallel with Colossians i:12, “Joint-heirs with Christ, if so be we suffer with him,” is parallel with Colossians iii.24, or as the Apostle wrote to Timothy: “If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him, If we endure, we shall also reign with Him” (2 Tim. ii.11-12).” (Welch, 213-214)

- That Welch taught a distinction between an “heir of God” and a “joint-heir with Christ” in *Just, and the Justifier* is beyond doubt. Like the modern purveyors of this notion, Welch also connected Romans 8:17 with II Timothy 2:12. However, a careful reading reveals that Welch connects those who are “joint-heirs with Christ” via suffering with Christ to the “overcomers” of

Revelation 3:21. This connection between the saints at Rome with the overcoming saints of Israel's prophetic program is mandated by Welch's dispensational position that the church did not begin until Acts 28. Since Romans was written during the Acts period, and the body of Christ had not yet been formed according to Welch, joint-heirship with Christ through suffering **must be** associated with Israel in order for Welch to remain consistent.

- Next, Welch proceeds to list the other occurrences of the Greek word *sugkleronomos* (joint-heirs) in the New Testament. Immediately after noting that the next occurrence of *sugkleronomos* is found in Ephesians 3:6 (fellowheirs) Welch anticipates the difficulty this reality causes for this exposition of Romans 8:17 and states the following:
 - **“We can imagine the criticism that this reference nullifies the idea expressed above on Romans viii.17. To this we reply that the truth revealed in Eph. iii.6 was unknown at the time the Apostle wrote to the Romans;** that it reveals the constitution of the mystery, making known the glorious equality that exists between all members of the One Body, whereas, Romans viii.17 is a revelation concerning “fellow-heirs” of Christ in connection with suffering. No such qualification is to be found in Ephesians iii. The next reference (to *sugkleronomos*), Hebrews xi.9-10, is more in line with Romans viii.17:” (Welch, 215)
- Careful readers will note the real reason why Welch teaches a distinction between “heirs” and “joint-heirs” in Romans 8:17, is because his dispensational system demands it. Welch does not believe that Romans is written to the church since it was written during the Acts period and that the mystery had not yet been revealed. Consequently, knowing that the exact same Greek word (*sugkleronomos*) is used in connection with the revelation of the mystery and formation of the body of Christ in Ephesians 3, Welch must teach a difference between “heirs” and “joint-heirs” otherwise he would be left with the awkward and inconsistent notion that believers are “joint-heirs with Christ” before the “fellowheirs” status that Jews and Gentiles enjoy in the body of Christ had been inaugurated and revealed in Ephesians. This is made plain by Welch’s statement that one “can image the criticism that this reference (Eph. 3:6) nullifies the ideas expressed above on Romans viii.17.”
- This reality is proven by Welch’s attempts to “balance” Romans 8:17 by connecting it with Hebrews 11:9-10 and I Peter 3:7 rather than with Ephesians 3:6. After using the example of how Abraham, Isaac and Jacob “lived as pilgrims in the land of promise, and looked for something beyond and above, even the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city,” Welch states that Hebrews 11 is dealing with overcoming faith or faith that endures. According to Welch, it is this faith which “avoids Esau’s bartering of the birthright for the present mess of pottage” that causes the teaching of Romans 8:17 to “fall into line.” That Welch viewed the hope of the saints in Rome as “millennial” is beyond dispute.
 - “The hope of the church as expressed in the epistle to the Romans was millennial (Rom. xv. 12-13); consequently the joint-heirs with Christ who are in any sense overcomers will find much that illuminated their position in Revelations ii. iii. There, addressing Himself to the seven churches of Asia, the Lord makes certain promises “to him that overcomes”: “the tree of life” (Rev. ii.7), “The crown of life,” and “The second death” (Rev. ii.10-11):

“The hidden manna,” “white stone,” and “new name” (Rev. ii.17): “Power over the nations . . . even as I received of my Father” (Rev. ii.26-28): “White raiment,” “book of life,” and “name confessed” (Rev. iii.5): “A Pillar.” “A new name,” the name of the “New Jerusalem” (Rev. iii. 12): and finally, “a grant to set with Christ in His throne, even as he overcame, and sat with His Father in His throne” (Rev. iii.21). To sit down with Christ in his throne as an overcomer, to reign with Him, because one has endured to be a joint-heir of Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, are all expositions of the same truth, though it operates in different spheres, whether the dispensation of the mystery or the Acts period.” (Welch, 216)

- Maintaining a difference between “heirs of God” and “joint-heirs with Christ” in Romans 8:17 has been a hallmark of the Acts 28 position for decades. After the death of C.H. Welch in 1967, his understudy and successor Stuart Allen advanced the same understanding of Romans 8:17 in his book *The Galatian & Roman Epistles of Paul* in 1987 (see pages 122-123).
- The argumentation of Welch on these matters is much more clear than what we observed in Lesson 155 from the pen of N.H. Peters. Not all believers are joint-heirs with Christ. Joint-heirship is viewed as synonymous with reigning with Christ. Thus joint-heirship/reigning is conditioned upon suffering. Romans 8:17 is connected to non-Pauline texts in Hebrews and Revelation to close the argument.

G.H. Lang

- G.H. Lang was born November 20, 1874 (the same year as Winston Churchill) in London, England. Saved at the age of seven and half, his writings include fourteen major books and innumerable smaller booklets and pamphlets. All but nine of his books were published after he was fifty years old. Writing a Tribute to Lang upon his death for *The Witness* in December 1958, Douglas W. Brealey described Lang as “the most controversial figure in brethren circles since J.N. Darby.” Brealey goes on to state the following regarding Lang, “Though completely convinced of the eternal security of the believer, many of his views on prophecy led him into avenues of thought and teaching where a great number of us felt unable to follow.” (From the dust jacket of the 1984 Schoettle Publishing Co., Inc. reprint of *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights & Risks*)
- G.H. Lang’s 1936 publication *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks* stands out as one of the clearest precursors to SE in terms of its teaching regarding the conditional and progressive nature of sanctification and its impact upon joint-heirship and reigning with Christ. Students should be aware that there are more precursory statements to SE made in Lang’s publication than time and space will allow us to cover as part of the GHP. Consequently, in this lesson, we limited our comments to the most controversial/consequential statements made in the following three categories:
 - Statements regarding the necessity of qualifying one’s self to serve in the government of God as an additional issue to justification.
 - Statements connecting one’s level of sanctification with their portion of future glory.

- Statements that sound like they are straight from the SE lexicon.

Statements regarding the necessity of qualifying one's self to serve in the government of God as an additional issue to justification.

- “So when it is stated that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all (I Tim. 2:6), it means all, not some only. And, on the other hand, when God tells us of His electing grace and foreordination He connects these with the high destiny for which He has selected some from amongst the vast total of those who will accept his mercy. It were much that the sovereign should freely pardon rebels. If clemency prompted this did not demand that any of them should be exalted to share in the government which they had fought. And not being bound thus to favor any of them, it is perfectly legitimate for the king to give these honors to such individuals as it pleases him to choose. The condition upon which they must qualify for these dignities we shall consider later.” (Lang, 50)
- “Upon the return of the noblemen he rightly rewarded those servants who had been diligent and successful during his absence. And the special reward indicated in that “authority over cities” was given in proportion to their fidelity; that is, they were appointed to high places in the kingdom of their lord. And thus both the governmental authority and personal glory of our Lord He will most graciously and royally share with such as are accounted worthy of these dignities. And the degree of our faithfulness now will be the measure of our worthiness then.” (Lang, 58-59)
- “Two truths unite in the exaltation of God’s Son. First, on God’s side, it was of old true that the Father had appointed His Son to be heir of all things (Heb. 1:2). But then, on the outward side of things, Christ must vindicate this appointment by showing Himself as a man worthy of it by victoriously suffering: (quotes Heb. 2:10) . . .

And it is upon precisely the same double condition that Christ’s people will share with Him His honors. In the first, place it is the choice of God, and the call of God, that creates every possibility thereof, and it is the effectual working of God, by His Spirit, that alone can make actual this purpose of God. Thus it is wholly of grace, and by the power that grace supplies, that any will be glorified. . . Yet, on the other hand, it is plainly set forth in Scripture that these honors must be reached through fidelity and suffering during our earthly course. Forgiveness of sins, and the possession of eternal life and salvation, are indeed free gifts (Rom. 3:24, 6:23), but inheriting the kingdom requires that we prove our fitness and worthiness by sharing our Leader’s toils whilst pressing after Him along His path of life. . . But it is as gracious as wise, and as wise as gracious, that the kingdom and its honors are presented to us as a goal to be reached by strenuous endeavor, as a prize to be gained by earnest toil, a reward to be earned by faithful service, as a crown to be won by keen fighting. . . Thus authority in the kingdom, and the honor of sitting at His own, the chief, table in the day of His royal feasting, are plainly promised as superior rewards for superior devotion. . . (Quotes Rev. 12:4-5) . . . And this opposition is wisely permitted of God so that those whom he has chosen for His kingdom may become thoroughly qualified for their duties in that age. The sons of royal and noble houses are by their birth entitled to expect riches to use, honors to bear, and high offices to fill. But though their birth is their title to such great things, the training, educating and discipline of such must be as thorough as their farther is exalted.” (Lang, 63-65)

- “But that same Revealer has very solemnly intimated that these heavenly glories are forfeitable on certain conditions.” (Lang, 97)
- “Whenever the matter is that of the pardon of sin, the justifying of the guilty, the gift of eternal life, Scripture ever speaks positively and unconditionally. The sinner is “justified freely by God’s grace,” and the “free gift of God is eternal life (Rom. 3:24; 6:23),” in which places the word “free” means free of conditions, not only of payment. Eternal life therefore is what is called in law an absolute gift, in contrast to a conditional gift. The later may be forfeited if the condition be not fulfilled; the former is irrevocable. But as soon as the sinner has by faith entered into this standing before God, then the Word begins at once to speak to him with “Ifs.” From this point and forward every privilege is conditional.” (Lang, 163)
- “We have here sought to show that God most positively and repeatedly forewarns His firstborn sons that their heavenly privileges may be lost and the share in the inheritance in the kingdom be forfeited. To be less to Christ than one might have been, and to be further from Him in His kingdom than one need have been, this will be sad enough to any to whom He is even now the altogether lovely one. But to have lost entirely the gladness of sharing with Him in that kingdom, and to have forfeited eternally the sweetness and glory of reigning with Him and His bride—what heart that loves Him will risk such penalty merely to enjoy the world’s poor and fleeting indulgences?” (Lang, 221-222)

Statements connecting one’s level of sanctification with their portion of future glory.

- “The ignition condition upon which man may aspire to this beatific vision is the atoning work of the Redeemer. “Christ also suffered for sins once for all that He might conduct us to God (I Peter 3:18).” But the final condition for realizing in fact that which the atonement has made possible, is set before us in the clause under consideration; “pursues the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord.” . . . A heart that has no desire but for the glory of God, whose affections all center in Him, whose delight is in his good and well-pleasing and perfect will, such an one, but the power of the Spirit of grace, will make due progress in holiness—though perhaps unconsciously to himself—and will reach the sanctification which will warrant the bestowing of the fullest and highest bliss possible through the precious blood of Jesus, even the supernal vision of the face and presence of Him who before was personally inaccessible to man.” (Lang, 100)
- “Reconciliation by the blood of the cross is part of the work designed to usher in this glorious end. The reconciliation is past and complete—“yet now hath He reconciled you;” the presentation is future and is conditional requiring continuance in the faith and hope of the gospel; for apart from this continuance moral state will not advance to the high standard by which God will determine future reward—they will not arrive at “the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord, (Heb. 12:14).” (Lang, 119)
- “The place thus given to the Word of God, and to sanctification as produced by that Word, as the necessary preparation for the heavenly glory, is set forth with remarkable distinction in the Lord’s commission to the chiefest of his apostles (Acts 26:17-18). Indicating to Paul the sphere and nature of his life-work an including both Jews and Gentiles . . . (quotes the verses) . . . Thus Paul had two vast benefits to offer to mankind: 1) the remission of sins, and 2) an inheritance. These

two favors are similarly distinguished in Heb. 9:15, where we are reminded of 1) the “redemption of transgression” with the object 2) that those who are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance” . . . Now it is to be observed that the risen Lord most definitely connects the receiving of the inheritance, not with the remission of sins, but with being sanctified. Many in the different ages will receive the former who are not among the called who will receive the eternal inheritance of the saints in the heavens. . . But our arriving there is contingent upon our being sanctified, as well as justified. Nor is this an unreasonable or impossible condition. For it is by faith in Christ that we are to be sanctified, just as it is by faith that we have been justified. And he who has trusted Christ for pardon for sin, can as readily trust Him for power over sin, and is without excuse if he does not do so.” (Lang, 143)

- “. . . sanctification is also required with a view to the glorified state being reached. . . And in this connection it is proper to add that the word justified is sometimes used by the Holy Spirit to include sanctification. . . Similarly, the two are blended in the words (I Cor. 6:11), “but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God.” At this late place in the apostle’s exposition, after he has labored the question of holy living as well as that of justification, we judge him thus to combine the two aspects in one, and to mean the term justified to cover the sanctity of life that it makes possible and therefore demands, but which the justified may largely fail to produce, or cease to produce after having long brought it forth by the Spirit. . . Our passage must therefore, 1) be read in the light of its context; and 2) of its late place in a consecutive exposition which has included a heavenly emphasis upon practical holiness and 3) of the fact that the word “justified” may include the practice of holiness; and 4) of the overwhelming consensus of the rest of Scripture; and we conclude that it cannot be made the basis of teaching that every justified person is unconditionally guaranteed a share in the heavenly glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . IN his purpose God did glorify all in question; but equally in His purpose does He see every justified one as already seated “with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6), and equally true is that the Holy Spirit is ready to make this an operative reality to faith; yet very many by carnality or ignorance are forfeiting this elevated experience, in spite of it being part of God’s plan for them.” (Lang, 203-206)

Statements that sound like they are straight from the SE lexicon.

- “In the administration of His mighty kingdom, and in the adjusting and rewarding of the affairs of the ages of human and angelic history, the glorified saints will be associated with the King of glory. Doubtless a large part of our training on earth is directed by our Father to capacitating us for such responsible and honorable office. If then a self-willed child refuses and nullifies the training, how shall he be found fit for the high but delicate position that he might have gained?” (Lang, 89)
- “But real believers, being born of God and being called to His kingdom and glory, fulfill the facts of Esau’s case. Such persons are 1) really children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and 2) they are firstborn of His family, and hold the rights of primogeniture. These rights they do not have to earn, or buy, or win: they are wholly a birthright by the sovereign grace of God. But they do have to value and to keep them, and are warned against forfeiting these privileges. Their sonship is inalienable, and their eternal life unforfeitable, not being deposited in them and held by them at their own risk, but being “hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3);” but these higher personal dignities

and glories are forfeitable, and by as much as they are worth retaining by so much is found in this teaching a salutary and sanctifying power. Let the believer be assure that all, all is secure, and great is the danger of inducing a subtle carelessness of heart; but with the retention of the highest privileges left conditional upon our walk, strong is the inducement to press on unto perfection.” (Lang, 104)

- “Once it is seen that receiving salvation from wrath is one thing, and that rising to the glory of rule in the kingdom is another thing, and is an attainment that follows, the Gordian knot is untied; for it at once becomes a possibility to forfeit the kingdom by personal misconduct; while yet retaining eternal life by the pure grace of God, exercised on the grounds of the merit of Christ alone.” (Lang, 113)
- “The whole picture is, in truth, very arresting. He views them as “babes.” Now a “babe” in Christ has a title to a share of the family inheritance; but if one die a “babe,” or if though life be prolonged, there be “arrested development” and its consequent immaturity, how shall that one be competent for receiving and using the inheritance?” (Lang, 179)

Concluding Remarks

- Conceptually, many of these statements are in line with SE’s teaching regarding the nature of conditional progressive sanctification and its role in reigning with Christ. Moreover, according to both Lang and SE, believers must attain unto positions of reigning their own training and education in the present.
- In the next lesson we will prove beyond doubt that SE got its definition of Biblical Adoption from Lang as well as explore Lang’s teaching regarding joint-heirship and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

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Sunday, January 11, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 157](#)
[Sonship Edification: Precursors to Sonship, Part 3](#)

Introduction

- A few weeks back, in Lesson 156 we continued our investigation into the precursors of Sonship Edification (SE) by looking at the writings of Charles H. Welch on Romans 8:17. In addition, we began considering G.H. Lang’s 1936 publication *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks*. It was observed that Lang’s work is ripe with SE concepts and themes particularly in the following areas: 1) the necessity of qualifying one’s self to serve in the government of God as an additional issue to justification, and 2) connecting one’s level of sanctification with their portion of future glory. Finally, we observed multiple statements that sound like they came straight from the SE lexicon.
- In this lesson, I would like to continue our evaluation of G.H. Lang’s *Firstborn Sons* as a precursor to SE by considering his comments on the following subjects: 1) indwelling of the Holy Spirit, 2) translation of Romans 8:17, and 3) meaning of the expression “if so be” in Romans 8:17

Precursors to Sonship Continued

G.H. Lang Continued

- Please recall from Lesson 156 that Lang was a Brethren writer from Great Britain. Lang was fully aware that his teachings were different from the “great teachers” of the early Brethren period: “the great teachers of that period restored the proper emphasis to the truth that God is calling the saved of this age to a place in the heavens as the bride of His Son. But they attached to this privilege that certainty of possession which the Word attaches to the possession of eternal life only.” (Lang, 215) In short, Darby and other early Plymouth Brethren teachers erred by ascribing to every justified believer a position in the heavenly places, according to Lang. In contrast, Lang mentions N.A. Groves, R.C. Chapman, and Lady Powerscourt among the first generation of Brethren who viewed the first resurrection and its accompanying privileges as something that could be missed. (Lang, 215)

Lang on the subject of the Spirit Dwelling

- Lang appears to share in common with SE the notion that all regenerated believers are not necessarily indwelt by God the Holy Spirit.
 - **“That initial work of the Spirit which suffices for the regenerating of a sinner, so that he receives eternal life, is not all that is required to incorporate him into the body of Christ;** else believers before Pentecost, and those of the next age, equally with those of this dispensation, would be members of the “body,” which the Word of God does not suggest, but rather negates. The apostles were not to Christ as a body until His Spirit indwelt them all at once, uniting them thus to Him and to one another. **Is it the**

fact that every believer has thus received the Spirit? or is it not rather to be feared that some have been simply regenerated, and know nothing more of His working and nothing at all of His indwelling and infilling? If we discard preconceived theories and candidly face facts, it would seem that there can be but one answer. . . . But Pentecost stands not for the first quickening by the Spirit, but for the regenerated man receiving power for effective witness to Christ (Acts 1:8), by the Spirit entering into and so dwelling in him that He pervades the heart, filling it with divine wisdom, knowledge, love, and boldness; and controlling the body, using it in speech and other service; and empower for suffering. . . . His statements in both cases are in definite historic (aorist) tenses: “We were all baptized . . . ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit” (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:13); and so apply only to the persons addressed. **They are not general assertions concerning all believers, such as are found in connection with eternal life; “the one believing has eternal life (John 3:36).” The baptism is not anywhere stated to be an inevitable accompaniment of saving faith, but rather the contrary is shown, as in the two places in Acts just mentioned. Alas, that wide later experience confirms this. Many believers seem to be living in a pre-Pentecostal state, and it is at least open to question whether such are regarded by God as, or if in fact they are, members of the body of Christ, seeing that His Spirit does not appear to dwell in them, for He neither energizes, nor controls, nor uses them.”** (Lang, 145-148)

- While this argument is not identical with SE’s position on the matter, it is similar in that one can be a regenerated believer but not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Lang goes so far as to question whether or not believers who demonstrate no evidence of the Spirit dwelling in them have been baptized into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13) or have been “sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). How Lang can maintain his belief in the eternal security of the believer while holding these views regarding the Holy Spirit is beyond our ability to comprehend.

Lang on the Translation of Romans 8:17

- In seeking to establish a distinction between those who are “heirs of God” (all believers) and those who are “joint-heirs with Christ” conditioned upon suffering “with *him*”, multiple times Lang seeks to retranslate Romans 8:17. Specifically, Lang renders the Greek participle *de* as “but” instead of “and” in front of the expression “joint-heirs with Christ.”
 - “If we are God’s children, we are therefore, His heirs; heirs indeed (*men*) of God, **but** (*de*) joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified with Him (Rom. 8:17).” (Lang, 65)
 - “Romans 8:16-17—“The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also gloried with him.” The latter verse (v. 17) should read, “heirs indeed (*men*) of God, **but** (*de*) joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, etc.” (Lang, 120)

- It is not hard to see why someone wanting to argue for a difference between “heirs” and “joint-heirs” would advocate for the following rendering of Romans 8:17:
 - “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, **BUT** joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.”
- Changing the “and” to a “but” makes arguing that the “if so be” in the second half of the verse is placing a condition upon being a “joint-heir with Christ” in the first easier. This is evident from Lang’s comments at the head of the paragraph following the above quote from page 120, “How clearly this (his retranslation of Rom. 8:17) establishes a condition for being gloried with Christ. . .” (Lang, 120)
- In my paper *Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17*, I addressed a similar argument in Appendix B (see pages 29-34) being put forth by the supporters of the “joint-heir view” of Romans 8:17. While the supporters of the “joint-heir view” **do not** follow Lang in arguing that the Greek word *de* is MISTRANSLATED in the King James Bible and should read “but,” they do argue that EVERYTIME the Greek words *men* and *de* occur together in the same verse, in the book of Romans, that *de* serves the function of CONTRASTING two different things.
- On September 10, 2013, Brother Matt Stutzman, author of *Heirs of God or Joint-Heirs with Christ?* asked me the following question on the Joint-Heir Group Facebook page regarding the Greek participles *men* and *de*:
 - “Bryan Ross . . . I brought up the Greek participles “men” and “de” that are used in Romans 8:17 back when you were challenging this issue on the basis of the now debunked punctuation argument. I’m not sure if you didn’t understand what I had said in that message, or if you don’t agree with it, or if you are simply ignoring it.

In any case, I’ll restate what I had said there and ask you to give it some thought:

Those two participles “men” and “de” (G3303, and G1161) are combined together in 13 total verses in the book of Romans. In every case (without exception) the use of these words together in Romans are ALWAYS used to contrast two different things. They are NEVER CONJUNCTIVE.

Again here are a few examples of this which I believe deserve your honest consideration so long as this discussion is being contested from a basis of Greek:

Quotes Romans 2:25; 5:16; 6:11; 7:25; 8:10; 8:17

. . . Given that ALL 13 examples in Romans clearly use these *participles* together to contrast two different things, it would certainly be illogical for a person to argue

that Romans 8:17 is somehow the lone exception that deviates from the established pattern and precedent. Wouldn't you agree?"

- More recently in studying for these lessons on the precursors of SE, I was handed *The Reign of the Servant Kings* by Joseph C. Dillow (1992). In reading Dillow's view on Romans 8:17, I ran across the following Greek Participle Argument:
 - "That two contrasting heirships are being discussed seems to be suggested by Paul's use of the Greek particles *men . . . de*. Not readily translatable in English, the sense is something like this, "On the one hand (*men . . .*) heirs of God, and other the other (*de*) joint-heirs with Christ." These particles, when coupling two phrases together, are normally disjunctive and imply a contrast between the items compared, not an equality. **In fact, in every usage of these particles in this way in Romans, they are always contrastive and never conjunctive . . .** In other words, we are all heirs of God, and we will be joint-heirs with Christ if we suffer with Him." (Dillow, 376)
- The obscure and similar nature of this type of categorical argument (ALWAYS vs. NEVER) are so clearly linked that it is difficult to conclude the Brother Stutzman had not read or was unfamiliar with Dillow's argumentation. This conclusion appears even more likely when one considers Brother Stutzman's strong aversion to even considering the underlying Greek text supporting the King James Bible when conducting Bible study (see Stutzman's co-authored *Wrongly Deriding Joint-Heirs with Christ*). Either Brother Stutzman parted ways with his own stated "organic" methodology of Bible study and considered the underlying Greek text or he was aware of this line of argumentation from another source.
- *De* (1161)—is a CONJUNCTION (primary participle) in terms of the part of speech. The Greek word is found 2,870 times in the Greek text supporting the King James Bible. As a CONJUNCTION it can be either ADVERSATIVE (that is expressing contrariety, opposition, or antithesis: for example, "*but*" is an adversative conjunction) or CONTINUATIVE. It is important to note that when *de* (1161) is rendered "and" in English it is MOST OFTEN representative of the CONTINUATIVE use of the Greek word. This is evident by noting the definition of the English CONJUNCTION "and" And (conj.)—"And is a conjunction, connective or conjoining word. It signifies that a word or part of a sentence is to be added to what precedes." (*Webster's 1828 Dictionary*) This is evidenced by the multiple ways it has been translated into English:
 - But—1,237 times
 - And—934 times
 - Now—166 times
 - Then—132 times
 - Also—18 times
 - Yet—16 times
 - Yea—13 times
 - Moreover—13 times

- Nevertheless—11 times
 - For—4 times
 - Even—4 times
- There are 112 verses in the New Testament that contain the Greek words *men* (3303) and *de* (1161) in the same verse. How the word *de* (1161) is rendered in English is determined by each individual occurrence, not by an arbitrary rule. In other words, the determinative factor in whether *de* (1161) is ADVERSATIVE (“but” in English) or CONTINUATIVE (“and” in English) is the sentence structure of each verse. This is clear when one considers how *de* (1161) is rendered in English in these 112 verses:
 - But—69 times
 - And—47 times
 - Other—19 times
 - There are seven examples where the conjunction *de* is translated in both the adversative (“but”) and continuative sense (“and”) within the same verse. The translators of the King James Bible knew the difference between the two uses of the Greek word and thus rendered it accordingly in English given the sentence and thought structure of each verse:
 - Acts 14:4; 22:9; 27:41
 - Romans 8:10
 - I Corinthians 9:25
 - II Timothy 1:10; 2:20
 - My point in Appendix B of *Ifs, Ands, and Buts*, was not to argue that the English word “and” can NEVER be used to contrast two different things but that the combined usage of the Greek words *men* and *de* in the same verse DOES NOT MANDATE that *de* is being used to “contrast two different things” in the book of Romans or anywhere else in the New Testament. The Greek word *de* when rendered “and” in English can be used to CONTRAST two different things; it was NEVER our assertion that it COULD NOT. The usage of the word “and” can be either ADVERSATIVE (i.e., establishing a contrast) or CONTINUATIVE (i.e., connecting things together in a sequence) depending upon the context in which it is used. The meaning and usage of “and” needs to be determined by an investigation of each individual occurrence not an unfounded overarching rule.
 - Romans 9:21
 - The textual FACTS in Romans 8:17 are that the Greek word *de* occurs two times within the verse and is rendered “and” both times in the King James Bible.
 - “And (*de*) if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and (*de*) joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

- Why would one argue that the second occurrence of *de* should be rendered and/or read as ADVERSATIVE (contrasting two things) while the first occurrence is allowed to stand with a rendering and/or reading this is CONTINUATIVE? In short, if such a rule exists (the existence of which has not been proven) why is it not applied to the first occurrence of *de* at the beginning of verse 17 as well as the second? The answer is simple, rendering/reading the second occurrences of *de* as a CONTRAST makes it easier to argue for the conditional nature of joint-heirship and reigning with Christ, i.e., it fits the paradigm being asserted. If the purposed rule were consistently applied to the first occurrence of *de* it would be establishing a contrast between those the children of God in verse 16 and those who are heirs of God in verse 17, thereby negating the assertion that all believers are heirs of God. Rather than seeking to establish arbitrary and unfounded rules should not one's interpretation of a passage be subject to the TEXTUAL FACTS and not the other way around?

Lang on the meaning of the expression "if so be" in Romans 8:17

- Lang appeals to multiple reference works including Alford, Dean, Robinson, as well as Bible translations by the likes of Darby to support his notion that "if so be" places a condition upon joint-heirship and a believer's future glorification with Christ.
 - "Alford thus translates and comments: "IF AT LEAST (see above on verse 9, *eiper*, provide that, not since, which would be *epeiper*) we are suffering "with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him: i.e., 'if (provided that) we are found in that course of participation in Christ's sufferings, whose aim and end, as that of His sufferings, is to be gloried as He was, and with Him.' But the *eiper* does not regard the subjective aim, q.d. 'if at least our aim in suffering is to be gloried,'—but the fact of our being partakers of that course of suffering with Him, *whose aim is, wherever it is found to be found*, to be glorified with Him (Alford's italics)." The reader will note the italicized words "wherever it is found," implying that there may be those who are not found suffering with Him. The learned Dean adds, "The connection of *suffering with Christ*, and being glorified with Him is elsewhere insisted on, see II Tim. 2:11; I Pet. 4:13, 5:1."

Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown implicitly reject the rendering "since" by translating "provided we be suffering with Him." So also Darby (New Translation) renders "if indeed we suffer." Moule explicitly condemns it (Cambridge Bible for Schools), and so does Bloomfield, who quotes Crellius as follows: "it was but just that they who wished to be partakers with Christ in his glory, should also be partakers of his sufferings."

Robinson (Lexicon) accepts the sense "since," but even so it is not fair to quote him thus as has been done: "The Greek word rendered, if so be, implies an acknowledged and recognized fact, or as Robinson says, 'assumes the supposition to be true.'" For what Robinson says is that *eiper* "assumes the supposition to be true, *whether justly or not*" (Lang's italics). For the sake of argument or illustration a supposition may be assumed to be true, but where *eiper* is used it is open to question whether the assumed fact is fact or only an assumption." (Lang, 120-121)

- Lang appears to be sifting these “competent” scholars for an explanation of “if so be” that will fit his preconceived notion of the verses meaning. The Greek word *eiper* appears six times in the *Textus Receptus*, the Greek text supporting the King James Bible. Of these six occurrences of *eiper* in the New Testament it is variously translated as follows: “if so be that” 3 times (Romans 8:9, 17; I Corinthians 15:15), “if so be” 1 time (I Peter 2:3), “though” 1 time (I Corinthians 8:5), and “seeing” 1 time (II Thessalonians 1:6). Given the FACT that the King James translators variously rendered *eiper* with the English words “though” and “seeing” proves the notion that *eiper* carries the sense or force of “since”, as suggested by Robinson. Consider the following definition of the English word “seeing:”
 - Seeing—“This participle appears to be used indefinitely, or without direct reference to a person or persons. “Wherefore come ye to me, *seeing* ye hate me?” Genesis 26. **That is, since, or the fact being that or thus; because that.**” (*Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*)
- Robinson’s definition of *eiper* as quoted by Lang “assumes the supposition to be true, whether justly or not” is consistent with the notion of a first class condition in both English and Greek. The FACT is, *eiper* or “if so be” in English is a condition, the question is what TYPE of condition is it. In Romans 8:17 the Greek word *eiper* is followed by a verb in the indicative mood (the indicative mood is used to make factual statements or pose questions), i.e., “suffer with.” This is true in both Greek and English. Even the Oxford English Dictionary acknowledges a variety of different TYPES of conditions expressed by the English word “if.” When “if” is followed by the indicative mood “the speaker expresses no adverse opinion as to the truth of the statement in the clause; it is consistent with his acceptance of it” according to the Oxford English Dictionary. In contrast, “the subjunctive after “if” implies that the speaker guards himself from endorsing the truth or realization of the statement; it is consistent with his doubt of it.” (The subjunctive mood is the mood used to show a wish, doubt, or anything else contrary to fact.)
- In Romans 8:17, Paul is not saying maybe the Romans are joint-heirs and maybe they are not, we have to wait and see how it turns out, in a subjunctive sense. Rather, he is stating the FACT that the Romans “suffer with him” on account of the previously established FACT of having been made “joint-heirs with Christ.” Both “if” and “if so be” in Romans 8:17 are first class conditions and serve the function of taking the truth and certainty of the aforementioned thing and applying it to what is about to be said. In other words, “if this first thing (which we both know and agree about) is true, then this second thing is just as true.” In short, one cannot suffer with Christ unless and until they have been joined to him. In other words, being joined to Christ is a prerequisite to suffering with him not the other way around.

Works Cited

Dillow, Joseph. *The Reign of the Servant Kings*. Schoettle Publishing Co: Miami Springs, FL, 1992.

Lang, G.H. *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks*. Samuel Roberts Publishers: London, England, 1936.

Sunday, January 18, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 158](#)
[Sonship Edification: Precursors to Sonship, Part 4](#)

Introduction

- The majority of Lessons 156 and 157 were devoted to a consideration of G.H. Lang’s book *Firstborn Son: Their Rights and Risks* (1936) as a precursor to Sonship Edification (SE). In Lesson 156 we demonstrated that Lang’s work is fraught with SE concepts such as: 1) the necessity of qualifying one’s self to serve in the government of God as an additional issue to justification, and 2) connecting one’s level of sanctification with their portion of future glory. Last week, in Lesson 157 we considered Lang’s teaching on the following subjects: 1) indwelling of the Holy Spirit, 2) translation of Romans 8:17, and 3) meaning of the expression “if so be” in Romans 8:17.
- This week we want to conclude our survey of Lang as forerunner of SE by investigating his teaching on the following subjects: 1) the conditional connection between Romans 8:17 and II Timothy 2:11-13, 2) difference between children and sons, and 3) Lang’s definition of Biblical Adoption

Precursors to Sonship Continued

Lang on the Conditional Connection between Romans 8:17 and II Timothy 2:11-13

- Lang, in similar manner to SE teachers, connects Romans 8:17 with II Timothy 2 to close his argument that there is a difference between “heirs” and “joint-heirs.” Specifically Lang seeks to explain why the “ordinary grammatical rule” regarding First Class Conditions does not apply in II Timothy 2:11-13.
 - “The ordinary grammatical rule that “if” with the indicative of the verb does not create a condition does not hold regularly in New Testament Greek. In II Tim. 2:11-13 there are four parallel clauses which must all be constructed alike, and all have this construction:
 - If we died with him, we shall also live with him;
 - If we endure, we shall also reign with him;
 - If we **shall** deny him, he also will deny us;
 - If we are faithless, he abideth faithful; for he cannot deny himself.

Now it is plain that the two clauses cannot mean since we deny him, and since we are faithless, for that is not the fact of all believers; so here the “if” does carry a condition, and thus living with Christ (as contrasted with only having life in Him) and reigning with Christ are conditioned by dying with Him (which is more than believing that He died for me), and enduring a share of His sufferings. Thus in this place also, and dealing with the same theme as in Romans 8:17, the same thought is pressed, and the privilege is made conditional.” (Lang, 122)

- Time and space will not permit a full rebuttal to these comments by Lang. This past spring and summer, I spent eight weeks expounding upon the faithful saying of II Timothy 2:11-13 and explaining what I believe to be the most consistent understanding of the passage based upon the grammatical FACTS. For the time being, I would just like to point out that Lang has changed the nature of the condition in the third statement by inserting the bolded word “shall” into the text. By inserting “shall” into the verse before the comma, Lang has changed the verse to read in his favor thereby inserting the condition of uncertainty into the statement. In contrast, the King James reads:
 - “If we deny him, he also will deny us:”
- In the King James Bible this is not a subjunctive statement of uncertainty, as has been asserted by Lang but an indicative statement of FACT. For more details regarding my explanation of the faithful saying in II Timothy 2:11-13, interested parties are encouraged to consult Appendix A on page 7 for a list of links to the studies in question.
- For our purposes in this Lesson, I would just like to point out the following: 1) all who argue for the conditional nature of joint-heirship seek to connect Romans 8:17 with II Timothy 2:12; 2) the arguments put forth by the teachers of SE in any of its variations are identical to those being posited by Lang; and 3) all those who use II Timothy 2:11-13 to close the argument that joint-heirship is conditional in Romans 8:17 play fast and loose with the text of II Timothy 2. This is done by either, 1) reading words into verse 12 that ARE NOT there such as: “If we suffer WITH HIM, we shall also reign with him AS JOINT HEIRS,” or 2) altering the nature of the condition in the second half of verse 12 to make it fit their system ala Lang (this can be done in a variety of ways up to and including committing the formal logical fallacy of denying the antecedent).

Lang on the Difference between Children and Sons and the resulting connection between Adoption and Joint-Heirship

- Lang argues that “all children inherit something from their parent, such as their nature, life, love, care, and their daily necessities” but that when it comes to how much of his wealth each child receives “a wise father will determine by their several capacities for profiting by possessions.” (Lang, 122) Using Revelation 21:7-8, Lang identifies three classes of people in the eternal state:
 - “(i) The lost, whose part is the second death (ver. 8)
 - (ii) saved people (ver. 3), with God dwelling among them, and who, because of salvation must include possessing eternal life by the new birth, must be children of God and have entrance to His kingdom (John 3)
 - (iii) heirs and sons; inheriting being not collective but strictly individual, and consequent upon being a conqueror; “the one that overcometh shall inherit;” and the “son” being a

full-grown, mature man, according to the well-known emphasis, and the distinction between “child” and “son,” found elsewhere as carrying the very point of the argument.” (Lang, 122)

- Lang cites Luke 20:36 and Galatians 3:23-4:7 to support his notion that “the first resurrection unto a heavenly position (“equal unto the angels”)” hangs entirely “upon the difference between “children” and “sons.” (Lang, 122) This argument advanced by Lang is eerily similar to SE’s teaching that there is a difference between a “regenerated son” and an “adopted son.” Please recall SE’s definition of Biblical Adoption:
 - Biblically, adoption was for the natural-born children of a family. That is, a Father would adopt His natural son or daughter. And this was not unusual, but rather, it was the rule. The primary motivation for adoption was not pity or some strong emotion of rescue, but it had in mind the welfare of the family’s name and the family’s business. It is true that on occasion, a man might adopt a son or daughter outside of his own natural children. It may be that he had no children of his own. There is another circumstance that may arise that would have a man adopting someone other than his natural children, but we will discuss that a little later. . .

In adoption, the father would be looking for some specific traits in the son or daughter he would adopt. The father did not just want a son that would be able to carry on the family business, but one that would carry on that business with the same commitment and dedication that he had. The father would want a son that possessed his wisdom and way of thinking. In other words, the father wanted a son who would carry on the business exactly as the father himself would. To accomplish this adoption, the father would look over his sons, and if he found one that was willing and able to be educated in his father’s business, then the father would adopt that son and begin personally teaching all about his business. He would teach the son the way he (the father) thought, and pass on all his wisdom and experience to his son. This was so that his son would take on his father’s thinking, and living, and then as he labored in his father’s business, all of his dealings were as if it were the father, himself who was engaged in the business. It would really be, “Like father, like son!”

But sometimes the father would look over his own, natural born sons, and still not be able to find one with the desire, the drive, and the ability to be educated properly as his son. In that case, the father could look outside the family and find a child that would fit the bill (so to speak), and he would then adopt a child that was not natural born. The father would take that son (or daughter) and begin to educate them so they could enter into laboring with the father in all his business.

This was done so that the integrity and the success and the character of the father and the father’s business could be successfully passed on from generation to generation. It was a way to not only keep the integrity of the father’s name and the father’s business

strong, but to insure that it would continue getting even stronger and more powerful as time went on. In other words, it was a way to ensure the father's business against corruption, weakness, attack and ultimately, failure!" (McDaniel, *SE Orientation* Lesson 1, 5-6)

Lang's Definition of Biblical Adoption

- Lang, like Newbold and McDaniel after him, makes a distinction between "children" and "sons" in terms of position and inheritance within a given family. In fact, Lang's definition of Biblical Adoption is conceptually exactly the same as the one advanced by SE.
 - "The Roman noble of N.T. times chose one of his boys to be his heir, whichever he thought most suitable, and declared before the magistrates that this was his son and heir. This was the adoption of that child as distinct from the others of the family. His relationship to the father was as theirs, his position in the family was superior." (Lang, 123)
- By extension, the "son" who is the "heir" of the Father is the one who inherits the "heavenly glories," according to Lang. In contrast, the "child" remains a beneficiary of being in the family but possesses no ruling authority in the affairs of the family, i.e., he is an "heir of God," but not a "joint-heir with Christ."
 - "Thus here the son is the heir of the heavenly glories, "these things" just before described, not simply one of the large family; a standing carrying larger privileges, and great responsibly and opportunity. It is for the "revealing of the sons of God" that creation waits (Rom. 8:19) . . . Now Christians are the children of God (Rom. 8:21) who expect to be glorified with Christ "if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified with him" (ver. 17); but we groan as yet, expecting the adoption, the open acknowledgement by the Father of the whole family of the saved that we, who suffer with Christ, are the sons in the family (ver. 23).

The sharing of Christ's sufferings now is our training and qualifying for sharing His glory hereafter; as well as the glory being the compensation graciously promised for the sufferings." (Lang, 123)

- That this terminology and manner of speaking is indicative of SE is beyond doubt. I now believe, that at some point SE teachers Blades and/or Newbold read G.H. Lang's *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks*. The following aspects of SE teaching are clearly observable in Lang:
 - The definition of Biblical Adoption
 - The necessity of qualifying one's self to serve in the government of God as an additional issue to justification

- Connecting one's level of sanctification with their portion of future glory.
 - Holy Spirit does not indwell all believers.
 - "If so be" in Romans 8:17 not being a first-class condition.
 - Difference between a regenerated child, i.e., "heir of God" and a son or "joint-heir with Christ.
 - Only those qualifying themselves for joint-heirship will reign with Christ.
 - Connection between Roman 8:17 and II Timothy 2:12
 - SE sounding statements connecting one's "training" and "commitment" to be educated by the father now with one's portion of future glory.
- I believe that doctrinally SE's major point of origin resides in following two issues: 1) its definition of Biblical Adoption and 2) in reading the "if so be" in Romans 8:17 as placing a condition upon being a "joint-heir with Christ." In my opinion, a bi-fold door works as a good illustration; on the lower level of our tri-level home, in order to gain access to our crawl space one must pass through a closet that is covered by a bi-fold door. Once one passes through this point of entry, access to the crawl space is granted. The point of entry into SE was the dual issues of redefining Biblical Adoption and conditional joint-heirship in Romans 8:17. Once these doctrines were embraced they necessitated a complete rethinking of the entirety of Romans 8.
 - A future lesson will demonstrate the validity of this theory by investigating the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly* articles written by Keith R. Blades. When Blades began to write on Sonship, in the early half of the last decade (the 00 decade). His first writings on SE centered on the definition of Biblical Adoption and the conditional nature of joint-heirship in Romans 8:17. This in turn, over time, led to a reverse engineering of the whole of Romans 8 that called other basic doctrines into question like the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:9. Even David Winston Bush, author of the Sonship Stablishment Study Series of books, notes the pivotal role that Romans 8 plays in the SE study system by devoting an entire chapter of his book, *More Than Conquerors*, to discussing the matter (see Chapter 3, Romans 8: The Pivot Point).
 - Considering the FACT that SE adopts that exact same definition of Biblical Adoption posited by Lang and the same teaching with respect to Romans 8:17 and II Timothy 2 as well as many other conceptual and explanatory similarities, there is no way in my mind that Lang's book was not read by the first generation of SE teachers.
 - For the purposes of illustration, if one considers SE to be a river, Lang's book *Firstborn Sons* is a primary tributary among others. In the next Lesson, we will consider two more tributaries to the SE system, R.B. Theime, Jr.'s *Edification Complex of the Soul* (1972) and Zane C. Hodges *The Gospel Under Siege: A Study on Faith and Works* (1981 & 1992).

- Not to mix metaphors, but Theime’s work provided the structural framework for SE whereas doctrines gleaned from Lang, Hodges, and others were hung upon Theime’s framework like sheet rock secured to its framing.

Concluding Remarks

- Recent comments on Facebook by supporters of the notion that there are two different inheritances in Romans 8:17, however they conceive of it, reveal the following trend: the next step in this doctrinal saga will be to argue that anyone who denies the conditional nature of joint-heirship is by default placing a condition upon being an “heir of God” and is therefore, by extension, placing a condition upon the believers’ justification, i.e., they are denying the gospel of the grace of God and teaching a works based gospel.
- Ironically, the writings of Lang, even foreshadow this contemporary and trending line of argumentation by the support of the “two inheritance view.” In 1936 Lang wrote:
 - “Those who refuse the distinction between simple heirship to God and joint heir-ship with the Messiah, make the former as well as the latter to become conditional upon suffering with Christ; and thus would the loss of those who avoid suffering be vastly greater, their salvation itself being imperiled.” (Lang, 123)
- The week of Thanksgiving, I privately predicted to some of my friends in the ministry that within six to eight weeks’ time (first part of 2015), teaching in some form would surface on Facebook and the internet accusing me and anyone else who does not see a distinction between “heirs of God” and “joint-heirs with Christ” of placing conditions upon justification and teaching a works based gospel.
- It is my firm belief and contention that G.H. Lang’s 1936 book *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks* is a major contributor to the theological system known in our day as SE.

Works Cited

Lang, G.H. *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks*. Samuel Roberts Publishers: London, England, 1936.

Appendix A

The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2:11-13

The following links are to my teaching on the passage in question. All these messages were taught at Grace Life Bible Church in Grand Rapids, MI during the spring and summer of 2014. Select your preferred format by clicking on the corresponding link below.

- The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2: An Overview
 - [PDF Notes](#), [MP3 Audio](#), [YouTube Video](#)
- The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2: If Statement Number 2
 - [PDF Notes](#), [MP3 Audio](#), [YouTube Video](#)
- The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2: If Statement Number 2, Part 2
 - [PDF Notes](#), [MP3 Audio](#), [YouTube Video](#)
- The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2: If Statement Number 3
 - [PDF Notes](#), [MP3 Audio](#), [YouTube Video](#)
- What Does It Mean to Reign With Christ
 - [PDF Notes](#), [MP3 Audio](#), [YouTube Video](#)
- What Does It Mean to Reign With Christ, Part 2
 - [PDF Notes](#), [MP3 Audio](#), [YouTube Video](#)
- What Does It Mean to Reign With Christ, Part 3
 - [PDF Notes](#), [MP3 Audio](#), [YouTube Video](#)
- The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2: If Statement Number 4
 - [PDF Notes](#), [MP3 Audio](#), [YouTube Video](#)

Sunday, January 25, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 159](#)
[Sonship Edification: Precursors to Sonship, Part 5](#)

Introduction

- Since halfway through Lesson 155, we have been discussing the precursors to Sonship Edification (SE). In Lesson 155 we provided the following non-exhaustive list of doctrinal forerunners to SE:
 - 1884—*The Theocratic Kingdom* by George N.H. Peters—3 Volumes
 - 1935—*The Berean Expositor, Volume XXV* by Charles Welch
 - 1936—*Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks* by G.H. Lang
 - 1972—*Edification Complex of the Soul* by R. B. Thieme, Jr.
 - 1981—*The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* by Zane Hodges
- Further research and study since Lesson 155 reveals that at least one additional title (perhaps more in the future, especially additional titles by Hodges as well as others associated with the Grace Evangelical Society) should be added to this list.
 - 1992—*The Reign of the Servant Kings* by Joseph Dillow
- At this point in our survey of the forerunners of SE, we have covered the writings of Peters, Welch, and Lang from our original list presented in Lesson 155. In this lesson we want to briefly consider the precursory nature of Thieme’s *Edification Complex of the Soul*.

Precursors to Sonship, Continued

R.B. Thieme Jr.

- According to the back cover of *Edification Complex of the Soul*, Thieme grew up in Beverly Hills, CA and attended the University of Arizona, majoring in Greek. After graduation he was commissioned as an officer in the Cavalry. Prior to Pearl Harbor, Thieme transferred to the Army Air Force where he served in WWII and was placed on Reserve Status in 1946 as a Lieutenant Colonel. Following the war, Thieme attended Dallas Theological Seminary where he graduated Summa Cum Laude and learned of the science of textual criticism and furthered his studies of the original languages. According to Wikipedia, Thieme was “pastor of [Berachah Church](#), a nondenominational Christian church in Houston, Texas from 1950-2003. Affectionately called “the Colonel” by his congregation, he was a dispensationalist theologian who wrote over a hundred books and conducted over 10,000 sermons on various theological topics during his 55 years as a pastor.” (Click here to visit [R.B. Thieme Jr. Bible Ministries](#))

- Thieme shares in common with SE an inclination towards developing his own extensive vocabulary of non-biblical terminology. “Thieme's doctrinal study and unique vocabulary were based on a methodology he called **ICE**: Isagogics, Categories, and Exegesis. **Isagogics** is the study of the Bible in its historical context, including the human writer, the recipients, and the time in which they lived. **Categories** refers to a topical compilation of doctrine, so that one can approach the Bible on a line-by-line-precept-by-precept basis, and cross-reference Scripture effectively. **Exegesis** as defined by Thieme involves studying the grammar, syntax, and etymology of the original languages of Scripture, so that one is not relying on intermediate translations which may obscure or lose meanings. Through the ICE method, Thieme sought to accurately communicate the truths of the Bible.” ([Wikipedia Entry](#))
- There are two primary reasons for my inclusion of R.B. Thieme as a forerunner of SE. The first is alluded to above; Thieme’s practice of developing his own specified non-scriptural vocabulary. Much like we observed at the beginning of our studies of SE (see [Lesson 145](#)), one must decode the meaning of Thieme’s lexicon of terminology before being able to follow/process his teaching. This practice on the part of SE teachers speaks to having been influenced by Thieme’s study/teaching methods. For example, we observed Newbold using/referring to the term ICE teaching in [Lesson 153](#) (see page 7). This allusion by Newbold, even though it is ultimately unfavorable, speaks to an awareness of Thieme’s methodology/terminology.
- The second reason for including Thieme as a precursor to SE is on account of his teachings regarding “edification” set forth in his 1972 book *Edification Complex of the Soul*. Thieme views edification in very hierarchical terms and utilizes much of the same terminology as SE to describe what he calls the “edification complex.” For example, Thieme’s system includes multiple “levels” and “phases” and possesses “checkpoints” that one must pass through as they advance through the various “levels” and “phases.” While Thieme’s system is ultimately different from the SE system of Blades, Newbold, McDaniel, and others; it bears many terminological and some conceptual similarities.
- On page one, Thieme makes a distinction between the believer’s positional completeness in Christ in Colossians 2:10 and his experiential reality. A believer’s soul possesses a deficiency, according to Thieme and for this reason believers are instructed to “grow or to progress toward maturity” in II Peter 3:18 and Ephesians 4:14-15. (Thieme, 1) Herein lies the “ultimate goal of the Christian life,” to “become a mature, stabilized believer with the capacity for maximum product for the Lord (i.e., labor with him in his business).” (Thieme, 1) Advancing in maturity is the function of what Thieme calls the “grace apparatus for perception” or GAP. GAP is the “provision of God whereby EVERY believer can understand EVERY doctrine in the Word, regardless of education or IQ (Eph. 3:18).” (Thieme, 1) The GAP assists the believer with Phase 1 of their Christian life set forth in Ephesians 3:19, TO KNOW. (Thieme, 1)
- According to Thieme, the GAP forms the basis for the “Edification Complex in the Soul” (ECS).

- “To know” is “ginosko” in the Greek. This word indicates the whole process of the GAP. When you are exposed to doctrine through the communication of a pastor-teacher, doctrine is inhaled through the filling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10) into the perceptive (left) lobe of the mind (“nous” in the Greek). If you understand what is taught, it becomes “gnosis,” or knowledge understood. “Gnosis” cannot be exhaled; that is, it has no application. It cannot build the EDIFICATION COMPLEX in the soul (ECS), which is the completed soul and fulfillment of our relationship with God.

“Gnosis” does not give eyes to the soul—in fact, it can do nothing for a person spiritually; it is simply intellectual comprehension of a point of doctrine. You can understand any human knowledge in your left lobe; but if you are going to understand God, you must have something that surpasses “gnosis.” It must become “epignosis” . . . In order for doctrine to become “epignosis,” it must be transferred BY FAITH from the perceptive lobe to the human spirit. In other words, doctrine must be believed to be anything more than mere intellectual comprehension.

. . . But once doctrine has been transferred by faith into the human spirit, it becomes residual doctrine, stored for cycling back into the right lobe’s frame of reference. Here it forms vocabulary, changes human norms and standards to divine norms and standards and gives divine viewpoint (i.e., it allows one to think like God thinks). The doctrine is then exhaled out the left bank of the soul toward God: you love God, and you exercise prayer and faith-rest toward Him. You also exhale out of the right bank of the soul toward people and produce divine good, love toward right man or woman and friends (i.e., you act like God acts). Everything depends upon “epignosis.” That is your spiritual IQ.

The result of “epignosis” is “that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” The “fullness of God” is the ECS, a term which will be demonstrated to perfectly describe a mature believer. The only way to erect an ECS is to have building material, and this building material is “epignosis.” You cannot build an ECS with “gnosis”; so Bible doctrine has to become “epignosis.” (Thieme, 3-5)

- The implication is clear, only those believers that erect an ECS are mature and “filled with all the fullness of God.” Furthermore, the glorification spoken of in Ephesians 3:21 is potential for all believers but can only be accomplished or actualized by the using the GAP to build an ECS. The glorification spoken of in Ephesians 3:21:
 - “. . . depends upon the function of the grace apparatus in the church, which leads to the erection of the ECS; and the EC is reflected glory of God. . . The glory of the EC lasts through all eternity. The production of divine good and the EC—the “gold, silver and precious stones” (I Cor. 3:12-14), rewards which we will reflect in eternity—act as an eternal ECS. They will reflect the glory of God throughout all eternity just as the EC reflects the glory of God now.” (Thieme, 7)

- The ECS possesses the following five floors, according to Thieme.
 - “The reason for describing it as a “complex” is that the building in the soul is composed of five “floors:” 1) grace orientation (the understanding of God’s plan and the believer’s proper place in it); 2) mastery of the details of life (putting material things in their right perspective); 3) a relaxed mental attitude (the freedom from mental attitude sins); 4) capacity to love in all three categories (one-toward God; two-toward right man or right women; three—toward friends); and 5) the penthouse, “plus-H” or inner happiness (God’s happiness, which doesn’t depend on people, circumstances or things).” (Thieme, 9)

- Only those believers who have erected an ECS can understand the Bible on their own. This is on account of the fact that while a believer’s soul is saved at salvation, it needs proper stabilization through an ECS, according to Thieme. (19) Because being filled with “epignosis” is contingent upon the individual believer’s attitude, not all believers have what it takes to be filled with “epignosis” and thereby erect an ECS. (23) Given that believers will have to endure all sorts of pressures, tests, and distractions, it is natural for despondency and discouragement to set in. Consequently, only those who persist day after day will succeed in erecting an ECS (this is very similar to SE’s notion of whole heartedly committing to the curriculum and seeking one’s Sonship Education more than anything else). (23-24)
 - “That goal (the goal of Ephesians 4:13) is stated in the previous verse as EDIFICIATION and amplified in this verse as MATURITY. Whether a believer ever arrives at maturity or not depends on his faithfulness in functioning under GAP. “The unity of the faith” does mean an experience of everyone agreeing with everyone else. It is actually “the oneness of the doctrine” and connotes an objective. The objective is the maturity of the believer who has a consistent system of doctrine by which he orients, produces and lives. . . Unto (the objective) a perfect man,” actually, the “completed man.” The ECS is the “new man” or the “completed man.” He is a believer who has an EC, who is mature and therefore has reached the point of becoming spiritually self-sustaining (though he will never become spiritually independent). It means that he can meet the problems of divine guidance, he can orient to God’s grace in time of adversity or in time of prosperity, he can produce maximum divine good in Phase Two. So the “perfect man” is not a person who does not sin, but one who is a mature believer. . . Until you have an EC you cannot fulfill the purpose of your life in the angelic conflict (Unseen conflict in which the forces of Satan are warring against the forces of God.)” (Thieme, 36-38)

- The ECS is a hierarchical construct; one must build each one of the five floors of the complex in order. One must properly build the first floor before moving on to the second, and the second before the third and so on. Consequently, it is important to have “check points” along the way to ensure that each floor has been properly built before moving on to the next.
 - “. . . if you don’t operate on the basis of grace, it is pretty clear that you don’t have the first floor; and you can’t have the top floor if you don’t have the first floor. You can’t build floors two, three, four, or five unless you have the first one. The EC is not a house

built on stilts! All the floors have to be filled in. So it's important to have check points along the way." (Thieme, 55-56)

- As a general rule, *Edification Complex of the Soul* (the book) is very redundant and hard to follow in places. Thieme makes great jumps in his logic through his unique functional vocabulary that he does not prove with verses; a practice we have already observed in our investigation of SE. While Thieme's ECS system is different from SE, there are many concepts that carry over. Some of these include:
 - The use of a highly unique and specified unbiblical terminology: ICE, Grace Apparatus for Perception, ECS
 - Hierarchical system of levels and phases.
 - One must pass each "check point" to properly progress and build the ECS
 - Only those who erect an ECS as Thieme has described it are mature and filled with all the fullness of God.
 - One must commit and persist in the process in order for an ECS to be built
 - Reward at the judgment seat of Christ and participation in the "angelic conflict" is contingent upon properly erecting an ECS.
 - Future glorification is potential for all believers but is only accomplished or actualized by the using the GAP to build an ECS.
- For the record, I have checked into Thieme's teaching on joint-heirship in Romans 8:17. Thieme does not appear to have argued for a difference between "heirs" and "joint-heirs" in Romans 8:17. Consequently, Thieme's primary contribution to the development of SE resides in his hierarchical understanding of edification.
- Thieme's complex of levels, phases, and check points was picked up by early SE teachers and adapted to fit with a mid-Acts Pauline understanding of the Scriptures. As I stated at the end of Lesson 158, Thieme's EC provided the structural framework for what has been termed SE in our day. Doctrines gleaned from Lang, Hodges, Dillow and others were hung upon Thieme's framework like sheet rock secured to its framing.
- Using our illustration of SE as a river formed of many smaller tributaries, Thieme's *Edification Complex of the Soul* is one such contributor to the modern theological system of Sonship Edification.

Thieme, Blades, and Newbold: Establishing a Connection

- Proving a point of connection between Thieme, Blades, and Newbold is important to establishing the validity of my hypothesis.
- A few years back a member of Grace Life Bible Church gave me an entire box of R.B. Thieme booklets. At the time, I had no interest in reading them so I just boxed them up and kept them in my basement. Last fall when Thieme's name came up in class as possibly significant in the development of SE, I pulled out the booklets, organized them, and began reading.
- As I read, I encountered some familiar terminology that I had heard Brother Jordan use in Grace School of the Bible and/or in his other teachings. Some examples include:
 - The definition of Grace: "All that God is free to do for man on the basis of the cross."
 - Divine Institutions: "Principals set up by God for the perpetuation of the human race; viz., volition, marriage, family, and nationalism."
- This common vocabulary prompted me to write Brother Jordan and ask him about his exposure to the writings of Thieme. On January 7, 2015 Richard offered the following response:
 - I first heard of him (Thieme) thru Art Sims in the early 80s. He gave me several of his booklets. It took me a while to get a handle on his terminology, but I actually liked some of it. "Rebound," for instance is a great term but his definition for it makes it unusable. "Edification Complex of the Soul" was another one, but I never really figured out what he meant by it. He is rather traditional Acts 2/Chafer type doctrine just put into new and strange wrappings, along with some peculiarities of his own added to the mix. I never found him that compelling and he is more often than not rather difficult to read." (Jordan, Facebook PM—1/7/15)
- Two days later on January 9, 2015, after asking some further clarification questions, Brother Jordan offered the following extended reply.
 - "Art was an Independent Baptist pastor [grad of Florida Bible College] in Naples, FL who in the late 70s came to see the "no water" viewpoint before he ever met anyone in the "grace movement." When he came in contact with g-m [Grace Movement] preachers-GGFers at first--he had problems with their Lordship Salvation tendencies. I met him in the late 70s at the Cedar Lake BBF conference [while I still lived in AL], when Marvin Duncan taught the Daily Bible Hour and presented at least two strong Lordship messages. He and I had met at that meeting and together complained to the powers that be about the issue. Mr. Stam was very sympathetic and also took up the cause, resulting in its diminishing. Because so many in BBF and GGF are such strong Calvinists, this issue was always in the shadows (Lordship is rooted in Calvinism/Arminianism).

Through the years Art became disenchanted with both BBF and GGF and has long since gone his own way. He was always his own man/thinker.

I was in his church for a meeting in 80 or 81 (can't remember exactly off the top of my head) and he introduced me to Thieme, who he had once followed rather closely. At that time Art had been training Keith Blades, whose parents attended Art's church--this was when I met Keith. Keith had moved to Fort Myers and started a church there under Art's oversight. Not too long after this, Keith moved to Canada. . .

On the Thieme front, he (Sims) had moved on from him (Thieme) by the time we became acquainted due to his mid-acts understanding. Blades was with Art during this transition (away from Thieme to mid-Acts) and was very familiar with Thieme. As I mentioned, I got several booklets from Art and a couple of tapes. They were hard to read/listen to, so I didn't do much with them. Art had attended his Pastor's Conference in TX and I listened to a couple of those tapes, but wasn't really interested in all the Greek parsing and categorical type teaching he did.” (Jordan, Facebook PM—1/9/15)

- Since Richard heard of Thieme via Art Sims and Keith Blades trained under Sims, it is reasonable to assume (Richard says as much) that Blades also would have been familiar with Thieme’s work through his mentor, Sims.
- We have already demonstrated above, via his awareness of the acronym ICE, that Newbold is familiar with the teachings of R.B. Thieme. I am not the only one who has reached this conclusion regarding Newbold. Some time back (2011, I think the website is a bit unclear.), internetmonk.com ran a story by Chaplain Mike titled “[Whatever Happened to...R.B. Thieme, Jr.?](#)” While this article is largely critical of Thieme, it does contain an interesting list of ministries that are carrying on Thieme’s “legacy.” Included within this list is a link to [Triangle Bible Church](#) in Raleigh North Carolina. Triangle Bible Church is of course that assembly pastored by Mark Newbold. Observers of Triangle Bible Church, independent of myself, have noted the Thiemite influence and style associated with Newbold’s ministry.
- Given that Blades and Newbold both possessed an awareness of Thieme’s ministry and that these two brothers were the ones primarily responsible for the emergence of SE within the Grace Movement, it is reasonable to conclude that Thieme’s book *Edification Complex of the Soul* influenced their thinking on the subject of edification. This is further demonstrated by considering the hierarchical systems of edification developed by both Thieme and SE as well as by their shared terminology of: levels, phases, and checkpoints.
- Thieme’s concepts regarding edification provided the structural framework to which the rest of the SE doctrines were affixed. *Edification Complex of the Soul* is a tributary to the formation of SE.

Works Cited

Thieme, R.B. *Edification Complex of the Soul*. 1972.

Sunday, February 1, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 160 Sonship Edification: Precursors to Sonship, Part 6](#)

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 159 we considered R.B. Thieme's *Edification Complex of the Soul* as a precursor to Sonship Edification (SE).
 - 1884—*The Theocratic Kingdom* by George N.H. Peters—3 Volumes
 - 1935—*The Berean Expositor, Volume XXV* by Charles Welch
 - 1936—*Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks* by G.H. Lang
 - 1972—*Edification Complex of the Soul* by R. B. Thieme, Jr.
 - 1981—*The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* by Zane Hodges
 - 1992—*The Reign of the Servant Kings* by Joseph Dillow
- It was demonstrated that Thieme's primary contribution to development of SE rests in his hierarchical system of edification. It was from Thieme that SE picked up the terminology of structure of levels, phases, and checkpoints with respect to the process of edification. Thieme's concepts regarding edification provided the structural framework to which the rest of the SE's doctrines were affixed.
- This week, we want to consider one final forerunner to the development of SE, the writings of Zane C. Hodges. In our effort to accomplish this we will consider: 1) Hodges' teaching on Double Heirship in Romans 8:17, and 2) the formation and role of the Grace Evangelical Society.

Precursors to Sonship, Continued

Zane C. Hodges

- Zane Clark Hodges was born June 15, 1932 and was reared in Chambersburg, PA. He came to Dallas TX in 1954 after receiving a bachelor's degree from Wheaton College. He received a Master of Theology degree from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1958. He then taught New Testament Greek and Exegesis (1959–1986) at Dallas Seminary and was chairman of the New Testament Department for some time. Hodges also served as pastor at Victor Street Bible Chapel, formerly The Old Mission in Dallas, for almost fifty years. He was the founder and president of Kerugma Ministries. ([Obituary](#)) (See also [Wheaton History A to Z](#))
- Theologically, Hodges is known for: 1) "Free Grace theology", a view which holds that eternal life is received as a free gift only through belief in Jesus Christ for eternal life (a person cannot lose their salvation, even if they fall away from the faith); 2) "Eternal Rewards", a view that various

passages in the New Testament are not dealing with eternal salvation but addressing Christians and the opportunity to earn eternal rewards or to caution against their loss; and 3) his position on the Majority Text. ([Wikipedia Entry](#))

- In 1981, Hodges released the first edition of *The Gospel Under Siege: A Study of Faith and Works*. While Hodges argues forcefully in *The Gospel Under Siege* for the eternal security of the believer, it is his teaching regarding double heirship in Romans 8:17 that brought him much criticism. This is evident from a consideration of the endnotes that were added to the second edition published in 1992. In the first endnote for Chapter 9 Hodges states the following:

- **“It is particularly in reference to my discussion of heirship that some critics have thought that my ideas were without precedent in Christian literature.** But in thinking so, they are seriously mistaken. Most of my suggestions on this theme were anticipated before the turn of the century by George N. H. Peters (1825–1909), *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 3 vols. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884; reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1952), his magisterial magnum opus. He was born in Berlin, PA, graduated from Wittenberg College, and pastored a number of Lutheran churches in Ohio.

Another significant volume which anticipates the contents of this chapter to a considerable degree is G. H. Lang, *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights & Risks* (London: Roberts, 1936; reprint, Miami Springs, FL: Conley & Schoettle, 1984).” (Hodges, 180-181)

- That Hodges was taking criticism on account of his position regarding double heirship in Romans 8:17 is evident from the first line quoted above. While I have both editions of Hodges work before me, and there are no substantive differences in meaning between them (only minor differences in wording), I will be taking all my quotations from the updated and footnoted second edition under the premise that it is more emblematic of Hodges’ most recent thinking on the subject.
- After leading off Chapter 9 with a quotation of Romans 8:16-17, Hodges states his awareness that the verses in question are “often read as if only one heirship were in view.” He then proceeds to inform his readers that another reading is permissible “with only a slight alteration of the English punctuation.”
 - “This declaration is often read as if only one heirship were in view. **However, with only a slight alteration of the English punctuation (which is equally permissible in the original Greek)**, Paul’s words may be read as follows:

and if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” (Hodges, 127)

- Please compare Hodges suggested reading and the reading as it stands in the King James Bible (KJB) side by side:

Hodges Suggested Reading	King James Bible (1769)
And if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.	And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with <i>him</i> , that we may be also glorified together.

- In the very next paragraph Hodges admits that he MUST alter the punctuation of the verse so that it reads in a manner consistent with the position he is advancing. In other words, Hodges’ comments reveal that unless the punctuation, and thereby the reading, of the passage are altered, his position that there are two forms of heirship in Romans 8:17 is unsustainable. The text is altered first to enable Hodges to state/advance his position rather than Hodges altering his position to match the text.
 - **“Under this reading of the text, there are two forms of heirship.** One of these is based on being children of God. The other is based on suffering with Christ. This distinction is crucial for understanding the New Testament teaching on this subject.” (Hodges, 127)
- Put another way, “now that I have changed the text to read in my favor, it is now apparent that there are two forms of heirship spoken of in the verse. Consequently, one can see how critical this altered reading is to my position. This distinction stemming from my altered reading of the verse is crucial for understanding the issue of inheritance throughout the rest of the New Testament.” In short, Hodges admits that if the text is allowed to stand as it reads in the KJB, there is no basis for arguing for “two forms of heirship” in Romans 8:17. He MUST alter it before advancing his position.
- While this type of text tampering might be permissible for someone like Hodges, it is certainly not permissible for the teachers of SE, regardless of which version of the position they are advancing, who also happen to believe in the inerrancy of the KJB. What our investigation into the precursors of SE reveals is that one has to tamper with the King James reading in Romans 8:17 to advance the position that there is a difference between “heirs” and “joint-heirs” in the verse. This text tampering falls into the following four general categories:
 - First, deny that the textual FACT that *ei per* (“if so be that”) is a 1st class condition. There is no doubt that *ei per* is a condition; the question is which type of condition it is. Even the Oxford English Dictionary acknowledges a variety of conditions that can exist depending on the mood with which the condition “if” is coupled. In Romans 8:17 the condition *ei per* (“if so be that” in English) is followed by a verb in the indicative mood “suffer with.” This is a textual FACT that cannot be distorted or ignored.
 - This view has been adopted by SE teachers Newbold and McDaniel (see [Lesson 154](#) page 3) as well as by the “Joint-Heir View” of Northern California Grace Fellowship (NCGF).
 - Second, deny the textual FACT that *ei per* (“if so be that”) carries the force of “since” in its meaning and usage (see [Ifs, Ands, or Buts](#) pages 8-10 and Lesson 157 pages 6 and 7). See

the translation of *ei per* in I Corinthians 8:5 as “though” and II Thessalonians 1:6 as “seeing.”

- While we are uncertain on the views of SE teachers Newbold and McDaniel regarding the meaning of *ei per* it is clear that NCGF’s “joint-heirs view” does deny the textual FACT that *ei per* carries the force of “since.” If this were not the case, the King James translators would have been mistaken in how they rendered the word in I Corinthians 8:5 and II Thessalonians 1:6.
- Third, retranslate the second occurrence of the Greek word *de* in Romans 8:17 as “but” before “joint-heirs with Christ” instead of “and,” ala G.H. Lang (see Lesson 157 pages 2 to 6). A related but slightly different version of Lang’s view is to argue that EVERY TIME the Greek words *men* and *de* occur together in the same verse in the book of Romans *de* is ALWAYS used to CONTRAST two different things and NEVER serves to CONNECT two things; ala Joseph Dillow in *Reign of the Servant Kings* (see Lesson 157 pages 2 to 6).
 - Dillow’s position identified above has been advocated for as a SECONDARY ARGUMENT by the supporters of NCGF’s “Joint-Heir View.” While Dillow’s view does not go as far as Lang’s in altering the King James text outright, it does, on the basis of an unsubstantiated Greek rule, MANDATE a similar reading of the verse to the one offered by Lang (i.e., the “and” in front of “joint-heirs with Christ” should be read/understood as CONTRASTIVE (as though it were a “but”) and not a CONJUNCTION). While stopping short of correcting/altering the King James text, the net effect of Dillow’s view is the same as Lang’s. At this time we are unaware of any similar arguments being made by SE teachers Newbold and/or McDaniel.
- Fourth, disregard, dismiss, and/or alter the punctuation of King James text so that it reads in a manner conducive to supporting the “two inheritance view” that there is a difference between “heirs” and “joint-heirs” ala Hodges (see above).
 - Once again this is done by a SECONDARY ARGUMENT put forth by NCGF’s “Joint-Heir View.” It is argued on the basis of the fact that the 1611 edition of the KJB contained a colon (“:”) between “joint-heirs with Christ” and “if so be that” and that the 1769 edition contains a semicolon (“;”), so that any argument based upon punctuation is completely bogus and a “red herring.” In other words, the punctuation as it stands in the 1769 edition of the KJB does not matter. While I would maintain that an argument for “heirs” and “joint-heirs” being the same based upon punctuation ALONE is not strong; I would further state that any position that completely dismisses the punctuation found in the 1769 edition of the KJB as having no bearing on how the verse should be read/understood is eerily similar to the re-punctuation position advanced by Hodges. For the sake of fairness and clarity, at this time we are not aware of any such punctuation arguments being offered by SE teachers Newbold and/or McDaniel.

- The bottom line is this; the double heirship view of Romans 8:17 was a vital point of entry into the articulation of SE by Blades in the early half of the last decade (00 decade). The double heirship view of Blades and Newbold is found in varying degrees and forms in the precursory writings of Peters, Welch, Lang, Hodges, and Dillow. With the possible exception of Welch who's exposition of Romans 8:17 is impacted more by his Acts 28 dispensational stance than anything else; all of these precursors to SE in some way, shape, manner, or form seek to alter the King James text in Romans 8:17 so that the passages read in their favor. In our day, the teachers of the various variations of SE have in varying degrees done likewise either directly or indirectly so as to advance their position. This has been done by either denying the TEXTUAL and/or TRASLATION FACTS plainly exhibited by a consideration of the English text of the KJB or by adopting SECONDARY ARGUMENTS that functionally undermine the translation and/or punctuation found in the standard King James text of 1769.
- Moving on, Hodges, in similar fashion to Sonship teachers, appeals to "Old Testament custom" to support his views on double heirship in Romans 8:17.
 - "The concept of two kinds of heirship is very natural indeed in the light of Old Testament custom. As is well known, in a Jewish family all the sons shared equally in their father's inheritance, except for the oldest, or firstborn, son who received a double portion. That is, he inherited twice as much as the other sons.

Against this background, Paul can be understood as saying that all of God's children are heirs, simply because they are children. But those who suffer with Christ have a special joint heirship with Christ. It is of great significance that later in this chapter Christ is actually described as the firstborn among many brethren (8:29).

Naturally, all believers are God's heirs. In the eternal future they will most assuredly inherit all of the blessings which are unconditionally promised to them. Among these is an eternal glory (Romans 8:30) which is inherent in the resurrection itself. . .

But in Romans 8:17, Paul speaks also of a *co-heirship* that results in *co-glory*. This contrast is a bit easier to see in Greek than it is in English.

In the Greek text, Paul juxtaposes two words for *heir*, one of which is the simple word for this, and the other a compound word roughly equal to our word *co-heir*. Likewise, two other compound words in Paul's text express the thought of *co-suffering* and *co-glorification*. As Paul's words make clear, such an heirship is dependent on something more than saving faith. This heirship is contingent on our experience of suffering with Christ.

Romans 8:17 thus confronts us with a double heirship. One of these is for all believers. The other is for believers who suffer in fellowship with Christ. (Hodges, 128-129)

- Hodges follows everyone else we have studied trying to make an argument for double heirship in Romans 8:17 by seeking to connect it with II Timothy 2:12.
 - “Putting Romans 8:17 together with 2 Timothy 2:12, it is natural to conclude that to be co-glorified with Christ involves co-reigning with Him. In other words, the glory of co-heirship is more than merely participating in the glorious future world. It is to share the portion of the Firstborn Son of God and to *reign* in His Kingdom.” (Hodges, 129-130)
- Throughout the rest of Chapter 9, Hodges’ argumentation can be described as dispensationally confused at best. Attempts are made to reconcile/merge and/or harmonize non-Pauline texts such as Luke 19:11-27, I John 5:4-5, 18; Revelation 2:11, 26-27; 3:5, 21 (also see the cluster of Old Testament verses cited on page 135) with Pauline passages such as I Corinthians 6:6-20 and Galatians 5:19-21. (Hodges, 130-141) In short, many appeals are made to the non-Pauline Scriptures by Hodges. Most notable is that we once again see an attempt to connect Romans 8:17 with the “overcomers” of Revelation 2 and 3. This phenomenon has occurred in all the precursory writings we have considered, yet it is a connection that is missing from the various SE teachers seeking to argue for two types of eternal inheritance in Romans 8:17.
- Chapter 9 of the second edition of *The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* was reprinted with Hodges’ permission in the fall 2003 issue of the *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal*. Parties interested in reading Chapter 9 and its accompanying footnote may do so by clicking [here](#).

Hodges, GES, and Blades: Establishing a Connection

- Doctrinally there are two primary reasons why a mid-Acts Pauline dispensationalist such as Keith Blades would have been interested in the ministry of Zane Hodges.
- First, Hodges was an outspoken proponent of the Majority Text and was openly critical of the text and methodology of Westcott and Hort in general and the NIV specifically. It was Zane Hodges that penned the Forward to Wilbur Pickering’s well-known and influential book *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (first edition 1977, revised edition 1980). Hodges also coauthored Appendix C “The Implications of Statistical Probability for the History of the Text” found in the 1980 revised edition of Pickering’s book. Pickering’s work was critical of the textual theory advanced by Westcott and Hort and promoted the merits of the Majority Text as a more reliable guide for reconstructing the readings of the New Testament text. In addition to penning the Forward and Appendix C for Pickering’s book, Hodges wrote extensively on the subject for various theological journals including the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society. In addition, Hodges was the co-author of two book length works on the subject:
 - *The Greek New Testament: According to the Majority Text* (1982, 2nd Edition 1985)
 - *The NIV Reconsidered: A Fresh Look at a Popular Translation* (1990)

- Given that Keith Blades was a strong proponent of the KJB, it makes sense the he would be aware of Hodges' work in the field of textual criticism even if Blades did not agree with all of Hodges' conclusions.
- Second, Zane Hodges was a vocal opponent of Lordship Salvation as well as a proponent of the eternal security of the believer. In 1989, Hodges opposed the 1988 release of John MacArthur's *The Gospel According to Jesus*. Hodges spoke out strongly against MacArthur and his Lordship Salvation position through the publication and release of the first edition of *Absolutely Free: A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation* (a second edition was released in 2014).
- Like Hodges, Blades was also very concerned with the following points of doctrine: 1) clarity of the gospel; 2) opposition to Lordship Salvation; and 3) the eternal security of the believer. In addition, to publishing twenty plus gospel tracts devoted to explaining the gospel in a " cliché" free manner, Blades also authored a booklet titled *The Gospel of Grace: Make It Clear! Make It Plain!*
- My point here is that theologically, Blades shares certain similar doctrinal interests with Hodges. These areas of common interest speak to a potential/probable awareness of Hodges' work on the part of Blades. Many in the Grace School of the Bible (GSB) circle of the Grace Movement are aware of Pickering's book and are, by extension, aware of Hodges. In fact, within the Manuscript Evidence class (MSS) in GSB, Pastor Jordan recommends and quotes extensively from Pickering's book and includes Hodges' *The Greek New Testament: According to the Majority Text* in at least two different lists of men associated with the transmission of the text through church history.
 - Quotations or references to Wilbur Pickering's *Identity of the New Testament Text* in GSB occur in the following lessons (the number in parenthesis corresponds to the page number where the statements can be read in this [PDF document](#).):
 - MSS 102-5 (59); 102-10 (107, 109); 102-12 (131); 102-14 (143); 102-15 (157, 159, 160)
 - References to Hodges' *The Greek New Testament: According to the Majority Text* see the following lessons and pages numbers:
 - MSS 102-1 (15); 102-12 (125)
- Personal relationships and connections further strengthen the notion that Blades was aware of Hodges as well as the Grace Evangelical Society (GES) of which Hodges was a member. The GES was founded in 1986 and specializes in books that deal with soteriology from a free grace perspective (one of Blades areas of interest). Please recall from Lesson 159 that Richard Jordan first learned of R.B. Thieme from Art Sims, and that Sims mentored Keith Blades early in Keith's ministry (Keith's parents attended Art's assembly). In a recent private Facebook message from January 11, 2015, Brother Jordan told me that he first learned of the formation of the GES from Art Sims, Keith's mentor. Sims joined the GES for a time and recommended to Richard that he consider following suit (Jordan never joined). In addition, to stating that Sims joined for a time but

did not stay long, Jordan said that Keith knew about the formation of the GES but also elected not to join the society.

- GES is an evangelical Christian advocacy organization based in Denton, TX whose purpose is to promote Free Grace Theology. GES was founded in June 1986 when dispensationalist Bob Wilkin sent out newsletters to likeminded associates regarding soteriology within conservative American churches. Wilkin had obtained a BS at the University of California at Irvine in 1973, a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1982, and a PhD at Dallas Theological Seminary in 1985. In 1988, the *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* (JOTGES) was founded; Arthur L. Farstad became its first editor. That same year (1988), Zondervan published *The Gospel According to Jesus* by John MacArthur Jr., a work which would crystallize the influence of Lordship salvation Theology in Dispensational circles. The Executive Director, Robert N. (Bob) Wilkin, speaks across the country at churches and regional conferences and has written several books. As the representative of the GES in public debates, Dr. Wilkin has engaged Progressive Dispensationalist and the former president of the Evangelical Theological Society, Darrell Bock (Progressive Dispensationalist), and the Calvinist apologist and writer James White. The ministry critiques certain ideas in evangelism and theology, especially strains of Covenant theology, Puritanism and Lordship salvation. ([Wikipedia Entry](#))
- After Zane Hodges died in 2008, the GES secured the copyrights to Hodges' printed material. Hodges' writings are kept in print at this present time via the efforts/resources of the GES.
- All of this means that Keith Blades was aware of the GES via his mentor Art Sims. If he was not already aware of the writings of Hodges, Keith's awareness of the GES would have placed Hodges and other GES writers squarely on Blades radar screen.
- All Blades needed to establish was an awareness of G.H Lang's *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks* which was the second footnoted edition of Hodges' *The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* released in 1992. Via Hodges' endnotes, Blades and possibly Newbold were granted access to G.H. Lang, where they found their definition of Biblical Adoption as well as a host of other concepts that were carried forward and included within the theological system now known as SE (See Lesson 159 for a detailed list of these concepts.).
- This theory raises questions regarding whether or not Blades and/or Newbold were reading other GES writers such as Joseph Dillow. What is certain is that Lang, Hodges, Dillow, and other GES writers maintain very similar views to those advanced by SE teachers Blades, Newbold, and McDaniel as well as the "Joint-Heir View" of NCGF. For further study and comparison, interested parties are encouraged to read [The Reign of the Spiritual Elite: The Theology of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society](#).

Works Cited

Hodges, Zane C. *The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension 2nd Edition*. Redencion Viva: Dallas, TX, 1992.

Sunday, February 8, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 161](#)
[Sonship Edification: The Evolution of SE in the Writings of Keith R. Blades, 1994-June, 2001](#)

Introduction: Personal Thoughts Regarding Blades

- The bulk of Lessons 155 to 160 were taken up with a survey of the precursors to Sonship Edification (SE). Now that we have taken the time to understand SE as a system as well as its doctrinal/theological roots, we are in a position to investigate how SE took shape in the mind of Keith R. Blades and first began to be articulated in the second half of 2001.
- I first learned of Keith Blades in the mid to late 1990s (as a teenager) via exposure to his book *Satan and His Plan of Evil (SHPE)*. In fact, Lee Homoki was speaking at my Dad's church in Genoa City, WI when the bright red cover of Keith's book first caught my eye on Lee's book rack (1996, I believe). I did not immediately buy it, however. It was not until the summer of 1997, at the age of 20, that I purchased a copy of the book at the Grace School of the Bible Summer Family Bible Conference in Chicago, IL.
- *SHPE* was very influential on my thinking in my early twenties. During the 1998/1999 school year, while a student at Grace Bible College, I taught *SHPE* to the college age class at Berean Bible Church in Wyoming, MI (now Rush Creek Bible Church in Byron Center, MI). My enjoyment of *SHPE* prompted me to secure copies of Keith's other printed works including: *A Very Simple Survey of the Bible Volumes I and II* as well as *Have You Ever Wondered What Heaven is Like* and *The Gospel of God's Grace: Make it Clear! Make it Plain!*
- During my undergraduate years (1996 to 2002) at GBC, I also began receiving Keith's quarterly Bible study periodical *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly (EBQ)*. Via the quarterlies, I was also made aware of Keith's extensive library of teaching videos that were advertised in the quarterlies. While I kept up with the quarterlies for a while, eventually I stopped reading them on account of my class load. In addition to being a full-time student at GBC, I also enrolled in Grace School of the Bible in the fall of 1997. My studies, in addition to working part time, would not allow me to keep up with the quarterlies, though I continued to receive them and file them away for future reference and reading.
- I was not aware of Keith's teachings regarding SE until March 2014, when his name surfaced in a now retracted Northern California Grace Fellowship YouTube video. Hearing Keith's name mentioned in this context prompted my investigation into his involvement in the "two inherence" controversy. It was this investigation that caused me to consider the quarterlies that I had laid aside years prior as well as to seek out electronic copies on the Enjoy the Bible website.
- As I spoke to people about my findings leading up to teaching these lessons on SE, many expressed surprise. Those who were only familiar with Keith's book length works (i.e., had not read the quarterlies) expressed surprise (as did I) to learn that he was involved and instrumental in the articulation of SE. For those unaware of the full spectrum of Blades' writings it is as though there were two different writers: 1) the Blades of the popular book length works, and 2) the

Blades of the quarterlies who is the fountainhead of SE. It is entirely possible to not be aware of this reality. If all one has read from the pen of Blades are his book length writings, they would be totally unaware of his enunciation and support of SE in the quarterlies.

The Percolation Period: 1994 through June, 2001

- I have elected to call the time period between the publication of *SHPE* in 1994 and June 2001 the Percolation Period. During this six and half year time frame many of the doctrinal/theological ideas that would later become part and parcel of full-blown SE can be observed in rudimentary form. It was in the second half of 2001 that Blades commenced his full scale articulation of what has become known as SE.
- I chose to begin this timeline with 1994 because it was the year that Keith’s most influential and well-known book, *SHPE*, was published. It was also during this time period that most of Keith’s book length works were authored. The only major exception is the publication of *Properly Handling the Word of Truth* in 2006.
 - 1994—*Satan and His Plan of Evil*
 - 1996—*Have You Ever Wondered What Heaven is Like*
 - 1996—*The Gospel of Grace: Make it Clear! Make it Plain!*
 - 1996—*A Very Simple Survey of the Bible, Volume I*
 - 1997—*A Very Simple Survey of Genesis, Volume II*
- As I said in the introduction, SE concepts and thinking cannot be found in any of the aforementioned works to any noticeable degree.
- Rudimentary SE concepts begin to appear in the thought stream of Blades with the first issue of the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly* that began its fourteen-year run in the first quarter of 1996 (as far as I have been able to determine). For the first two years (1996 and 1997), Blades ran four main articles, one each quarter. Beginning in 1998, Blades devoted the fourth quarter issue to addressing questions and answers submitted by his readers. This practice continued until the periodical ended its run in 2009. Between its inception in 1996 and June 2001, twenty-two issues of *EBQ* were published and distributed by Enjoy the Bible Ministries.
- Seedlings to SE can also be observed in some of Keith’s audio/video teachings produced and released during the time frame in question (1994 to June 2001). From the “Bible Study Resources” listed in the ministry catalogue published by Enjoy the Bible Ministries in January, 2000, five series of studies are worth noting.

- 1995—*The Adoption of Sons (A Primer to Sonship)*—while this three-hour study is not dated, I believe it dates from the 1995 Northern Rocky Mountain Berean Bible Camp. This is on account of the fact that *SHPE* was published in 1994 and Keith can be heard speaking about his new book in the first hour of teaching in that study. I believe that *SHPE* was published during the second half of 1994 and promoted at the 1995 conference. Then, during the first quarter of 1996, when the *EBQ* was launched – the first article was titled *The Adoption of Sons (A Primer to Sonship)*. This video series is spoken of in a footnote in the *Enjoy the Bible* quarterly in the second quarter of 1998.
- 1997—*Godliness*—is advertised as coming from the 1997 Northern Rocky Mountain Berean Bible Camp. The description in the catalogue lists *Godliness* as the primary objective of the “edification process” outlined in this three-hour study.
- 1999—*The Effectual Working of God’s Word*—advertised as coming from the 1999 Northern Rocky Mountain Berean Bible Camp.
- 1999—*The Effectual Working of God’s Word in Israel’s Program*—also advertised as coming from the 1999 Northern Rocky Mountain Berean Bible Camp. This three-hour study includes a study on “the doctrine of God’s ‘Jehovah-ness’ and grace.”
- A fifth series of studies that bears mentioning and is advertised in the January 2000 catalogue, is *Justification & Salvation: Or the Thief on the Cross, Is He an Exception to the Rule?* While this series seems to have had no direct bearing upon the themes of Sonship and/or Edification, it is controversial for its teaching on the justification of Old Testament saints. In this series Blades maintains that the saints of Time Past are justified in the exact same manner as members of the body of Christ during the dispensation of grace. In short, Blades asserts that works played no part in how Old Testament saints were declared right before God. The question of how saints in Time Past were justified continues to be an ongoing topic of discussion/debate among Grace Believers. This series of studies by Blades has been at the forefront in recent years as these discussions have transpired, especially within the Grace School of the Bible circle of the Grace Movement. Given the fact that it is advertised in January 2000, it is reasonable to conclude that Keith taught this material at some point during the late 1990s and that it was available for at least eighteen months before Keith began articulating SE in force during the second half of 2001.

Sonship Seedlings in the *EBQ* from 1994 to June 2001

1996

- The *EBQ* debuted during the first quarter of 1996 with an article titled “The Adoption of Sons: A Primer to this Wonderful Truth” (note the similar title to the audio series listed above). As the title suggests, this article captures the early thinking of Blades on “sonship” and “adoption.” The inaugural issue of the *EBQ* sets forth many sonship seedlings that would later flower into full blown SE. Some of these concepts include the following:

- *Definition of Biblical Adoption and the Difference Between “Children” and “Sons”*—“To adopt a child not naturally your own is only one kind of adoption. To “adopt” simply means to take something unto yourself and make it your own. Hence, there are other kinds of “adoptions,” especially in other cultures, one of which is the kind of adoption Paul refers to in Romans 8. In Hebrew culture, and even among the Greeks of Paul’s day, parents adopted *their own children*. When they did this they recognized a level of maturity that their child had reached and they no longer treated him as a little child, but began treating him as an adult. By this kind of adoption the child was declared to be no longer in a state of childhood. He had now passed from childhood into adulthood. He was now declared to be a “son” and no longer a child, and he was now going to be treated as an adult by his parents.” (Blades, *EQB* 1st Q. 1996, 1)

- *Sonship is Something That Must be Attained Unto*—“Here Paul cites this unique cultural issue of adoption so common in his day. As he says, a father’s own offspring is his “heir”. But for “as long as he is a child,” or is in the state of childhood, his father doesn’t treat him any different from a servant. He may be “lord of all” being his father’s heir, but he is not treated as such by his father for as long as he is in the state of childhood. Rather, in accordance with childhood and being a minor, the father deals with his offspring through the use of “tutors and governors.” The relationship between the two, therefore, is restricted and is on a puerile level. . . This “appointed time of the father” is the time at which the father “adopts” his own child. He declares his offspring to no longer be a “child” in the state of childhood, but now he is an adult, a “son.” He has attained unto sonship.” (Blades, *EQB* 1st Q. 1996, 1)

- *All Believers in the Dispensation of Grace are Sons of God*—“Again, this is the kind of “adoption” Paul is talking about when he declares that we in this dispensation of grace are now the adopted sons of God. Having adopted us God has put us into the position of adult sons. We possess “sonship.” He is not treating us like children. Instead, He is dealing with us as adults, as “sons.” . . . The provision to enable God to deal with His heirs as “sons” and no longer have to deal with them as “children” was made by Christ on the cross. In view of it, God could “adopt” His heirs and the glories of sonship could begin to be enjoyed by them. God, however, suspended His program with Israel and they have yet to receive the adoption of sons. We, the members of the church the body of Christ, are the heirs of God in this present dispensation of grace. In accordance with the provision God has made through Christ for sonship to be a reality, and in view of the riches of His grace unto us, God has wonderfully adopted us, putting us in the position of adult sons and treating us as such. We are not being treated by Him as “children” under the tutor and governor system of the Law, but we are being treated as “sons” (Footnote: Israel will receive the adoption when God resumes and fulfills His program with them upon the conclusion of this present dispensation of Gentile grace. See Romans 9-11, especially 9:1-5; 11:1-36). (Blades, *EQB* 1st Q. 1996, 2)

- *Father Becomes His Sons Teacher and Guide*—“Instead, having placed his child in the position of an adult son, now the father himself personally becomes his son’s teacher and guide. The father now personally assumes the remaining education of his son. This is something not only looked forward to by the father, but it is also a wonderful liberty for the son. Going from “tutors and governors” to being personally dealt with by his father is an issue of great joy and relief to a son.” (Blades, *EQB* 1st Q. 1996, 2)
- The main point expressed in the inaugural issue of the *EQB* is that, as members of the body of Christ, we are not under the “tutor and governor” principle of the law as Israel was in time past. In this regard it is very similar to what we saw expressed by Pastor Stam in his short piece on Sonship from *Two Minutes With the Bible* that we studied in [Lesson 143](#) (see pages 5 and 6). That being said, there are rudimentary concepts to SE swirling around the edges of the article’s main point.
- In the third Quarter of 1996, Blades published an article titled “Awesome Resurrection Changes”. This issue is significant because it contains the following clear statement that, at the time, Blades believed that all believers are joint-heirs with Christ.
 - “Right now we possess the standing of adoption, or sonship, and are being treated by God as adult sons, as Paul stated earlier in verses 14-15. However, when God ends this dispensation we will then have the inheritance portion of our "adoption" and will be manifested in that inheritance as the sons of God. Hence, verse 19 refers to "the manifestation of the sons of God." In accordance with this, the "redemption of our body" will not only involve mortality being swallowed up of life, but it will also involve a **number of other changes to our bodies commensurate with our inheritance as "joint-heirs with Christ" and with the special heavenly vocation unto which God has called us.**” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Q. 1996, 2)

1997

- Thematically, if the first year of the *EBQ* (1996) focused on the issues of sonship and suffering; in the second year (1997) the process of edification was a dominant theme. Two of the four issues released in 1997 focused on the theme of edification. These included the first quarter article titled “Those That Oppose Themselves” and the third quarter article “Have Their Conscience Seared With a Hot Iron.”
- In “Those That Oppose Themselves” from the first Quarter of 1997, Blades discussed the various ways that believers can oppose themselves and thereby hinder their own edification. Blades identifies the following three ways that believers can oppose their own edification: 1) opposition to the authority and power of the word of God; 2) opposition to rightly dividing the word of truth; and 3) opposition to edification itself. In a section titled “How is that done?” Blades states the following regarding how believers can hinder their own edification.

- “Just how is it that a Christian can oppose himself and hinder his edification? What comprises it? Simply put a Christian opposes himself when he thinks differently about edification than God does. In particular, when in his thinking he opposes the very things necessary to achieve godly edifying. Self-deception and self-opposition are activities of our mind. Hence, when we think differently than God does about the very things He says are necessary for our edification, then we oppose ourselves and hinder our edification.

Edification, of course, is a function of the word of God. Consequently, the things God says are necessary for our edification are things about our attitude and approach to His word. Hence, it is our thinking about the word of God and how we handle it that is the issue in whether we oppose ourselves or not.” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Q. 1997, 2)

- Later in the same article, Blades begins to tie together the issues of edification and sonship. According to Blades, one ought to desire their edification “more than anything”. In summation, Blades stated in part:
 - The third of the three ways that we oppose ourselves when it comes to our edification has to do with our attitude towards edification itself. It is evident that God places great value upon our edification. In fact, to say it that way is to put it mildly. For in truth God longs for it. Indeed, everything He has done for us in this dispensation testifies to this. Consider, for example, that in this dispensation He is treating us as "sons" so that we may be taught directly by Him. . . Without a doubt, God longs for our edification. It is precious in His sight. The question now is, is it precious in our sight? It certainly ought to be. **We ought to desire it more than anything.**” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Q. 1997, 4)
- In his third quarter article from 1997 titled “Having Their Conscience Seared With a Hot Iron” Blades uses the phrase the “process of edification” for the first time. In addition Keith’s definition of Godliness which later became part of SE is introduced for the first time into the thought stream.
 - “As "the epistle of Christ," the Lord’s very own words to us are written upon the "tables of (our) heart" by the Holy Spirit through the **process of edification.**” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Q. 1997, 3)
 - “With the renewing of our mind the Holy Spirit takes the authoritative written word of God to us and educates us particularly in the knowledge of what God values and esteems. Our thinking, along with the norms and standards of our conscience, are adjusted by the authority of the written word of God to us and brought into conformity with it. **We are then able to think about things as God does, know how to do things God’s way, and labor with God in what He is doing.** The word of God through the Spirit of God becomes the life of our inner man, particularly the vitality of our conscience. As such, therefore, we possess and are to operate solely upon the authoritative knowledge of what God says is right; what He says is truth; what He says He is doing, and the like.” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Q. 1997, 2)

- For the record, I am not saying that I do not think that edification is a process because I do. I just do not think it takes place in the manner described by SE.

1998 Through June 2001

- During the three and a half years between 1998 and June 2001 Blades was relatively silent regarding the subjects of sonship and edification. Of the fourteen issues of the periodical published during these years, only two issues deal with sonship and/or edification to any significant degree. These include the following: 1) “Gird Up Thy Loins Like a Man” from the second quarter of 1998, and 2) “Christian Ungodliness” from the first quarter of 1999. There is no mention of these subjects during the whole of the year 2000 or the first half of 2001.
- In “Gird Up Thy Loins Like a Man” from the second quarter of 1998, Blades uses the term “sonship status” two times, “sonship” one time, and “adoption” four times. In addition, he sets forth, for the second time, his definition of Godliness.
 - “Briefly put, godliness is composed of three main issues: **1) To think like God does. 2) To do things God’s way. And, 3) To labor together with God in what He is doing.** These are the issues that comprise being intelligently occupied with God. In being made godly, God created man to operate like Him and with Him in these three particular ways. . . Job definitely needed counsel. However he needed counsel that was true to, and in accordance with, thinking like God does, doing things God’s way, and laboring together with God in what He is doing. He needed *godly counsel* from that kind of “knowledge.” . . . By means of ‘words with knowledge’ God brought Job’s thinking into line with His own; enabled him to do things God’s way in the situation he was in; and gave him reason to rejoice in the fact that he was laboring together with God in what He is doing.” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Q. 1998, 2-3)
- The first quarter of 1999 saw the publication of “Christian Ungodliness” by Blades. “Christian Ungodliness” uses the terms “sonship” two times and “edification process” one time. Moreover, a third mention of the definition of Godliness, as well a brief but related discussion of sanction, can be found in this issue of the *EBQ*.
 - “Briefly put, with a make-up corresponding to God’s, man was created to be godly in three specific areas: **1) To think like God does; 2) To do things God’s way; and 3) To labor with God in what He is doing.** These are the three fundamental components to godliness, with the inner man issue of thinking like God does being the crux of the matter.

Ungodliness, by definition therefore, is the opposite of this. It is the issue of not thinking like God does; not doing things God’s way; and not laboring with God in what He is doing. . . Ungodliness, therefore, can afflict God’s own people. Through neglect of the Scriptures, improper or dishonest Bible handling, heeding false teaching, following

traditions and the commandments of men, and the like, saints can be ungodly. They can fail to think like God does; not do things God's way; and fail to labor with God in what He is doing. And this is possible not only in God's program with Israel, but also with us in this present dispensation of God's grace. . . In the opening verses of I Timothy Paul makes it emphatically clear that "godly edifying" is what God wants for every Christian. Godliness, therefore, is the goal of the edification process (quotes I Timothy 1:3-4)." (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Q. 1999, 2-3)

Conclusion

- During the years between 1994 and June 2001, the seedlings of SE were being planted via the writing ministry of Keith R. Blades in the *EBQ*. During these years Blades focused most of his teaching regarding adoption/sonship on the fact that members of the body of Christ are treated as adult sons in the dispensation of grace and are therefore not under the tutor and governor principle of the law. There were, however, certain conceptual and explanatory precursors to SE that had not yet fully bloomed in Keith's writings. During the third quarter of 2001 this would change and Keith would begin his full scale articulation of what has become known as SE.
- During these years 1994 to June 2001 Blades began to write and speak of the "process of edification" and began tying it in with his views on adoption/sonship.
- In the next lesson we will assess the impact that Pastor Richard Jordan and Grace School of the Bible had upon Blades as well as discuss the abrupt shift that transpired during the second half of 2001.

Appendix A

Sonship Edification Terminology in the Enjoy the Bible Quarterly, 1996-June 2001

The purpose of this Appendix is to breakdown the utilization of terminology that would later become emblematic of Sonship Edification by Keith R. Blades in the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly* between 1996 and June 2001. Please note that these figures include only occurrences of SE terminology in the main text of each article. Occurrences in the subject headings and/or article titles have been omitted.

Year	SE Terminology Used
1 st Quarter 1996—"The Adoption of Sons: A Primer to this Wonderful Truth"	Sonship Status—1 time Sonship—7 times Adopt—2 times Adopting—1 time Adoptions—1 time Adopts—2 times Adopted—8 times Adoption—20 times
3 rd Quarter 1996—"Awesome Resurrection Changes"	Sonship—1 time Adoption—5 times
1 st Quarter 1997—"Those That Oppose Themselves"	Edification—22 times Godly Edifying—9 times Edified—2 times Definition of Godliness
3 rd Quarter 1997—"Having Their Conscience Seared With a Hot Iron"	Edification—2 times Adoption—3 times
2 nd Quarter 1998—"Gird Up Thy Loins Like a Man"	Sonship—1 time Sonship Status—2 times Adoption—4 times Definition of Godliness
3 rd Quarter 1998—"Rejoice in the Lord Alway"	Sons—1 time
1 st Quarter 1999—"Christian Ungodliness"	Sonship—2 times Edification Process—1 time Definition of Godliness

Of the twenty-two issues of the *EBQ* published between 1996 and June 2001 seven of the articles contain SE seedling terminology and concepts that would later germinate and flower into the mature form of SE that we have been studying over the past five months. The following is a listing of the totals from this time period.

- Sonship—12 times
- Sonship Status—2 times
- Adopt—2 times
- Adopting—1 time
- Adoptions—1 time
- Adopts—2 times
- Adopted—8 times
- Adoption—32 times
- Edified—2 times
- Godly Edifying—9 times
- Edification—24 times
- Edification Process—1 time
- Definition of Godliness—3 times

Sunday, February 15, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 162](#)
[Sonship Edification: The Evolution of SE in the Writings of Keith R. Blades, 3rd Quarter of 2001](#)

Introduction: Further Thoughts on the Percolation Period, 1994 to June 2001

- Since last week when I taught Lesson 161, it has come to my attention that during the percolation period, Keith may not have been writing about SE but that does not mean he was not thinking about it or speaking to select people privately about it.
- I mentioned last week my wonderment over why the *A Very Simple Survey of the Bible* Series of booklets ended in 1997 with Volume II on Genesis. In the past, I thought, and mentioned last week, that one explanation for this phenomenon might be on account of Keith falling ill. Upon further reflection I am no longer satisfied with that explanation. Even if Blades fell ill in 1997 or 1998, it did not stop his production in terms of writing and preaching; he continued to produce the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly (EBQ)* without interruption as well as speak at the Northern Rocky Mountain Berean Bible Camp in 1997 and 1999 and 2000 at a minimum. I now believe that the reason why Blades dropped the *Survey* series is because something else was taking shape in his mind, i.e., Sonship Edification (SE).
- I have reason to believe that during the late 90s Keith was privately test marketing some of his sonship ideas even though he was not publicly teaching them or openly writing about them in the *EBQ*. The following is a short list of reasons why I believe this to be true:
 - Jeremy Shellman was very involved with Keith during the mid to late 90s and wanted to bring Blades to Arizona to pastor an assembly there. Keith visited the group and declined the invitation to relocate on account of his misgivings regarding the stability and structure of the group. Keith's refusal resulted in a parting of ways between Jeremy and Rick Jordan (Brother Jordan's son). This parting of ways led to the formation of Southwest Bible Fellowship by Rick Jordan in 1998. Rick reports that in the late 90s Jeremy was talking about how not all believers are joint-heirs with Christ unless they meet certain conditions. Rick believes that Jeremy was getting his views on joint-heirship and edification from his private conversations with Blades. (Phone conversation on 2/12/15 with Rick Jordan.)
 - On Saturday, February 7, 2015, I received a phone call from a brother in Florida who spoke of a recording that Keith sent out to certain people previewing SE and asking for their feedback. This Brother confirmed the existence of the tape with Mike McDaniel of Millennium Bible Institute in Texas. When asked for a copy of the recording, Brother McDaniel refused, citing his promise to Blades that he would not share it with anyone as justification for not doing so despite this Brother's offer to cover any and all expenses associated with the duplication and distribution of the recording. Brothers from Canada with whom I spoke had no direct knowledge of the recording but were not surprised to hear of its existence. According to these Brothers, Keith had been PRIVATELY

studying these things for quite some time and was apprehensive about sharing it with anyone before he began writing about it extensively in the *EBQ*.

- For the purposes of illustration, I view Keith’s actions with respect to SE as similar to the private screening of a movie or its limited release in select cities. Keith appears to have tested his ideas with certain people whom he thought he could trust before releasing his movie for full public viewing. This illustration fits with the general notion that ideas are developed and tested before they are written about.
- The bottom line is this – there are reports from multiple quarters of SE having already affected local assemblies prior to its full scale public unveiling in the second half of 2001. Just because Blades was not writing about SE in the *EBQ* to any large degree does not mean that the ideas were not taking shape in his mind and being made manifest in other less public ways.

The Influence of Grace School of the Bible

- Any investigation into the precursors to and development of SE in the mind of Keith R. Blades would be incomplete and unfair if I failed to note Keith’s long time association with Pastor Richard Jordan and Grace School of the Bible (GSB).
- Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Blades and Jordan, as well as other graduates of GSB, maintained intimate fellowship around God’s word rightly divided and shared the pulpit at various Bible conferences and camps. Brother Jordan identified Keith as one of the brothers who contributed to development and enunciation of the Grace Alternative doctrines in the late 80s and early 90s (see [Lesson 125](#) see page 4).
- Given his close fellowship with brethren associated with GSB it would be unrealistic to think that Blades was unfamiliar with Brother Jordan’s teaching regarding the Pauline Design for the Edification of the Believer upon which the curriculum of GSB is based (see [Lesson 122](#) pages 3 & 4, [Lesson 124](#) page 2). In a recent conversation with Brother Jordan, he expressed his recollections of discussing the curriculum structure of GSB with Keith during the early years the school classes were being taught, i.e., the early 1980s.
- While Pastor Jordan has NEVER taught or advocated for SE’s Proverbs 1 curriculum overlay (the notion that Proverbs 1 serves as a table of contents or curriculum map for Paul’s epistles), he did have much to say about the process of edification and the divine doctrinal design exhibited in Paul’s epistles. When Pastor Jordan reaches Romans 12 in GSB, he tells his students that if they were teaching the book of Romans in their own assemblies that upon reaching Romans 12 it would be a good time to consider teaching through Proverbs. This recommendation is made based upon the clear and basic principles for sonship living set forth in the book of Proverbs. In Romans 203 Lesson 3 Brother Jordan states the following:
 - “By the way, when you are pastoring a church, if you are teaching the book of Romans, right now would be an excellent time to teach the book of Proverbs, because Proverbs is

written by a Daddy to his son to teach his son how to live as a son. It is exhortation. Hebrews quotes it and says: I speak unto you as to a son. He speaks unto us as to sons. If you haven't read through the book of Proverbs enough to be familiar with it, now would be a good time for you to do that. You will be able to discern those dispensational-oriented instructions, because we have already studied enough dispensational things. Most of the instructions in Proverbs are not that way though; most of them are clear basic principles of sonship living.” (Jordan, [Romans 203 Lesson 3](#), 48-49)

- Pastor Jordan’s commitment to the notion of Godly edifying is clearly exhibited in the capstone course of GSB titled Ambassadorship. Ambassadorship 301 and 302 has much to say regarding the process of edification and how one can build an edifice of sound doctrine in their soul. Rather than making numerous lengthy quotations from Brother Jordan’s notes, the following chart presents the statistical breakdown of his use of edification terminology in Ambassadorship 301 and 302. Please follow the links below (the column headings on the table) to access PDF copies of Pastor Jordan’s notes.

Ambassadorship 301	Ambassadorship 302
Edify—1 time Edifying—8 times Edified—3 times Edification—33 times Edification Process—7 times Edification Complex—4 times Edifice—13 times Edifice of Doctrine—6 times Edifice of Sound Doctrine—3 times	Edify—12 times Edifying—6 times Edified—5 times Edification—69 times Edifice—4 times

- While there can be no doubt that Pastor Jordan borrowed some conceptual thinking regarding edification from R.B. Thieme; he NEVER advocates for the rigid hierarchical view of edification with its levels, phases, and checkpoints advanced by Thieme and later adopted by SE.
- On Wednesday, January 28, 2015 I wrote Pastor Jordan and asked him the following question; “Did you ever have a conversation with Blades about there being any connections between Proverbs 1 and Paul’s epistles?” The following day on January 29, 2015, Pastor Jordan offered the following reply:
 - “We did talk about the simple–young man–wise man–man of understanding progression matching the Romans–Ephesians–Thessalonian–Pastoral progression. But it wasn't anything like what I've seen them doing. Rather it was simply a recognition of the logical development of growth in maturity.”
- On September 1, 2014, after learning of my intention to cover SE as part of the Grace History Project, Brother Jordan wrote me and stated the following:

- “Hi. I noticed you said you read Blades’ quarterlies and were going to try and pinpoint the development of his SE thinking. It would be interesting to identify exactly what is meant by SE in his presentation. I actually introduced him to Rom. 16:25-27 as our edification design in the early 1990s (I think Richard meant the early 1980s here based upon other comments he made elsewhere.). **It seems to me his SE concepts are a tangent off of that concept that has run amuck.** The last contact Alex and John V. had with him (which was the last contact any of us had) he indicated to them that everything he had previously taught was wrong. No idea what that meant, but you might talk to them about it in your research.”
- Historically, the development of SE within the Grace Movement is best viewed as a **tangential development** that emerged from the Grace School of the Bible circle of the Grace Movement during the early half of the last decade (00 decade). Spearheaded by Brother Blades, ideas gleaned from Brother Jordan and GSB were mixed with concepts from Lang, Thieme, Hodges, and Dillow in order to form full blown SE.
- Last week in Lesson 161 we observed that seedlings of SE are visible in the quarterly writings and audio/visual teachings of Blades between 1994 and June 2001. It was during the second half of 2001 Blades turned a corner and began the process of enunciating SE in its mature form.

The Turning Point: Public Release 3rd Quarter 2001

- There can be no doubt that Keith R. Blades turned a corner towards the full proclamation of what has become known as SE in the second half of 2001. Multiple aspects of the 3rd quarter issue of *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly (EBQ)* bear this out.
- First is the explosion of sonship terminology found in the issue’s lead article “For It Were Better For Me to Die, Than That Any Man Should Make my Glorifying Void.” The following is a listing of the number of occurrences of SE terminology found in this edition of the *EBQ*.
 - Sonship—54 times
 - Sonship’s—1 time
 - Sonship Status—4 times
 - Sonship Liberty—32 times
 - Sonship Status and Liberty—8 times
 - Adoption—3 times
 - Adopted—1 time
 - Edify—1 time
 - Edification—12 times
- The following chart compares the total occurrences in SE terminology from 1996 through June 2001 with the 3rd quarter edition of the *EBQ*.

1996 Through June 2001	3 rd Quarter 2001
Sonship—12 times Sonship Status—2 times	Sonship—54 times Sonship's—1 time Sonship Status—4 times Sonship Liberty—32 times Sonship Status and Liberty—8 times
Adopt—2 times Adopting—1 time Adoptions—1 time Adopts—2 times Adopted—8 times Adoption—32 times	Adopted—1 time Adoption—3 times
Edified—2 times Godly Edifying—9 times Edification—24 times Edification Process—1 time	Edify—1 time Edification—12 times

- Blades utilized sonship terminology more in this one issue of the *EBQ* than he had throughout the entirety of the previous five and half years. From the 3rd quarter of 2001 on, every issue of the *EBQ* until it ended in 2009 is devoted to the development and articulation of some aspect of SE.
- A second reason why the 3rd quarter of 2001 signifies a turning point in the public proclamation of SE by Blades is because the Canadian mailing address for Calgary, Alberta falls off the publication. Every issue of the *EBQ* since its inception during the 1st quarter of 1996 contained a mailing address for both Canada and the USA. From the 3rd quarter of 2001 till the end of the *EBQ* in 2009 every issue contains only the mailing address for Matthew, North Carolina. While this might not seem like a big deal at first blush, I feel it is significant given all the pertinent information.
- Keith Blades died in July 2010. The following February (2011) Mark Newbold and Triangle Bible Church hosted a “Sonship Gathering.” At the Sonship Gathering on February 20, 2011, Mark Newbold and Triangle Bible Church presented Keith’s widow Noreen with a Medal of Honor Certificate to honor the life and ministry of her departed husband. As part of this presentation, Brother Newbold read the following citation that was written on the plaque.
 - “In recognition of his service to God, his heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, to the many who have benefited by his Bible teaching ministry as well as the Pastor and congregation of Triangle Bible Church, determining rightly that in order to function properly as a Bishop of a local assembly as described in God’s word, **Keith Blades knowingly and deliberately sacrificed his opportunity to communicate God’s word in a local assembly and instead isolated himself and dedicated every fiber of his being to the effectual working of and being properly edified in the matters of Sonship Edification with a view to functioning, not simply as an instructor of Christ, but as a father.**

Keith's deliberate decision to do so brought him undue criticism, abandonment of colleagues, threatened financial support, not to mention the sufferings of Christ by Satan and his policy of evil, all of which were keenly felt not only by him, but by his wife Noreen and his son Kenneth.

Keith's devotion and dedication to rightly dividing the word of truth to the sense and sequence of the doctrines of God's word and of Sonship Edification have resulted in the dissemination of Bible truth rarely displayed upon this earth.

The personal results of his laboring hard in the word were apparent to all who came into contact with him as his life bore the marks of one who was being conformed to the image of Christ.

Keith's generous and unselfish mentoring along with all that was accomplished by Enjoy the Bible Ministries has had a deep and profound impact upon the Pastor and the assembly of Triangle Bible Church, and reflect God's great grace and godly humble credit upon Keith, his family and the Lord Jesus Christ whom he so nobly served to his dying breath." (Medal of Honor presentation begins at 29:00 on the [video](#). For a written transcript containing the contents posthumous Medal of Honor Citation presented to Noreen Blades by Mark Newbold of Triangle Bible Church [click here](#).)

- According to the citation quoted above, Blades "knowingly and deliberately" forsook his ministry in a local assembly and "isolated himself" so that he could dedicate every fiber of his being to functioning as a father in teaching sonship edification to others.
- On March 31, 2013, a letter from Dennis Bray, the administrator of Enjoy the Bible Ministries was posted on [The Adoption of Sons](#) discussion board at the consent of Brother Bray. Brother Bray's letter reads as follows:
 - "Here's a summary of how the ministry came into existence.

Keith came to understand and appreciate "rightly dividing the word of truth," Paul's unique and distinctive apostleship, "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery," and the like, over 30 years ago. During these years he had the privilege of pastoring 3 churches and teaching sound Bible doctrine according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God committed to Paul's trust. **(His last two churches were located in Canada, where he met his wife and resided in his later years.)**

During his pastorate of his last church (in Calgary), a loosely-put-together extension ministry was in place whereby tapes and writings were made available for others who expressed an interest in the teaching ministry. This extension ministry continued to grow over time.

I met Keith at a conference in Montana in 1995. Excited as I was hearing him teach and being exposed to his "extension ministry," Keith and I established this extension teaching

ministry as a distinct ministry in the U.S., operated out of my home. I operated the ministry from the states performing the day-to-day operations and he dedicated all his time to the Word without distraction.

We decided the ministry to be a distinct and stand-alone ministry through which Keith taught God's word "rightly divided" separate from his pastorate. **He eventually left the church, dedicating his time wholly to this ministry.**

Since 1995, my wife and I have worked alongside with Keith to make those teachings available to others in video, audio, printed forms and on the internet. (This is why the ministry is located in North Carolina.)

We consider ourselves very fortunate to be part of this ministry
Hope this helps.

Dennis”

- According to Dennis Bray, Enjoy the Bible Ministries was formed in 1995 during Keith’s third and final pastorate in Calgary. It was the Calgary, Alberta assembly that Keith left so that he could devote the totality of his time to enjoy the Bible Ministries according to Bray and to SE according to Newbold.
- After piecing together to pertinent facts quoted above, the reason why the Calgary, Alberta address was removed from the 3rd quarter issue of the *EBQ* in 2001 is because Keith had left the assembly in Calgary to devote his full time and attention to SE and Enjoy the Bible Ministries by the time of its publication. This coincides nicely with the general timeline I presented in [Lesson 145](#). Triangle Bible Church audio #2094 establishes the following facts:
 - Exact Date Uncertain— Newbold learns right division and purchases Blades’ book *Satan and His Plan of Evil* on recommendation. Enclosed was a pamphlet listing of Blades’ tapes. Newbold orders the tape “The Battle on the Cross” and is so impressed with Blades’ teaching that he orders Blades’ entire audio library with assistance from Triangle Bible Church. (Triangle Bible Church Audio #[2094](#), 7/11/2010)
 - 2000— Newbold begins emailing Keith Blades with questions (TBC Audio #[2094](#))
 - 2001— Newbold begins phoning Keith Blades and recording the conversations (TBC Audio #[2094](#))
 - 2003— Newbold asks Blades to teach him everything he knows about SE (TBC Audio #[2094](#))
- The removal of the Calgary, Alberta address coincides with Keith beginning the public proclamation of SE.

- In summation there are two reasons (covered in this lesson) why the 3rd quarter issue of the *EBQ* from 2001 signifies a turning point in the ministry of Keith Blades towards the full enunciation of SE: 1) explosion of SE terminology, 2) the removal of the Calgary, Alberta mailing address. A third reason will be explored in the next Lesson namely the hierarchical view of edification that is set forth therein.

Sunday, February 22, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 163](#)
[Sonship Edification: The Evolution of SE in the Writings of Keith R. Blades, 3rd Quarter of 2001, Part 2](#)

Introduction: Clarifying an Important Difference

- Lesson 162 included a section titled “The Influence of Grace School of the Bible.” The main point of that section was to highlight the influence that Pastor Richard Jordan and Grace School of the Bible (GSB) had on the thinking of Keith R. Blades when it comes to the issue of edification.
- While I think it is true that Blades took the concept of edification far further than Brother Jordan and/or other Brothers associated with GSB, that characterization alone is not sufficient to capture the complete nature of what occurred. It is not only a matter of DISTANCE but also one of DIRECTION.
- Brother Jordan’s concept of the Pauline Design for Edification of the Believer is rooted in observing the connection between what Paul’s states will “stablish” believers in Romans 16:25-26 with how Paul’s epistles are organized in the New Testament cannon.

	Congregation	Pastoral Epistles
○ Scriptures of the Prophets	Coming	I & II Thessalonians
○ The Mystery	Church	Ephesians to Colossians
○ My Gospel (Paul’s Gospel)	Cross	Romans to II Corinthians
- Brother Jordan’s notion of how believers are edified in the dispensation of grace looks to Paul’s epistles to ascertain how the believer’s edification is going to occur, i.e., what a believer needs to understand to be “stablished.” It then explains the canonical order and structure of Paul’s epistles based upon Pauline texts such as Romans 16:25-26, II Timothy 3:16-17 and I Corinthians 3.
- While Blades was introduced to Brother Jordan’s thinking outlined above, he departed from it by forsaking Romans 16:25-26 as the pattern for the believer’s establishment in favor of appealing to the book of Proverbs as well as other aspects of Israel’s program.
- In short, Blades did not merely carry Brother Jordan’s ideas regarding edification further in terms of DISTANCE; rather, he took the understanding of edification he gleaned from Brother Jordan in an entirely new DIRECTION.

The Turning Point: Public Release 3rd Quarter 2001, Continued

- In Lesson 162 we covered two of the three reasons why the 3rd quarter issue of the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly* (EBQ) from 2001 signifies a turning point in the ministry of Keith R. Blades towards the full public enunciation of Sonship Edification (SE). The first two reasons included: 1) the explosion and expansion of SE terminology; and 2) the removal of the Calgary, Alberta mailing address.

- A third piece of evidence that the 3rd quarter of 2001 was a turning point in the teaching of Blades regarding sonship is the content of the main article titled: “For It Were Better For Me to Die, Than That Any Man Should Make my Glorifying Void.” Using the church at Corinth as an example, Blades begins to talk about Sonship Liberty 101, 201, and alludes to 301 at the end of the article. Sonship Liberty 101 includes the following according to Blades:
 - “The Corinthians knew the *basics* about our sonship status and liberty “in Christ” in this dispensation . . . they had been educated in Sonship Liberty 101, so to speak. And this being the case, they were immediately impressed with the issue of God treating us and dealing with us today as adult “sons”; and in particular they were thrilled with the personal liberties that go with it.

Hence, they readily understood and appreciated the issue of the liberty that is ours in not being “under the law” in this dispensation. They knew what it means for us not to be under the law’s ‘tutor and governor’ operating principle, nor to be in bondage under “the elements of the world” that it employs . . . they learned that God is not dealing with us today as “children” but as adult “sons.” They knew, therefore, that they were not given “the spirit of bondage again to fear.” But rather in receiving “the Spirit of adoption” and thereby “crying, Abba, Father,” they knew they were liberated “sons.” They, therefore, knew they were ones to whom “all things are lawful,” just as Paul repeatedly acknowledged to them.

Accordingly the Corinthians relished the freedoms of sonship, as they rightfully should. For the freedoms of sonship are truly wonderful and marvelous. There is no comparison between the childish things, limitations, and restrictive operating principles of childhood, and the adult things, freedoms, and mature operating principles of sonship. . .

Consequently, when the Corinthians gloried in the fact that “all things are lawful” for “sons,” and exercised their liberty, their initial delight and glorying was not unfounded, nor in error. And neither is it so when we do the same. However, though this may be true, the understanding, appreciation, and delight that we have for our sonship status and liberty should not stop here. For there is more to sonship than this. Much more. In fact, what we need to learn is that the liberty of having ‘all things lawful’ is merely the means for being able to exercise the ultimate purpose of sonship.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 2-3)

- So, the Corinthians had understood the basic principles of adoption/sonship found in Romans 8 and Galatians 4. The problem was that they had not moved beyond the mere comprehension and appreciation for their sonship liberty to the true goal of sonship or Sonship Liberty 201.
 - “Strictly speaking, our personal liberty as “sons” is not the grand purpose or the ultimate aim of sonship. Instead, once again, it is actually a provision through which the ultimate aim can be achieved. However it is a matter of further edification for us to understand

and appreciate this to be so. It is the issue of Sonship Liberty 201, if you will.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 3)

- In an attempt to illustrate his point, Blades compares the difference between Sonship Liberty 101 and 201 with a believer who understands that they live in the dispensation of grace but who fails to grasp God’s ultimate purpose in forming the body of Christ. According to Blades, a believer in this condition does not yet:
 - “. . . have the edification and doctrinal ability to glory in God’s “manifold wisdom.” This only comes later in our edification once we first understand and appreciate the basics. Thus it is one thing to know the basic fact or reality of one of the privileges of God’s grace unto us, and to glory in the fact that we possess it. However it is a matter of further edification to understand and appreciate the *purpose and design* behind the privilege, and to glory in this as well, if not more.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 3-4)
- In the mind of Blades the situation described in the above quote is exactly analogous to the situation in sonship.
 - “Now this is exactly the situation that we have with the privilege of our sonship status and liberty in this present dispensation. So if we like the Corinthian saints are only glorying in the fact that we possess sonship liberty, while at the same time not really understanding and appreciating the ultimate reason for possessing it, then we have much yet to learn.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 3-4)
- The saints in Corinth had become self-centered and selfish, according to Blades because they failed to build upon Sonship Liberty 101 with Sonship Liberty 201 (note the hierarchical nature of this concept. Sounds very similar to Thieme’s notion that the edification complex is not a house built on stilts but that each floor needs to be built before one proceeds to the next).
 - “They (the Corinthians) became self-centered and selfish in their thinking. As such they were exercising their sonship liberty to their own personal pleasure and to their own individual profit. With this going on, other saints among them who were weak in the faith, (not knowing what they knew), were in danger of being adversely affected by their liberty. Yet now what happened to the Corinthians was by no means the fault of the doctrine of our sonship status and liberty. The “knowledge” itself was not to blame. Rather the reason why it “puffeth up” was because it was left to itself. Again it was Sonship Liberty 101, but it wasn’t built upon with Sonship Liberty 201.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 4)
- Sonship Liberty 201 is related to taking the liberty that we have in Christ and not using it to serve ourselves but to “walk in the fullness of Godly love and charity” which is sonship liberty’s highest crowning glory, according to Blades. (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 2) The problem with the Corinthians as well as many believers today is failure to be “suitably impressed” with the unique privileges that belong to our sonship liberty. It is this lack of being “suitably impressed”

on the part of many believers that highlights the need for “further edification” in the matter in the mind of Blades. (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 2)

- “However this is by no means an excuse, or a justification, for not being suitably impressed, either for them or for us. Rather what it indicates is the need for further edification in this matter. For further edification that takes our understanding and appreciation past the initial stage of simply glorying in sonship’s personal liberties, to the greater issue of glorying in its highest honor— being a follower of God and emulating Him in our walk.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 2)
- Sonship Liberty 101 occurs in Romans 8 where “we first learn the basics of our sonship status and liberty” as part of “the doctrine of our sanctified position “in Christ.” Education in Sonship Liberty 201 begins in Romans 12 where “God beseeches us to put our sanctified position ‘in Christ’ into practice in our daily lives, including our sonship status and liberty.” In connection with teaching us how our sonship liberty is designed to renew our minds in Romans 12:3 “God gives us doctrine that teaches us to think with the same selfless love that He has.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 4) Beginning in Romans 12:3 we learn that “the grand purpose of our sonship liberty is not to serve ourselves, but to give us the ability by love to serve one another.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 5)
 - “Moreover as the doctrine of Romans 12:3ff effectually works within us it is also designed to produce an initial measure of wise perception and discernment in us, which is a characteristic also belonging to sonship. . . What we should come to realize through the effectual working of Romans 12:3ff is that our sonship liberty is the very means by which the epitome of Godly love and charity can be produced by us and put on display by us.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 5)
- According to Blades, until we become “profoundly impressed” and thrilled in our hearts over the realities of Sonship Liberty 201, “we are not ready for the further edification that belongs to Sonship Liberty 301.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2001, 6)
- If one were reading this issue of the *EBQ* in 2001, they probably would not be able to detect where all this is heading. Reading it now in 2015, with the benefit of hindsight, one can see how, despite making some wonderful doctrinal points, this article is carrying the thinking of Blades regarding sonship and edification beyond the 101 position he presented in the quarterlies between 1996 and June 2001. All of this highlights a key point regarding why SE is so dangerous. In my opinion, there is enough dispensationally correct doctrine embedded within the system that it makes detecting the system’s doctrinal problems difficult. In other words, it is not like denominational teaching where the errors are easy to spot by those who understand right division. This is not just my opinion but a sentiment that has been shared with me by many whom I have heard from over the past six months who were personally involved with SE.

Expansion and Refinement 2002

1st Quarter 2002: Do You “Cry, Abba, Father?” (Plus a few other related questions)

- With the 4th quarter issue of the *EBQ* from 2001 being devoted to the annual Q&A edition; expansion and refinement of SE in the *Quarterly* was reserved for the 1st quarter of 2002. The lead article from the 1st quarter of 2002 (see title above) was a composite reprint of “The Adoption of Son: A Primer to This Wonderful Truth” from the 1st quarter of 1996 and new additional information added in 2002. In fact, this issue of the quarterly opens with the following parenthetical disclaimer under the title:
 - “The opening portion of this article is taken from a previous article on the reality of our sonship status in the present dispensation. We are repeating it at the beginning of this article to refresh the memory on this important truth, before presenting some further aspects of it.” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2002, 1)

- The break between old material from 1996 and new content from 2002 occurs on page 3 with the heading “The Intimacy of Sonship.” It is in this section that Blades expands upon the notion of a father adopting his own child, thereby personally assuming the remaining education of his son. It is here that we first encounter the notion of a father instructing his son to labor with him in “his business.” (3)
 - **“The father now personally assumes the remaining education of his son.** And this is something that has been eagerly looked forward to by the father. He now gets to take his child unto himself in the close, personal relationship of sonship, which will involve him being able to do things with his child that he was unable to do before.

Specifically, the child is now in the position of maturity **where he is able to understand, appreciate, and participate with his father in his business. And with this being so, the father begins to educate his “son” in his business, and also gives to him the privilege and responsibility of working with him side by side in its operations.**” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2002, 3)

- In the section titled, “Crying, Abba, Father” Blades states that it is on account of understanding the “grandest of all sonship privileges” the prospect of “working with our Father in His business” that ought to elicit the cry of “Abba Father” on our part. (4)
 - “For nothing less than the grandest of all sonship privileges is set before us; the privilege of working with our Father in His business. And because our hearts naturally should be filled with abounding joy for all of this, this is just what “crying, Abba, Father” expresses.” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2002, 4)

- Blades uses Mark 14:36, the passage where Christ cries Abba Father in the garden before his crucifixion, to illustrate the need we have as members of the body of Christ likewise cry “Abba Father.”
 - “As both the “Son of God,” and as a “son,” the Lord Jesus Christ had been laboring in His Father’s business throughout His ministry. But now the hour was at hand for the operation of redemption. And in connection with His approaching involvement in this most demanding operation of all, He prefaces His prayer with “Abba, Father.” He thereby acknowledges and expresses to His Father His sonship status. And in so doing He professes His complete willingness to labor with Him regardless of its personal impact, and to see every operation (including this one) through to its end, just as an obedient “son” should do. This is why He uttered “Abba, Father.”

Once again, therefore, the issue of us “crying, Abba, Father” is the issue of us acknowledging our sonship. It is the issue of our joyful response to having now received “the adoption of sons.” **And if we truly understand what it means for us now to be God’s adopted “sons”; and if we truly appreciate the nature of our sonship status and sonship relationship to God, along with what it now entails both for us and Him; then our hearts can do nothing less than cry out to Him in joy. We cannot help but cry out to Him as “sons” to our Father, joyfully acknowledging to Him the glory of our sonship status, as well as joyfully anticipating each and every aspect of what our sonship life with Him has in store for us.** (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2002, 4)

- “A Simplified Prospectus of Our Sonship Life” section introduces its readers, for the first time, to the three levels of sonship life and education that are laid out in Paul’s epistles.
 - “He is actually educating us and training us in the operations of His business. And as this takes place with us, He also grants us the privilege of laboring together with Him in the things He is doing and accomplishing in His business. Moreover He does all of this in preparation for the day when we will be entering into the full and future aspect of His business, following the conclusion of this present dispensation of His grace . . .

Simply and briefly put, the sonship education and life of a “son” is composed of three major stages (see point about the endnote below). In total they provide for his complete education, training, and work experience, with respect to his father’s business. Accordingly in each stage a father educates his son in some particular issues pertaining to his business. And within each stage, as the “son” receives his education, he is trained in particular aspects of his father’s business, and is given opportunities to labor with his father in the day-to-day operations of that business....

And we too, as we receive that education, are trained in various and progressive aspects of God’s business, and are given opportunities to participate in it.

In connection with this it is interesting to note something about the structure of Paul's church epistles to us, i.e. Romans through II Thessalonians. It is quite easy to see, and commonly acknowledged, that they have a three part makeup, or are composed of three groups. First comes Romans through Galatians; then Ephesians through Colossians; and then I and II Thessalonians. And as the internal evidence of the epistles themselves shows, they possess a **clear doctrinal and educational sense and sequence** (also speaks of the sense and sequence of the Pastoral Epistles in endnote five) as we progress through them from Romans to II Thessalonians.

However what is often not recognized is that this three part structure with its doctrinal progression exists as such because it conforms to the issue of providing for our sonship education and life. The three groups of epistles set forth and provide us with the progressive education we need for the three stages that belong to our sonship education and life in this dispensation. And as we receive that education in its proper order, and as it effectually works within us, it takes us through the three stages of our sonship life, and we are thereby effectually trained in our Father's business, and are given the opportunities to labor with Him in the various operations of it." (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2002, 4-5)

- Blades concludes the 1st quarter edition of the *EBQ* from 2002 by asking his readers the following question, "Do You, "Cry, Abba, Father"?"
 - "For as the heirs of God (note that there is distinction yet between "heirs" and joint-heirs") and adopted sons that we are, indeed there is no life like the sonship life. . .

Hence in view of the incomparable grandeur of our sonship status, the original question in the title to this article now bears asking. *Do you "cry, Abba, Father"?* In other words, do you indeed know what it means to have received "the adoption of sons"? And does it hold the same importance to you that it does to God?

Furthermore: Does your joy as a "son" go beyond the issue of you not being "under tutors and governors" and not being "in bondage under the elements of the world"? Does it include you being thrilled at the prospect of being educated by God as a "son," and of actually participating with Him in the operations of His business in this dispensation?" (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2002, 5)

- In this issue of the quarterly (1st Quarter 2002) Keith does not explicitly tie Paul's epistles to anything specific in the book of Proverbs, however, there is evidence that the connection was growing in his mind. In support of the statement noted above regarding the three major stages of sonship education, Blades states the following in endnote #3.
 - "Cf., for example, the doctrine of sonship in the opening chapters of the book of Proverbs." (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2002, 5)

- As the following statistics reveal, the 1st quarter of 2002 saw a continued expansion of the SE lexicon of terminology. Debuting for the first time in the 1st quarter of 2002 are the following terms: sonship education (1 time), sonship education and life (5 times), father's business (5 times), and sense and sequence (2 times). The totals from this issue of the *EBQ* are as follows:
 - Sonship—47 times
 - Sonship Status—14 times
 - Sonship Life—7 times
 - Sonship Privileges—2 times
 - Sonship Education—1 time (1st occurrence)
 - Sonship Education and Life—5 times (1st occurrence)
 - Sonship Living—1 time
 - Sonship Relationship—1 time
 - Adoption—30 times
 - Adopt—2 times
 - Adopted—1 time
 - Adopts—1 time
 - Father's Business—5 times (1st occurrence)
 - Sense and Sequence—2 times (1st occurrence)

Sunday, March 1, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 164 Sonship Edification: The Evolution of SE in the Writings of Keith R. Blades, 2nd Quarter of 2002 through 2003](#)

Introduction

- The previous three lessons (Lessons 161-163) on the evolution of Sonship Edification (SE) in the writings of Keith R. Blades covered the space of time between the publication of *Satan and His Plan of Evil* in 1994 and the 1st quarter edition of the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly (EBQ)* from 2002.
- In covering this material, we were able to pinpoint the 3rd quarter of 2001 as the turning point where Keith commenced his full public articulation of what has become known as SE. In this lesson we want to consider in detail the 2nd quarter edition of the *EBQ* from 2002 as well as survey the major conceptual/doctrinal developments that appeared in the *EBQs* in 2003.

2002: Expansion and Refinement, Continued

[2nd Quarter 2002: The Effectual Working of Our Joyful Hope: A Primer on Romans 8:18-25](#)

- In the 2nd quarter of 2002, Blades introduced two major developments into the thought stream that have become emblematic of SE: 1) the distinction between “heirs” and “joint-heirs” in Romans 8:17; and 2) SE’s unique understanding of “the creature.”
- In the section titled “Our Sonship Status, Inheritance, and The Sufferings of This Present Time”, Blades takes up a discussion of the difference between “heirs” and “joint-heirs” in Romans 8:17 for the first time (in print). At this point, it would be good to recall that previously, in the 3rd quarter *EBQ* from 1996, Keith had taught that all believers are joint-heirs with Christ.
 - “Right now we possess the standing of adoption, or sonship, and are being treated by God as adult sons, as Paul stated earlier in verses 14-15. However, when God ends this dispensation we will then have the inheritance portion of our "adoption" and will be manifested in that inheritance as the sons of God. Hence, verse 19 refers to "the manifestation of the sons of God." In accordance with this, the "redemption of our body" will not only involve mortality being swallowed up of life, but it will also involve a **number of other changes to our bodies commensurate with our inheritance as "joint-heirs with Christ" and with the special heavenly vocation unto which God has called us.**” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Q. 1996, 2)
- In seeking to explain why a discussion of “the sufferings of the present time” (Romans 8:18) follows so closely on the heels of laying out the believers “sonship status” (Romans 8:14-16), Blades stated the following: “. . . it does this because there is a direct connection between those sufferings and a particular aspect of our inheritance as “sons” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2002, 2). It is here that Blades states that there are two aspects to a son’s inheritance – the first unconditional and the second conditional. As we saw in [Lesson 154](#), SE’s teaching regarding the

conditional nature of joint-heirship in Romans 8:17 is one of its key distinguishing features. This supposed difference was first articulated by Blades in his writing during the 2nd quarter of 2002.

- “Simply and briefly put, one of the first matters about which a father educates his son upon his adoption is the matter of his inheritance. In so doing, a “son” learns that there are two aspects to his inheritance. There is an unconditional part and a conditional part. That is, there is the part which the “son” inherits by default, so to speak, seeing he is his father’s child. However there is also the part that he can inherit by way of promotion, or reward, in his father’s business at the conclusion of his sonship education and training. Or in other words there is the part that is called “the reward of the inheritance.” This particular aspect of a son’s inheritance is tied to the issue of his response to his sonship education and his functional life as a “son.” And this the “son” can receive for having been a wise and honorable “son,” who faithfully labored with his father in his business. The son’s labor is worthy of a reward, and his father rewards him with “the reward of the inheritance.”

Now as it is with sonship in general, so also is it with us as God’s “sons.” Having declared us to be His “sons,” God therefore immediately educates us in the matter of our inheritance, as Romans 8:16-17 sets forth. And as verse 17 makes clear, we learn that we also have the same two aspects to our inheritance.” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2002, 2)

- According to Blades, a son’s being an “heir of God” is the default aspect of their inheritance and entails the following: 1) eternal life, 2) honor of living in his presence, and 3) a glorified immortal body. In contrast, being a “joint-heir with Christ” is an additional issue or aspect of our inheritance that is conditioned upon suffering “with him.” It is here that the “sufferings of this present time” (Rom. 8:18) come into play according to Blades.
 - “As Paul says, we are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” Being “heirs of God,” we are heirs of God’s life and all that belongs to the honor of living in His presence. And we will have all of this in glorified, immortal bodies. This is the default aspect of our inheritance.

However Paul also speaks of us being “joint heirs with Christ.” Yet being “joint-heirs with Christ” is not the same thing as being “heirs of God.” It is an additional issue, or an additional aspect of our inheritance. And as the remainder of verse 17 sets forth, it is the conditional aspect. It is conditioned upon, “if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.” And with this being the case, this is where the issue of “the sufferings of this present time” come into play.

Indeed as the Lord witnesses the occurrence of such things, and as He sees us encounter and experience them, He ‘suffers’ their existence, as well as our experiencing of them. He does not ignore them, hide His eyes from them, or pretend that they aren’t real. Instead He actually ‘suffers’ them. Yet He does not do this stoically, or fatalistically, or with mere gritty toleration. Rather He does so through the effectual working within Him

of a very particular understanding that He has about them. An understanding that is derived from the comprehension that He has of His Father's business and why they are allowed to occur. And with that understanding He Himself 'suffers' the continued existence of the effects of the bondage of corruption in this world, and He does so with patience and contentment. . .

Now once again, we as "sons" today have the privilege of 'suffering with Christ.' With this being so God is indeed honoring us when it comes to the issue of us encountering and experiencing "the sufferings of this present time." As His "sons" God is honoring us with the godly privilege of thinking like He does, and like the Lord Jesus Christ does, regarding "the sufferings of this present time." Our Father is granting us the sonship privilege of responding to them as His godly "sons"; of possessing His godly thinking and having it effectually work within us to produce the same godly patience, longsuffering, and endurance that He Himself has. This, therefore, is a sonship grace indeed, and one which provides for us to be "joint-heirs with Christ" in the day when God manifests us as His "sons," and establishes both Christ and us in the fullness of His business and its future operations.

. . . Rather, in accordance with our sonship status and our godly edifying, God has given to us a very particular hope that is contained in a 'form of doctrine' which He wants us to have operating within us. This 'form of doctrine' is set forth in Romans 8:18-39, and it begins with the specific doctrine of our joyful hope in verses 18-25." (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2002, 2-3)

- In the next section, "The Doctrinal Purpose of Romans 8:18-25," Blades begins to layout and explain what has become known as the Sonship Establishment portion of the "curriculum," i.e., Romans 8:16-39. According to Blades there is a specific "form of doctrine" with three distinct components found in Romans 8:18-39.
 - "Simply put, the 'form of doctrine' set forth in Romans 8:18-39 has at least 3 distinct components to it, the first of which is contained in verses 18-25 and forms the foundation. This foundation is the doctrine of the specific joyful hope that God has given to us in this present dispensation of His grace. And once again, it is the very same joyful hope that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself presently operates upon. As His "sons" God has designed that it likewise effectually work within us, and as it does for it to produce in us the same kind of *godly patience and content endurance* presently belonging to Christ." (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2002, 3)
- The "joyful hope" for a member of the body of Christ is found in "the creature itself" being "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God," according to Blades. It is in this section, "Our Joyful Hope" that SE's notion of "the creature" is first introduced by Blades into the thought stream. As we saw in [Lesson 151](#), SE's teaching on "the creature" is one of its distinguishing characteristics.

- “The joyful hope that is set before us is our participation in the fabulous glory belonging to the specific role and vocation that God has purposed for us to fulfill as His heirs. And that role, (which God has only now revealed in this dispensation), is that of us providing for “the creature itself” to also “be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” As Paul explains. . . (quotes Rom. 8:19-21)

“The creature” is the designation given to the body, or realm, of God’s creation surrounding the earth, which by the very nature of its creation actually has it being a creature type embodiment for the earth. As such it incorporates the heavenly realm with its living, intelligent angelic creatures designed by God to function within it. Designating it as “the creature,” it is descriptive of God’s intended function for that realm, creating it as He did with the earth in its midst, and designing it to be lively and responsive to His very presence and residence on the earth within the midst of it...

But now the creature’s “hope” has been revealed by God. He will not leave it “subject to vanity.” Rather, “the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” And this will be accomplished through some other “children of God.” Some others, who being God’s heirs, will be used by Him to provide for glorious liberty to be given to “the creature.” And those other “children of God” are us; God’s “new creature,” the church the body of Christ, in this present dispensation of God’s grace.

Such, therefore, is God’s glorious purpose with us in this present dispensation. Being His “children,” and therefore being His “heirs,” God has purposed for us to be utilized by Him to provide for “the creature” to be “delivered from the bondage of corruption.” And with this being so, the indescribable glorious liberty that this will bring to “the creature itself,” as well as the phenomenal honor that it is to us ourselves to be so used of God, combine to constitute our joyful hope.” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2002, 5-6)

- In [Lesson 158](#), I compared the “point of access” to SE with a bi-fold door; one panel being SE’s definition of Biblical Adoption and the second being the conditional nature of joint-heirship in Romans 8:17. Beginning with the 3rd quarter of 2001 and extending through 1st and 2nd quarter issues of the *EBQ* from 2002, three major issues take center stage in the public articulation of SE from the pen of Blades.
 1. Definition of Biblical Adoption—3rd quarter 2001
 2. Hierarchical notion of edification (Sonship Liberty 101, 201, 301)—1st quarter 2002
 3. Conditional nature of joint-heirship—2nd quarter 2002
- This matrix of ideas was the seedbed from which the rest of SE sprang forth and matured between 2003 and 2009 in the *EBQ*. Keith’s thinking regarding how edification is accomplished was the mechanism upon which the system of SE was anchored and hinged. The dual issues of Biblical Adoption and joint-heirship served as the gateway doctrines that paved the way for the articulation of the rest of the system. In short, the three issues identified above comprised the

bulk of the first three articles in the public articulation of SE that commenced in the 3rd quarter of 2001.

- Rounding out our consideration of the 2nd quarter issue of the *EBQ* from 2002, it is important to note that this issue is the last to carry an advertisement for the Northern Rocky Mountain Berean Bible Camp in Montana. Shortly after commencing his public teaching on SE, Brother Blades pulled out of all Bible Conference/Camp meetings on account of the fact that he viewed them as arbitrary because they did not follow the proper sense and sequence of the sonship curriculum found in Paul's epistles.
- Statistically, the occurrences of sonship terminology for the 2nd quarter of 2002 are as follows:
 - Sonship—11 times
 - Sonship Status—5 times
 - Sonship Education—2 times
 - Sonship Education and Training—1 time
 - Sonship Privileges—1 time
 - Sonship Grace—1 time (1st occurrence)
 - Adoption—3 times
 - Father's Business—2 times
 - Creature—18 times (1st occurrence)
- There were no 3rd and 4th quarter issues of the *EBQ* during 2002.

2003: Summary of Key Developments

[1st Quarter 2003: A Brief Look at Romans 8:26-27, at Prayer in General, and at Sonship Prayer in Particular](#)

- In the first quarter of 2003 Blades picked up where he left off in the 2nd quarter of 2002 in terms of explaining the three initial sonship doctrines set forth in Romans 8:16-39 (These verses, Romans 8:16-39, would later be referred to as the Sonship Establishment portion of the curriculum). These three sonship doctrines, along with their “effectual working,” are all explained for the first time on page 2.
 - “Simply stated **the first of these three doctrines, set forth in verses 16-25, is that of the joyful hope that we possess as God’s heirs in His plan and purpose.** It provides us with the proper, fundamental perspective on things that we need to have by knowing what God is doing in this present dispensation together with knowing our role in it as God’s heirs and “sons.” And as verses 23-25 explain, this doctrine about the greatness of what God is now doing for “the creature,” (along with our role in it), effectually works within us to produce the Godly virtue of contentment and patient waiting for the realization of our hope, especially in the face of any of “the sufferings of this present time” that we will experience.

. . . As already noted, **the second doctrine in verses 26-27 concerns the issue of our prayer life. As such it deals with the Godly virtue of engaging in consistent, intelligent fellowship with our Father through prayer, because we know how indispensable prayer is in view of what God wants to accomplish with us as His “sons.”** Again, this doctrine’s effectual working within us provides for the intelligent fellowship of prayer to be undiminished, and for us to be unperturbed therein, even on those occasions when we “know not what we should pray for as we ought.”

The third of the three doctrines, set forth in verses 28-39, is designed by its effectual working to produce within us the Godly virtue of confidence to boldly face, as well as to profit from, all things that we may encounter in this world. And indeed we should have such confidence, because in view of God’s purpose with us as His “sons” we know that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.” Hence come what may, the Godly virtue of dauntless confidence should characterize our outlook on our sonship life.

These three Godly virtues are truly fundamental and foundational to our Christian lives. Again when they are established within us and we operate upon them, we are equipped to respond properly to the details of our lives as God’s “sons.” We are equipped to embark upon the journey of our sonship edification and training, and to do this not only to our Father’s rejoicing and glory, but also to our own profit and benefit.” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2003, 2)

- The second sonship doctrine is found in Romans 8:26-27 and deals with “sonship prayer,” according to Blades. In summation, Blades states the following regarding “sonship prayer” throughout the remainder of the article.
 - “Being “sons” prayer should take on all that much more of an important role in our lives. One that we recognize is particularly integral and vital to our sonship edification, and that we make use of accordingly. **For this reason prayer is naturally spoken about by Paul in Romans 8 as soon as he begins to teach us about our sonship status. In fact it is our deep appreciation for the fellowship that we have with our Father through prayer, and for Him ‘searching our hearts’ thereby, that makes the intercessory ministry of the Spirit of God within us so meaningful and so comforting, when we find ourselves infirm not knowing what we should pray for as we ought . . .** This is not only because of the close personal nature of our sonship relationship with God, but especially because of the edification in godliness that God has for us as His “sons.” In truth, our edification in godliness demands that we have close, intimate communion with our Father. So if we deeply appreciate our sonship edification, then we should also deeply appreciate prayer. . . In Romans 8:14 the apostle Paul states the dominant feature that characterizes and distinguishes sonship for what it is, which is the issue of being “led by the Spirit of God.” (Quotes Rom. 8:14) . . . As such being “led by the Spirit of God” has specific reference to the nature of our education as “sons” and to the advancement that it

is upon the education belonging to childhood. And indeed sonship education and edification is advanced, for its course of learning provides for “sons” to actually become like their father, not just know things about him. . . . When a father adopts his child and he becomes his “son” the father personally takes over his son’s education for the purpose of his son becoming like him in mind, in lifestyle, and in occupation. Through direct, close, personal fellowship and communion, (no more “tutors and governors”), he provides for his son to emulate him and to be a help meet for him in his business. **Through personal teaching, fellowship, and communion he educates his son so that the two of them are of one mind in their thinking, attitude, and viewpoint; are of one accord in their manner of living and conversation; and are one in how they spend their time and to what purpose they use their talents and skills. Sonship edification at a father’s hands provides for a “son” to become one with his father, and for both of them to enjoy and delight in the fruits of the fellowship of that ‘oneness.’** Moreover that ‘oneness’ is designed to make it so that in every good sense of the expression it can be said of the “son,” ‘like father like son.’ This is the father’s ultimate aim. Now this is exactly what being “led by the Spirit of God” — “the Spirit of adoption” — is designed to do with us as God’s “sons.” It is the means by which God our Father provides for, and accomplishes, our sonship education and edification. Being “led by the Spirit” is the issue of Him leading us through a curriculum for our edification that has clear purpose to it; that has known levels of edification, training, and corresponding attainments to it; and that has a definite objective and end in view. . . . We are thereby progressively taught godliness by our Father and we learn to be godly; i.e. to think like God does, to live like He does, and to occupy our time and use our acquired skills and talents with Him in the operations of His business. . . . **Moreover our Father ‘searches our hearts’ desiring not only to have such a level of intimate fellowship and communion with our own hearts and minds and to rejoice therein, but also to monitor and to gauge the progress of our edification in godliness and to respond to it accordingly. He ‘searches our hearts’ to know them and thereby to be able to give to us what our edification merits. By the same token we also should engage in this intimate communion through prayer, because as “sons” we likewise should possess the eager desire to express to our Father what is on our minds or in our hearts.** As “sons” whom He is educating, we should want to prove to Him the effectual working of His word within us; tell Him what our mind is with regards to the issues of our lives and how precious His thoughts and His doctrines are to us. Moreover we should want to benefit from Him ‘searching our hearts.’ . . . Engaging in it should be close to, if not, instinctive to us as “sons,” as we desire intimacy of communion with our Father and His searching of our hearts thereby. Such is the basic understanding and appreciation that we as “sons” should have for prayer. Indeed the fundamental effectual working within us of the knowledge of our adoption as “sons,” (which ought to have us “crying, Abba, Father” in the first place), should initially produce within us the eager desire for having such a level of engaging communion and fellowship with God our Father. The lack of such communion, or desire for it, is just plain unnatural for us as “sons.” **So then we should not only crave being edified by our Father through His word to us, we should also crave intelligently communing with Him about it through prayer. Such fellowship and communion is**

virtuous to Him, and He desires it with us being our “Father.” We too, being His “sons,” should possess the same Godly virtue of engaging in consistent, intelligent fellowship with Him.” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2003, 3-6)

[2nd Quarter 2003: For I am not Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ](#)

- The 2nd quarter issue of the *EBQ* does nothing to move the SE ball forward. In fact, the phrase “sonship grace” found in the side bar section “From EBM to You” stands out as the only occurrence of sonship terminology in this issue of the quarterly. In this respect it is an anomaly in post 3rd quarter 2001 history of the periodical.

[3rd Quarter 2003: Are You an Optimist or a Pessimist?](#)

- After the brief hiatus from sonship that occurred in the 2nd quarter of 2003, Blades picked up in the 3rd quarter of 2003 where he left off in the first. In this edition of the *EBQ*, Blades seeks to explain the third and final “sonship doctrine” found in Romans 8:16-39. According to Blades, the third initial sonship doctrine is “Godly optimism” and is set forth in Romans 8:28-39.
 - “The third of our three initial sonship doctrines begins to be set forth in Romans 8:28. (Quotes Rom. 8:28) With this declaration, the apostle Paul begins to set **forth the doctrine specifically designed by our Father to effectually work within us to produce the capstone of the three initial Godly virtues for our lives — the virtue of Godly optimism.** Now the source of Godly optimism truly is the doctrine of Romans 8:28–39. For Godly optimism regarding our sonship lives is not something that we are naturally born with, nor become possessors of simply by virtue of regeneration. Instead it is something that we learn; that we acquire as part of our sonship edification. . . The source, once again, for our Godly optimism as God’s “sons” in this present dispensation of His grace *is* the doctrine of Romans 8:28–39. As noted it is the third of the three fundamental Godly virtues for our sonship lives to operate upon. By means of its effectual working it is specifically designed to produce within us the two basic components which make up optimism; i.e. (1) a positive outlook on life, and (2) confidence that there is profit to be had or benefits to be received from the details of life. And indeed these are the very things that verses 28–39 are able to effectually produce within us, and sustain within us, come what may.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2003, 3-4)
- In a section titled, “The Doctrinal Purpose of Romans 8:28-39” Blades teaches that the point of these verses is not to teach eternal security but to instill the sonship virtue of “Godly optimism.”
 - “Though producing Godly optimism is the doctrinal purpose of Romans 8:28–39, often times the passage is looked upon, and taught, as if its doctrine is about the eternal security of our salvation. This is unfortunate not only because this is not the true doctrinal design and purpose of this passage; but also because the real passage whose doctrinal purpose it is to teach eternal security to us often ends up being denied its full and proper effectual working within us. Strictly speaking, before we ever doctrinally arrive in the latter part of

Romans 8, God has already taught us about the eternal security of our justification and salvation. This is what the doctrine of Romans 5:5–21 is all about, and what it is designed to effectually produce within us. . . So then God has designed for us to emerge from the doctrine of Romans 5 with the fully assured knowledge of the eternal security of our justification and salvation. So it is then that when we doctrinally arrive at Romans 8:14–15 and are taught that we have received “the adoption of sons”; and when the Holy Ghost — “the Spirit of adoption” — then begins to lead us as “sons” by means of verses 16ff; He does not need to lead us again into the doctrine of eternal security, as if we had not yet been taught it, or needed to have it supplemented. The Holy Ghost has already taught it to us, and established it within us, back in Romans 5; just as it says. Instead when we are declared to be “sons” and begin to be “led by the Spirit” from this point on in Romans 8, He leads us as “the Spirit of adoption” that He is. He, therefore, leads us into sonship doctrines. Specifically He leads us into, (and begins to lead us through), the particular curriculum for our sonship edification that God our Father has specifically composed and written for us as His “sons” in this present dispensation of His grace. Moreover this curriculum for our sonship edification begins with the same ‘form of doctrine’ that a father is responsible for teaching to his son first and foremost after adopting him. A ‘form of doctrine’ that provides the son with his fundamental and foundational operating virtues, of which the third and final one is his proper outlook on life. This, once again, is what Romans 8:28–39 gives to us.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2003, 4-5)

- Keith concludes this edition of the quarterly by asserting that it is only when believers have the “Godly optimism” that this portion of the “sonship curriculum” is designed to produce within them are they able to do what I Thessalonians 5:18 instructs, i.e., “in everything give thanks.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2003, 6)
- By the end of his quarterly writings in 2003 Blades had laid out in summary form what has become known as the Sonship Establishment portion of the SE curriculum.

Appendix A

Sonship Edification Terminology in the Enjoy the Bible Quarterly, 2003

The purpose of this Appendix is to breakdown the utilization of sonship terminology by Keith R. Blades in the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly* during the year 2003. Please recall from page 8 that the 2nd quarter of 2003 saw the occurrence of SE terminology (“sonship graces”) in the side bar titled “From EBM to You.” Consequently, the table below captures the totals from 1st and 3rd quarters of 2003.

1st Quarter 2003	3rd Quarter 2003
Sonship—21 times	Sonship—25 times
Sonship Status—2 times	Sonship Education—1 time
Sonship Life—1 time	Sonship Lives—13 times
Sonship Doctrines—1 time	Sonship Edification—6 times
Sonship Prayer—4 times	Curriculum for Our Sonship Edification—4 times
Sonship Edification—6 times (1 st occurrence)	Adoption—8 times
Sonship Education & Edification—2 times (1 st occurrence)	Adopted—1 time
Sonship Relationship—1 time	Edifying—1 time
Sonship Learning & Edification—1 time (1 st occurrence)	Godly Edifying—1 time
Curriculum—2 times (1 st occurrence)	
Curriculum For Our Edification—1 time	
Curriculum For Our Godly Edification—1 time	
His Business—2 times	
God’s Business—1 time	
Adoption—5 times	
Adopted—3 times	
Edification in Godliness—2 times	
Edified—1 time	
Godly Edifying—7 times	

Sunday, March 8, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 165 Sonship Edification: The Evolution of SE in the Writings of Keith R. Blades, 2004 through 2006](#)

Introduction

- In the interest of time and in order to avoid the painstaking process of going quarter by quarter and year by year through the remaining six years of the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly (EBQ)*, in this lesson we will adjust our approach and seek to summarize the major doctrinal developments in Sonship Edification (SE) between 2004 and 2006 by adopting a more topical approach.
- Adopting a more topical approach to the time period between 2004 and 2006 merits a discussion of three general topics: 1) general advances, 2) sonship checkpoints, and 3) the father’s chain of provision.

General Advances: 2004 to 2005

- In the [1st quarter of 2004](#), Blades wrote an article titled “Loving God.” In this article Blades teaches that it is only through the “outworking and progress of our sonship edification” that believers “are brought into close, intimate fellowship with God our Father, and our love for God is able to grow beyond the issue of loving Him only as our Justifier and Savior,” i.e., Romans 1 through 6. (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2004, 6) In short, it is only through SE that one can learn to love God to the fullest extent.
 - “Yea, it is through our sonship education and edification that we enter into a love affair with our God and our Father, which makes it so that throughout the course of our edification and maturing relationship we are enabled to say to Him, “Abba, Father; I love thee today more than yesterday, yet less than tomorrow” . . . May it be that your love for God is indeed manifold; that through the effectual working of your sonship edification you are learning to love God your Father for the many reasons, and in the many ways, that we as His “sons” should love Him. But most of all may it be that you are not among those who, though saints, are “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2004, 6)
- “Looking at What You Cannot See” from the [3rd quarter of 2004](#) speaks about the “greater edification attainments” offered by Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. As the title suggests, this article focuses on the need for the believers to walk by faith and not by sight in order for their “Godly edifying” to be properly accomplished.
 - . . . ‘walking by faith, not by sight,’ . . . is an integral, indispensable virtue in our sonship lives, which only becomes more and more of an issue, (and so more and more of a necessity for us), as our godly edification increases and matures. Consequently we cannot properly live as “sons” to our Father’s honor and glory, or to the fullness of the effectual working within us of His curriculum for our “godly edifying,” if we walk by sight or senses, and not by faith. The plain fact is that the nature of our sonship edification

demands ‘walking by faith,’ with the result that little or nothing beyond partial establishment can take place without it.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2004, 4)

- A third general advancement can be found in the main EBQ article from the [1st quarter of 2005](#) titled “The Importance of the Effectual Working of Romans 9-11, Briefly Considered.” It is here that we find, for the first time, the sonship curriculum laid out using the following terms and divisions: 1) Sonship Establishment (Romans 8:16-39), 2) Dispensational Establishment (Romans 9-11), and 3) Sonship Education (Romans 12).
 - “Therefore in view of the vital, practical nature of the dispensational doctrines of Romans 9–11, it should not surprise us that God has Paul teach them to us immediately following our sonship establishment at the end of Romans 8. Likewise we should perceive God’s wisdom in having them immediately precede the actual commencement of our sonship education in Romans 12. For it should be obvious that before we can actually begin our sonship education in earnest, we must not only have it firmly settled in our minds that we know exactly who we are in God’s plan and purpose, but we must also know exactly where God’s specific curriculum for our education today is to be found in the Bible.” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2005, 3)

Sonship Checkpoints: 3rd Quarter 2005

- In the [3rd quarter of 2005](#), four years after commencing his public proclamation of SE in the 3rd quarter of 2001, Blades introduces the readers of the *EBQ* to the notion of “sonship checkpoints” with the publication of “Sonship Checkpoints: And the Issue of Us Intelligently Presenting Ourselves to Our Father.”
- Right out of the gate, in the article’s first paragraph, Blades begins to explain what a “checkpoint” is and why they are a necessary part of the “sonship curriculum.”
 - “Throughout the entire course of our lives as the “sons of God” that we are in this present dispensation of God’s grace, and as we are progressively “led by the Spirit of God” through the full scope of the curriculum for our sonship edification, we are regularly brought to a number of prescribed way-points, or designated checkpoints along the way. These are specific points within the progress of our edification at which the ‘measure of our godly edifying’ is taken, so to speak, and in a sense an assessment is then made of our fitness and readiness to go on. Since we are involved in edification — i.e. “godly edifying which is in faith” — it is only natural that we should encounter such checkpoints.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2005, 1)
- Clearly borrowing conceptually from R.B. Thieme, Blades proceeds to compare the believer’s edification with a building project that must pass various points of inspection before progress can continue.

- “Moreover we should not only expect such checkpoints, we should even desire them. For our sonship edification is both a building project and a process, just as the word ‘edification’ denotes. And as with any building project there is not only a blueprint that defines and describes the building that is being built, but there is also a construction plan that defines and describes the process by which the building is to be erected. Not only this, but the construction plan is broken down into all of the various stages of construction that are necessary in order for the building to be constructed properly. Moreover within the construction plan, (and in direct connection with the prescribed stages of the construction process), there are a number of scheduled points, or times, at which the building is inspected. It is inspected not only by the builder himself, but also by a qualified inspector, to ensure that the building is being constructed properly and to ensure that the next stage of construction can go ahead as planned.

Now these times at which the building inspector comes by are times at which he checks up on how the ‘edification of the edifice’ is progressing, so to speak. Hence they are prescribed ‘checkpoints’ that are encountered along the way as the building project takes shape. At each of these points, the inspector specifically evaluates the work that has been done so far at any particular stage in the construction process, and he determines whether or not that work has been done properly. If so, then the next stage in construction can proceed on as planned. But if not, then wherever he finds fault the appropriate steps must be taken to correct the faults before the building process will be able to proceed on successfully. For in an edification project each stage in the process is interconnected, making them dependent upon each other. Hence the success of each stage in the process is dependent upon the success of the previous one.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2005, 1)

- Given the similarities between a building project and the believer’s edification and progression through the curriculum, it is only natural to expect and anticipate the existence of spiritual checkpoints in the curriculum, according to Blades.
 - “Prescribed ‘checkpoints,’ therefore, are a natural part of any edification project and process; whether it be a physical or material one, or a spiritual or educational one.

Wherefore we should not think it strange to find a similar thing in the ‘overall construction plan’ for our sonship edification. For in designing and composing the curriculum for it, our Father has actually ‘drawn up a blueprint,’ so to speak, for the building that we are to build, and He has given it to us so that we can build the building properly. And in connection with doing this He has also incorporated into the blueprint/curriculum all of the various points of inspection, or checkpoints, that are necessary for us to encounter, (as well as to pass), in order to provide for us to be able to succeed with our sonship edification and to obtain the full benefits from it.”

Wherefore *sonship checkpoints* are exactly what we do find strategically placed throughout the curriculum for our sonship edification. And God, being our Father, has clearly purposed that we encounter these points of assessment. For they are integral

components to our edification. And being such, it is not only important for us to understand and appreciate them, but also to clearly recognize them. However it is even more important that we give heed to them. That we honestly deal with them. That we let them effectually do their evaluating work, and then be wise “sons” who respond to their assessment positively and properly. For our “godly edifying which is in faith” depends upon this. (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2005, 1-2)

- That Blades viewed Paul as being keenly aware that he was writing a curriculum is evident from his comments on the supposed “sonship checkpoint” found in I Corinthians 3:1-4.
 - “Now as was just said, the reason Paul limited his ministry to these saints was because he *had* to. He knew that the curriculum for our sonship edification demanded this. For the truth of the matter is that these saints had come to one of the early ‘checkpoints’ in their godly edifying, and when it evaluated them, they were found wanting. They failed to ‘clear the checkpoint,’ so to speak. They did not possess the necessary credentials, (or the prerequisite knowledge and understanding and comprehension), to go on. And Paul knew it.

For as Paul had said earlier on in chapter 2, though he had wisdom to speak, he only spoke it “among them that are perfect.” And that’s the ‘checkpoint’ these saints could not yet clear. They were not “perfect” yet.

In order to be “perfect” these saints needed to have all of the establishment doctrines of “the testimony of Christ” that Paul had taught them effectually working within them. And by their effectual working within them they needed to be brought to the status of being “spiritual,” as Paul goes on to describe in the balance of chapter 2. For only by being “spiritual” saints would they be able to deal with the specific kind of “wisdom” that Paul had for them in the next portion of the curriculum for our sonship edification.

Now, once again, meeting this criterion of being “perfect” was not something that Paul himself just made up, or imposed. Rather it is something that God our Father established. And He imposes it and enforces it in our edification, just as Paul goes on to declare as he describes the Holy Ghost’s teaching ministry within us as we deal with our sonship curriculum.

Therefore the *sonship checkpoint* that determines whether a saint is “spiritual,” or is “yet carnal,” is the particular checkpoint that these saints in Corinth failed to clear. And so since these saints were not “spiritual,” and were not ‘judging all things,’ (as ones who are “spiritual” would naturally do), Paul did not, and he would not, ‘speak unto them as unto spiritual.’ Therefore they could not, and they would not, be able to proceed on in their sonship edification until they were no longer “carnal.” Hence the reason for all of Paul’s reproofs, corrections, and instructions in righteousness throughout the whole of I Corinthians.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2005, 2-3)

- Blades considered the “sonship beseeching” found in Romans 12:1-2 as a “particular kind of beseeching” and the most important of all “sonship checkpoints.” It is in Romans 12:1-2 that God our Father checks in with his son to make sure they are “on the same page before actually beginning the son’s edification.” The purpose of this checkpoint is to make sure that all necessary “sonship virtues are in place” before a son’s sonship edification actually gets underway. This particular “sonship checkpoint” will “determine whether his ‘son’ is truly ready to get his sonship education underway or not.”
 - “If the “son” has indeed learned what his father has taught him about his sonship status and what it means; and if he has realized the grandeur of it all; and if he has responded positively to it so that he loves his sonship, and this has effectually produced within him a corresponding enthusiasm for his sonship education, and the commitment to get it; and if he has understood what his father has taught him about the power that there is in what he will be learning; and most importantly, if he has an appropriate measure of confidence and conviction from what his father has taught him so that he knows that if he will fully rely upon what he will be taught that he can succeed with his education, and that he can meet its goals and fulfill its objective; then he will *present himself* to his father as such. He will present himself to his father — yea, even dedicate and offer himself to his father — as an *intelligent* “son,” who understands what his sonship is all about, and who now wants nothing less than to get his sonship education underway. . . Moreover, by the time we arrive at Romans 12 we should also be possessors of the sonship virtue that fully realizes the measure of commitment, or dedication, that is required from us in order to receive, and succeed with, our sonship edification. Likewise we should understand what the overall work of sonship edification involves; what the blueprint/curriculum for our godly edifying looks like; what the stages of construction are; and what the purpose for the building is, both for now and for when this present dispensation is concluded.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2005, 4, 6)
- One of the article’s final sections “Clearing The Checkpoint” manifests the works based nature of SE.
 - “Obviously Romans 12:1–2 is a very important *sonship checkpoint* for us. And it behooves us to not only give heed to it, but to do so honestly; letting it effectually evaluate our readiness to go on, and then responding honestly to its evaluation.

Wherefore when we arrive at this sonship checkpoint, if we cannot *honestly* present ourselves to our Father as is described; if we do not clearly understand and appreciate what we are doing as “sons” when it comes to ‘presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God’; and if we do not clearly recognize that in view of being “sons” doing this is our only “reasonable service”; if we do not possess the measure of commitment that is required from us to deal with our sonship curriculum and to thereby actually bring about the renewing of our minds; and if we do not have full confidence in the effectual working of what we are going to be taught; then the truth of the matter is that we are not ready to go on. We are not *truly* ready to begin our sonship edification.

Rather we are actually ill-prepared for what it involves. We lack the adequate preparation for it, along with the proper measure of commitment to it, as well as full confidence in it. And we lack these things not having sufficiently benefited from the effectual working of what we have been given to learn particularly in Romans 6–8, and most especially in 8:14–39.

If this should be the case with you, then instead of beseeching you to go on, in essence this sonship checkpoint beseeches you to go back. To go back especially into the doctrine of your sanctified position “in Christ,” and into the doctrine of your sonship status, and into the doctrines that are designed to give you your essential sonship virtues and to fully produce your sonship establishment; so that you can learn what you have not yet fully learned. For just as with any building project, work on the actual edifice cannot begin, or should not begin, until the foundation for it has been properly and sufficiently laid. And the foundation for our sonship edification is our sonship establishment, which is what the effectual working of Romans 1–11 produces within us.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2005, 4, 6)

- “Sonship checkpoints” are “integral and important elements” to the sonship curriculum in that they scrutinize a son’s “fitness” to move on. They are therefore not to be treated lightly or dishonestly but rather a son should desire them and look forward to their evaluation as a necessary part of our sonship edification. (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2005, 7)
- Finally, Blades urges his readers not to settle for or accept the counterfeit edification offered by “learning a bunch of Bible data,” “learning Bible facts and figures,” “systematic theology,” or “a series of topical doctrines.” In contrast, Blades states,
 - “. . . our sonship edification is the issue of “godly edifying.” It is the issue of us being led by the Spirit of God through a carefully planned and constructed curriculum that was personally developed by our Father for us, and that has been specifically designed by Him to actually renew our minds with the very same kind of information and thinking capacity that operates in His mind, so that we ourselves can think like He does, live like He does, and can labour with Him in the operations of His business.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2005, 7)

Father’s Chain of Provision: 3rd and 4th Quarter of 2006

- Beginning in the 3rd quarter of 2006 Blades began writing a two-part article that spanned the 3rd and 4th quarter issues of the *EBQ*. The first part was titled [A Weak Link](#) (3rd quarter) and the second part [A Strong Link](#) (4th quarter). These two articles set forth Blades’ thinking regarding something that he called the “father’s chain of provision.” According to Blades, there are numerous chains that God is forming; the most important of which is the “father’s chain of provision” for the Godly edification of his son.

- “We actually function as a link in a number of different ‘chains of God’s forging,’ beginning right with “the gospel of Christ.” Yet the particular chain that we want to focus upon is one that pertains to our sanctification “in Christ” and to God our Father’s purpose in having given us “the adoption of sons.” Specifically we are concerned with the chain God has forged that provides for our godly edification, or more to the point that provides for the *success* of our godly edification.

Now God indeed has forged just such a chain, with each link being perfectly worked by Him and joined one to another so that the ultimate objective of our “godly edifying” can be reached, and so that we can both attain and obtain the glory thereof.

Howbeit in accordance with both the privilege and responsibility that is ours having received “the adoption of sons” there is one link in this chain that by nature requires *our* active participation and *our* input in order for it to function properly. In other words it requires a positive and proper response and function from us in order for it to be a ‘strong link’ in the chain, which can then couple its strength with that of the other strong links and so ensure the success of the chain’s job.

This particular ‘link’ is *ourselves* in view of being “the sons of God” that we are in this present dispensation of God’s grace, having received from God our Father “the adoption of sons.” And *our active participation and input*, (which our Father has designed to comprise the strength of our ‘link’), is the issue of our positive and proper attitude towards our sonship education and edification, as well as our proper response to it.

Wherefore if we have both the proper attitude and response to our sonship education and edification, then we will be able to function as a ‘strong link’ in the chain that God has forged to provide for the success of our “godly edifying.” We will then be able to achieve every attainment that is contained within its curriculum, and thereby be able to reach its ultimate objective. But if our attitude and response to our sonship edification is not what it should be, then we will be ‘the weak link’ in the chain, and as such we will fail to attain and obtain all that the forging of the chain has been designed to provide for us to attain. Hence in view of what is at stake with this particular chain of God’s forging, we should not want to be ‘the weak link’ in it.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2006, 2)

- In terms of providing for the success of our “sonship lives and edification” God our father has forged both the first and last links in his chain of provision. The last link was hammered out first when the father decided and purposed the ultimate objective of his son’s education and life. Meanwhile, the first link in the “father’s chain of provision” relates to the design and composition of the curriculum that God provided whereby he can accomplish the ultimate objective comprised in the final link. (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2006, 2) In the mind of Blades, Romans 8:14-39 describes God’s “chain of provision” for us as part of our sonship establishment.
 - “Wherefore we are given to understand and appreciate that every link in ‘the chain of provision’ for the success of our sonship lives and education has been perfectly designed

and forged by God our Father for us, and has been put into place. No link is missing, or has yet to be forged, or is faulty or inadequate.

Instead, from what our Father has showed us and has described to us we are to look upon His ‘chain of provision’ with great awe and admiration. Not only because of the perfection of its completeness, but also because of the superb quality and strength of its links — including the quality and strength of ‘the link of our sonship status,’ even though as “sons” we are given to know that the onus is upon us to live properly as “sons” so as not to be ‘the weak link’ in the chain.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2006, 3)

- Believers can avoid being a “weak link” in the “father’s chain of provision” by responding positively and properly to both our sonship status and to the curriculum for our sonship edification. Only by having the proper response can a believer avoid being a “weak link” in the “chain of provision.”
 - “. . . but we actually make ‘our link’ to be just as strong and enduring as the other links in the chain, and we thereby ensure our success of meeting the objective of our Father’s purpose with us as His “sons.”

. . . As stated, we function as a ‘strong link’ when (1) we respond positively and properly to our sonship status itself, and (2) when we also respond positively and properly to what we are taught by our Father throughout the course of His curriculum for our sonship edification.

Now of these two components to being a ‘strong link’ our response to our sonship status is the most fundamental. For if we lack the positive and proper response to our sonship status itself, it should come as no surprise that neither will we have an adequate positive or an adequate proper response to the issue of our sonship education.

Hence responding properly to our sonship status itself is not only fundamental for us, it is also a prerequisite to our ability to respond properly and fully to our sonship education. Therefore it needs to be looked at first.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2006, 3-4)

- “It is our commitment to sonship learning that more or less defines whether or not we have the positive and proper response to our sonship status that we ought to have and need to have, if we do not want to be ‘the weak link.’” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2006, 5)
- According to Blades, one’s commitment to “sonship learning” is not subjective or arbitrary but “plainly described in the Book of Proverbs where, in His program with Israel, God not only specifically deals in detail with the issue of “the adoption of sons,” but He also sets forth the general format for sonship education.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2006, 5)
- It is the 3rd quarter of 2006, some six years after the turning point in the 3rd quarter of 2001 that one encounters clear connections between the Book of Proverbs and how believers in the dispensation of Grace are to be edified in the thought stream of Keith R. Blades. Proverbs 2:1-5 sets forth “the kind of commitment to sonship learning that a son needs to have,” according to

Blades. The three commitments of sonship learning are found in the three ‘if’ statements of Proverbs 2:1-5. (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2006, 5)

- “With the **first** ‘if’ the foundation, or first measure of sonship commitment is described. Hence the father says... (Quotes Pro. 2:1-2)

Very simply put, our first measure of commitment has to do with our basic attitude toward our Father’s desire to educate us. And as stated our attitude ought to be one of truly wanting our sonship education, with no insincerity or pretense. It begins with us having the genuine willingness and desire to ‘receive our Father’s words’ and thereby be taught by Him. And then in connection with being taught by Him our attitude should be such that we also purposefully determine to ‘hide His commandments with us,’ having the sincere and strong desire to make full use of them and to have them effectually work within us precisely as He has designed.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2006, 5)

- “The **second** measure is described by the second ‘if’ in verse 3 of Proverbs chapter 2 when the father says... (Quotes Pro. 2:3)

In saying this the father describes how his son needs to actively participate in the sonship learning process. And indeed he does. For the very nature of sonship education and edification demands that the son have active interaction with his father in what he is being taught, if both he and his father are going to be able to properly deal with everything that the son needs to learn.

. . . We too, therefore, need to actively participate and actively interact with our Father as He educates us; as the Spirit of God — the Spirit of adoption — leads us through the curriculum for our sonship edification. And such active participation and interaction for us should especially involve us partaking of the God-designed opportunities that are built into the operation of a local church for the specific purpose of ensuring that proper learning takes place by all the saints. And also it especially involves us taking advantage of the privilege of sonship prayer, whereby our Father ‘searches our hearts’ for the very purpose of personally dealing with us about the proper understanding of, and application of, what He is teaching us.

Wherefore this second measure of commitment to sonship learning should also be possessed by us, if we are to have the positive and proper response to our sonship status and edification that we need to have in order for us not to be ‘the weak link in the chain.’” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2006, 6)

- “The **third** and final measure of commitment to sonship learning is set forth with the third ‘if’ when the father says... (Quotes Pro. 2:4)

. . . a son needs to pursue his sonship education and edification vigorously and with strong compulsion. All of the various aims and benefits that the father has built into the curriculum for his son’s education ought to be perceived by the son as being so important and valuable that they grip him with a compelling drive to possess them.

In other words all of the aims, goals, benefits, attainments, and the like, belonging to his sonship education, (along with the unspeakable glory of obtaining its ultimate objective),

ought to so captivate the son that no other desire or pursuit in his life equals that of getting his sonship education and edification.

Wherefore getting his sonship education and edification is to be a son's top priority in life. . . To put it bluntly, we ought to orient and organize our lives around the pressing need for, (and around the compelling pursuit of), getting our sonship education; and not the other way around. For in view of being "the sons of God" that we are, getting our sonship education and attaining the objectives thereof *is* our life." (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2006, 6)

- The second half of the article titled *A Strong Link* from the 4th quarter of 2006 is largely redundant and recaps much of the same ground covered in the first (a phenomenon that is not uncommon in the writings of Blades). Our primary concern here is with the very end of this two part article found in the 4th quarter issue of the *EBQ* from 2006. The last two paragraphs capture the works based nature of SE, God our Father and his curriculum cannot and will not fail, "they are faultless." Rather, if one finds themselves in the position of being a "weak link" it is their own fault because they are deficient in one of the three sonship commitments outlined above and found in Proverbs 2:1-5.
 - "We are going to function as either a 'weak' or 'strong' link in our Father's 'chain of provision' for the success of our sonship lives and "godly edifying." They are the only two options. However there really is no excuse for us to be anything but a 'strong' link. For the doctrine about our sonship status in Romans 8:14–15, and the following doctrines for our sonship establishment in Romans 8:16–39, provide us with the very means by which we can function as a 'strong' link. They are purposefully designed by God to generate within us the two kinds of positive and proper responses that we need in order to be a 'strong' link. Wherefore we just need to avail ourselves of them, let them effectually work within us, and thereby be the 'strong' link that we ought to be.

So then the upshot of the matter is this: To whatever degree, or in whatever way, we may fail to succeed with meeting any or all of the educational expectations and attainments that are in the curriculum for our "godly edifying," the reason for any failure cannot be attributed either to our Father, or to any of His provisions for us, or to His curriculum. For they are faultless. Rather any reason for failure lies solely with ourselves. Because the simple fact is that we do not have to be a 'weak' link." (Blades, *EBQ* 4th Quarter 2006, 6)

Sunday, March 15, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 166 Sonship Edification: The Evolution of SE in the Writings of Keith R. Blades, 2007 through 2009](#)

Introduction

- In Lesson 165 we summarized the major developments in Sonship Edification (SE) from the pen of Keith R. Blades between 2004 and 2006. In doing so we noted the first clear usage of the terms Sonship Establishment (Romans 8:16-39), Dispensational Establishment (Romans 9-11), and Sonship Education (Romans 12) to delineate the various sections of the “curriculum” (1st Quarter 2005). The bulk of Lesson 165 was devoted to surveying the following major developments: 1) the discussion of “checkpoints” in the curriculum (3rd Quarter 2005), and 2) the Father’s Chain of Provision (3rd and 4th Quarters of 2006).
- In this lesson we want to conclude our discussion of the evolution of SE in the writings of Keith R. Blades by surveying the major developments in SE thinking observable in the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterly* (*EBQ*) between 2007 and 2009.

2007

[1st Quarter 2007: Suitably Impressed and Unimpressed](#)

- In this issue of the *EBQ*, Blades expands upon issues that are already in the thought stream – such as “the creature” and the curriculum’s ability to provide “vocational education and training” and equip believers to bring “functional life” to the creature.
 - “Wherefore our sonship education and edification is actually *highly specialized vocational education and training for us*. It is preparing us to occupy the various positions of intelligentsia of “the creature,” and in so doing to become its functional life-force for God.

Now with this being the case, each aim and goal of our sonship education is naturally a vital and integral part of the vocational education and training that we need as God’s “new creature.” For first of all each of them instills us with required knowledge and understanding that we need for being able to be the intelligence of “the creature.” By doing this, they then in turn provide us with the various capacities and abilities that we will need in order to carry out the creature’s functional life.

Accordingly, therefore, each one of our educational goals and objectives serves to provide us with the acquisition of the highly specialized knowledge, skills, and skillsets that we will need in order to be able to intelligently function in the various positions of intelligentsia belonging to “the creature,” and thereby be able to properly direct and implement its governmental administration of the heavenly places, and produce the functional life thereof.” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2007, 1)

- According to Blades, only Sonship Education by the Father’s curriculum prepares believers for their heavenly vocation and conforms them to the image of Christ.
 - “In other words, as we progress through our curriculum, and as each educational aim and objective that we achieve effectually prepares us and trains us for our vocation in the heavenly places, each one also corresponds with a recognizable aspect of the Lord Jesus Christ’s own glorious character and image in accordance with “godly edifying.” Hence our attainment of each aim effectually generates in us an identifiable feature or characteristic belonging to God’s own glorious character, and it actually puts it on display. . . . And indeed this should be so. For as our “godly edifying” generates within us the components of godliness — Godly thinking, Godly behaviour, and Godly labour — it is also naturally designed to generate within us the very same thoughts, reactions, and responses that our Father has towards things that displease Him, or that are contrary to Him and to His desire for us. Or more to the point, as our sonship edification conforms us to the image of God’s Son and prepares us for our vocation as God’s “new creature,” by nature it is also designed to generate within us the same attitude of contempt and disregard, (and even disdain), that God Himself has towards things that are purposefully ungodly and/or that are deliberately at odds with His desire to educate us as His “sons.”” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2007, 3)

- Believers get in the way of their own edification and become their own stumbling block when they fail to be “suitably impressed with what God our Father” teaches in his curriculum.
 - “As we progress through the curriculum for our sonship education we are actually taught to become unimpressed with a number of things, (with some being easier for us to have contempt for and/or disregard than others). But those that we are taught about at the outset, and during the early stages of our “godly edifying,” are the ones which it is most needful for us to condemn. This is particularly so when we realize that if we do not become suitably unimpressed with them at the time that God teaches us about them, then they can become formidable stumbling blocks and hindrances to our ability to make proper progress in our sonship education. . . . Therefore when we fail to become *suitably unimpressed* with what God our Father tells us that He discounts, denounces, or condemns, we ourselves can then become our own stumbling block, even our own worst enemy. For by having improper regard for something that God condemns, we actually carry around in our own minds the very means by which we can be tripped up, or sidetracked, or misled, or seduced, and thereby have the progress of our “godly edifying” impeded. And unfortunately we also carry around in our minds built in resistance to being able to honestly perceive and admit that we ourselves are actually hindering our own “godly edifying.”” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2007, 4)

 - “So then along with us being *suitably impressed* with each of the aims, goals, and objectives of our sonship education, our Father has also definitely designed that we become *suitably unimpressed* with some other things; especially anything that can either clearly or surreptitiously work against the success of our “godly edifying.”

Wherefore it not only behooves us to make sure that we are *suitably unimpressed* with the few fundamental things that have been mentioned, but that we are also unimpressed with all similar type things. For if we are “sons” who want to ensure the success of our sonship education, we too should be able to say with our apostle Paul (Quotes Phil. 3:8).” (Blades, *EBQ* 1st Quarter 2007, 6)

2nd and 3rd Quarter 2007: [Straitened in Our Own Bowels: A Brief Look at this Troublesome Ailment, Including Its Cause and Cure](#)

- The 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2007 saw the publication of another two part feature article – same as in the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2006. The subject matter is taken from II Corinthians 6:11-13 and dealt with the cause and cure for being “straitened in your own bowels.” Regarding this topic Blades stated, “Just as the health and proper functioning of our physical bowels are vital to the welfare of our physical lives, so the health and proper functioning of *the bowels of our inner man* are vital to the welfare of our sonship lives and to our godly edifying in this present dispensation of God’s grace.” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2007, 1)
- According to Blades, the “bowels of our inner man” are the seat of our sensitivity, affection, and emotional response to what we face in life, based upon our personal likes and dislikes. They figuratively parallel how our physical bowels are very sensitive to our affections and emotions, and are expressive of them. So our inner bowels refer to our sensitivity to things we encounter in our lives, and to our response to them, based upon whether or not we like what we encounter, or agree with them, or find pleasure in them, or are touched by them, etc. (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2007, 1-2)
- As with everything else, Blades ultimately ties all this back into sonship. As one matriculates through the curriculum, God our Father works to make it so that *we like what He likes*, and so that *we dislike what He dislikes*. Or in other words, He works to make our ‘likes and dislikes,’ (which govern our bowels), to be the very same as His own ‘likes and dislikes.’ (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2007, 3)
 - “In short, in accordance with His purpose of conforming us to the image of His Son, our Father works to make it so that we have “the bowels of Jesus Christ.” He therefore works to give us the Lord Jesus Christ’s ‘likes and dislikes,’ and thereby cause us to have the same bowels of sensitivity, affection, and emotional responsiveness to His will and desires for us in our sonship lives as that which belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ in His sonship. . . Whenever we find some aspect about our conformity to the image of Christ to be unpleasant to us, or offensive, or disagreeable; or when we are disinterested in it, or are less-than-enthusiastic about it; and we decide to resist it, or ignore it, or somehow avoid it; then we have become straitened in our own bowels towards our Father’s expressed will and desire for us. Our own ‘likes and dislikes’ cause us to object to some aspect of our Father’s expressed desire for us, and so we straiten our dealings with Him because of it; limiting or confining our cooperation with Him to those things with which we have no objection. This, once again, is the gist of what it means for us to be *straitened in our own bowels*. And from this brief description we also can see that it is a *self-induced ailment*.” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2007, 3)

- The question of whether or not a saint has cried Abba, Father is paramount in determining whether or not they are straitened in their own bowels, according to Blades. The crying of Abba, Father, though, does not pertain simply to having understood and appreciated the liberties and privileges but the full pursuit of the curriculum and its rewards.
 - “Therefore do you “cry, Abba, Father” regarding obtaining your sonship education and edification, knowing that it is your vocational education and training for the glorious eternal vocation your Father has for you in His business? And since this is so, are you pursuing your “godly edifying” with earnest zeal, esteeming it to be your most worthwhile and needful pursuit, and cherishing its incomparable rewards and benefits more than what this world can offer you?” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2007, 5)
- Regarding this situation, Blades asks his readers whether or not Proverbs 3:13-15 is true for them.
 - “Are your bowels receptive to this? Does this *truly* constitute part of the ‘table of likes and dislikes’ of your heart? Or are you more happy ‘finding’ and ‘getting’ things in your life other than your sonship education, or in preference to it? Do you prefer ‘the merchandise of silver’ and ‘the gain of gold’ to the merchandise and gain that your Father has designed for you to purchase by means of your sonship education? Does the value you place upon getting your sonship education testify that the saying ‘all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her’ is true of you?” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2007, 5)
- [“The Cure for Being Straitened in Our Own Bowels: The Conclusion to our Two-part Article on this Troublesome Ailment”](#) is the topic of the 3rd quarter issue from 2007. “Since the cause of the ailment is having a heart whose ‘table of likes and dislikes’ does not properly or fully conform to our Father’s own ‘likes and dislikes’ for us as His “sons,” then, obviously, the cure lies in remedying this discrepancy.” Consequently, the cure “lies in us being honest with ourselves and with our Father, and undergoing *a heart operation* to fix the discrepancy between our heart’s ‘likes and dislikes’ and those of our Father,” according to Blades. (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2007, 1)
- So the cure for being straitened in your own bowels is to have “an enlarged heart” according to II Cor. 6:11-13 and Proverbs 23:36. Once again, this heart enlarging cure prescribed by Blades comes at the hands of a proper response and application of the sonship curriculum.
 - Now this is the very kind of ‘heart enlargement’ that is naturally supposed to occur in sonship. For after a father gives his child “the adoption of sons,” his son is then expected to begin to ‘enlarge his heart’ by starting to fill it with the content of his father’s heart. Moreover this enlarging of the son’s heart is something that takes place on a regular on-going basis throughout his sonship education and edification. . . . But having now brought his son to a significant juncture in his sonship education, the father specifically works to ‘enlarge’ his son’s heart some more so that he will earnestly desire to partake of the next advancement in his sonship edification and life.

The father does this to make it so that his son will *strongly* desire the next step in his sonship life, especially in preference to certain powerful worldly desires and seductions which his son will face. For the father knows that not only could these temptations seriously interfere with his son’s sonship edification if his heart inclines unto them, but

they could also derail it, even destroying his son's ability to go on." (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2007, 2)

- "Therefore in connection with our sonship status itself, if we are straitened in our bowels at the issue of properly applying ourselves to getting our sonship education, (i.e. if we prefer other pursuits in life to that of getting our sonship education; or if we are more happy having the merchandise of this world rather than the merchandise of sonship wisdom; or if we prefer the world's definition for 'living life to the fullest' to that of God's definition; or in short, if we are in any sense "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God"), then our heart needs the most basic form of 'enlargement.' For we clearly are not as passionate about our sonship status as we should be." (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2007, 3)
- For those who are straitened in their own bowels with respect to the "sufferings of Christ" Blades prescribes the exhortation in Proverbs 1:7-9 as the cure for being suitably unimpressed with the things of the world that hamper a son's education and matriculation through the curriculum. A wise son should be pursuing after his sonship education and vocational training so as to qualify for the "creature's positions of intelligentsia. In short, believers ought to be seeking after the acquisition of "creature-skills" as well as "creature capacities and abilities" that only come through the curriculum. (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2007, 4)
- The enlarging of a son's heart is provided for at "strategic points throughout the course of our sonship education and lives." One such strategic point is when a son becomes "eligible to partake of any of prescribed sonship sufferings." The cure for being straitened in our bowels with respect to our sonship sufferings resides with a son "learning to be impressed with just how great an honor and a privilege it is for us to partake of the suffering. And then once we are suitably impressed with the privilege, our heart can begin the process of being enlarged." (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2007, 5)
- In conclusion to this two-part article Blades wrote:
 - "However knowing what the cure is and having it readily available to us does not do us any real good, *if we do not take it*. What's more, in accordance with being adult "sons," it is *our responsibility* to avail ourselves of the cure.

So then if you are straitened in your own bowels at any of the demands of sonship living, or at the sonship grace of suffering for godliness' sake, or at partaking of any of "the sufferings of Christ," (or for that matter at any aspect of our Father's will and desire for us as His "sons"), do not resign yourself to 'just live with it.' For this is neither a harmless nor a merely inconvenient ailment to have. Instead it truly can, and it truly does, wreck havoc with our sonship lives. And it will not go away, or get better, on its own.

Therefore, be a wise son and take the cure." (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2007, 7)

2008

- In 2008 Keith published a three part series in the *EBQ* on the subject of *Acquiring Godly Love and Charity*. This series was advertised as a "follow-up to [Are You Being Taught of God to Love](#)

[One Another](#) from the 2nd quarter of 2006 (See small print under the title). The three articles that comprised this study include:

- [Acquiring Godly Love and Charity](#)—1st Quarter 2008
 - [Being Firmly Rooted and Established in Godly Love](#)—2nd Quarter 2008
 - [Ready for the Growth and Development of Godly Love and Charity](#)—3rd Quarter 2008
- After conducting a thorough reading of the *EBQs* from 2008, I have concluded that there is substantively no new thinking added to the SE thought stream in these issues of the quarterly. As always, they have much to say about a son being expected to “intelligently track” his “progress” through the curriculum for his sonship education. The local church is mentioned for the second time as being a “trade school” that affords his adopted sons a chance to engage in our Father’s operations as well as acquire and exercise the various vocational skills and abilities received from sonship education.
 - Throughout the course of my research I have heard from multiple witnesses that Keith came down out of Canada in August of 2008 and made an unanticipated appearance at the 2008 Northern Rocky Mountain Berean Bible Camp after many years of not attending. The Northwest Grace Conference’s website confirms that the theme of the camp that year was [Pressing Towards the Mark: How to Participate in Your Own Edification](#). Given that the topic that summer was “edification” it is natural to see why Blades would have been interested in checking it out. The speakers that year were John Verstegen and Alex Kurz.
 - It is commonly reported by those who were in attendance, including Brothers Verstegen and Kurz, that Keith met with some saints one afternoon while others went on an outing. During this meeting Keith expressed the useless value of the topical teaching format of the camp because it did not follow the sense and sequence of the sonship curriculum found in Paul’s epistles. Many of these saints reported having been deeply troubled by the things Keith said at this impromptu meeting.
 - Brother Jordan told me in one of our conversations that the last contact anyone associated with Grace School of the Bible had with Keith was at the Bible Camp in Montana in August of 2008.

2009

- There was no *EBQ* for the 1st quarter of 2009. The 2nd quarter issue contained the following statement in an announcement sidebar titled “From EBM To You:”
 - “Due to Keith’s situation, we did not attempt to publish a first quarter edition of the ETB Quarterly. And even though he has some life-style adjustments to make, and also has a few complications that need to be dealt with, with this second quarter edition we hope to resume publishing the Quarterly on our regular schedule.” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2009, 2)
- The lead story from the 2nd quarter of 2009 was titled “[Do You Have the Dew of Your Youth? A Brief Look at this Vital Need](#)” In this article Blades maintains the decisions made by a son in his sonship youth will shape the nature of his or her adult sonship life.

- “Now there is no context in which the time of youth is more meaningful, (and during which there is more at stake), than in the context of our sonship status in this present dispensation of God’s grace. And so when it comes to us making the kinds of decisions and choices that determine what our adult sonship lives will be like, there are none more important than those that we are given to make at the outset of our sonship youth when God our Father provides for us to acquire *our proper and necessary sonship virtues*.

For our sonship virtues are what effectually shape, determine, and ensure what the quality and worth of our sonship living will be. And as such they are vital and powerful virtues, which when we acquire them and operate upon them they function as *the dew of our youth*.” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2009, 2)

- It is at the outset of one’s sonship youth that he is given to acquire “the dew of their youth.” Specifically it is during the sonship orientation and establishment provided in Romans 8:14-39, “that our Father provides for us to acquire our proper and necessary sonship virtues with their dew-like qualities.” The dew of one’s sonship youth is provided for by the three main components of sonship established in Romans 8:16-39. The three components include:

- “(1) the virtue of *being devoted to getting our vocational education come what may, as well as being committed to becoming proficient in carrying out the operations of our Father’s business, because we are far more impressed with the opportunity to be educated and trained in His business of being His “new creature,” as well as with the opportunity to invest our time and energy in His operations, than with anything else.*

Logically this is the first and foremost virtue that we need to acquire, seeing that the success of our sonship life depends so much upon how dedicated and committed we are to getting our sonship education and to living our sonship life.

(2) the virtue of *having implicit faith in whatever our Father teaches us in the curriculum for our education because we not only know that He is trustworthy, but because we know that His curriculum for our education is perfectly suited to its task and is flawless, with the result that we do not foolishly distrust or doubt any of His teachings or instructions, nor faithlessly question His wisdom, motives, or fidelity.*

This virtue is also naturally essential to our successful sonship living, especially in view of the numerous challenges, demands, and difficulties that we will encounter.

And (3) the virtue of *having unwavering loyalty to doing things our Father’s way, and to fulfilling His business operations, because we know that His way is the best and only way, and we are convinced of His word’s mighty power to operate within us, with the result that we do not compromise, alter, or refuse any of our Father’s operations, nor become self-willed.*

Likewise this virtue is also essential to successful sonship living. For it not only works to provide against us being cunningly enticed, fooled, or overthrown by opposition, but it also works to prevent us from being deterred or thwarted by any weakening of our resolve or by the draining of our courage.

. . . Now of these three virtues the second is the central one, and therefore the chief or controlling virtue. For without it our devotion to receiving our vocational education will

not amount to very much, nor will our loyalty to doing things our Father's way last very long." (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2009, 2-3)

- After spending much time and space talking about "Israel's Misspent Youth" and the example of our Lord Jesus Christ in his earthly ministry, Blades extols "The Power of the Dew of Our Sonship Youth" to see a son through the "fearsome tribulations and perils belonging to "the sufferings of Christ," and that come from the Adversary's policy of evil against us." (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2009, 7) It is the virtues acquired from the dew of our sonship youth (see above) that ought to sustain a son with dew-like freshness through all of the pressures of life.
- The final edition of the *EBQ* was published in the 3rd quarter of 2009 with a lead article titled "[Are We Disadvantaged: An Introduction to a Very Special Feature of God's Word.](#)" Once again there is much in this article that is redundant and observable in previous issues of the *EBQ*. One new development is the use of the terminology "five heart probing questions" to describe the questions raised by Paul in Romans 8:35-37. (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2009, 5-6)
- The conclusion of the final issue of the *EBQ* is taken up with a discussion of the relationship between the Apostle Paul and the alleged sonship curriculum. That Keith viewed Paul as being keenly aware that he was writing a curriculum is beyond doubt.
 - "For to us Paul's example and pattern is designed to be much more than a help. For God our Father has designed it to be much more than a simple guide, and even much more than a practical tutelage.

Instead He has designed it to be *a pattern to be followed*. A pattern in which we see the very kind of things that happen and occur when we pursue the course of our sonship education and properly live out our sonship lives. A pattern in which we can both see and sense how the demands and experiences of living our sonship lives are going to affect us. (For as they affected Paul, so also will they affect us.) And a pattern in which we can both see and sense just how the effectual working of our sonship education successfully operated within Paul, and in doing so be able to intelligently perceive exactly what our Father has designed specific aspects of our education to do for us, and how to properly apply them, so that they will effectually work within us as they worked within Paul, and thereby bring forth the same fruits unto God's glory in us as they did in Paul.

... But now let's be a bit more specific and look at this extraordinary capability a little closer. For the truth is that through the effectual working of being virtual eyewitnesses of Paul's example and pattern, and by having virtual empathy with his heart and mind, our Father has actually enabled us *to follow Paul's very thought processes, and also to sense the responses of his heart and bowels*, as he himself operated upon our sonship education and applied it to the details of his own sonship life.

In fact this means that our Father has enabled us to know the very kind of godly cogitations and heart-calming persuasions that Paul's godly edifying produced within him, and He has enabled us to know them just as intimately, and just as thoroughly,

as if we were able to personally talk to Paul about them, *like saints in his day were able to do with him.*

Wherefore as our Father enables us to virtually observe Paul's example and pattern, and empathize with him, we are actually able to benefit from his counsel and 'coaching' in the same way, and to the same extent, as if he personally took us aside and counselled us saying, 'Look, this is how what you have just learned is designed to work in your sonship life.' And so by being our pattern we are actually enabled to benefit from Paul explaining to us exactly what to expect out of the effectual working of what our Father teaches us, (just like he did with the saints in his day), seeing that he himself has already experienced what we are now experiencing, and he himself has already benefited from our Father's words on the matter." (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2009, 6-7)

- So ended the writing ministry of Keith R. Blades. There were no additional *EBQs* published between the 3rd quarter of 2009 and his death on July 4, 2010.

Sunday, March 22, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—[Lesson 167 Sonship Edification: Discerning the Post-Blades Sonship Landscape](#)

Introduction/Review

- In Lesson 166 we concluded our survey of the evolution of Sonship Edification (SE) in the writings of Keith R. Blades by considering the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterlies (EBQs)* from 2007 to 2009.
- In this final lesson on SE, I want to accomplish the following:
 - Look at the events leading up to Keith’s death in July 2010
 - Prove that Blades himself never publicly taught that Proverbs 1 served as a Table of Contents for Paul’s epistles prior to his death as far as I have been able to discern. Whereas Newbold is on record for teaching it well before Keith’s death in July 2010.
 - Ascertain where Newbold was in the sonship curriculum when Keith died in 2010. We will also seek to determine what this might mean for how much of the curriculum these two men discussed before Keith passed away.

The Death of Keith R. Blades

- In Lesson 166 we noted that there had been no *EBQ* published during the 1st quarter of 2009 on account of Keith’s health. The *EBQ* from the 2nd quarter of 2009 updated the periodical’s readers on Keith’s health status. It was on account of his health that no 1st quarter issue had been produced.
 - “We want to express our sincere appreciation for all of the kind cards, notes, email, and inquiries that we have received over the past while regarding Keith’s health in view of his heart condition and recent coronary procedure.

. . . Due to Keith’s situation we did not attempt to publish a first quarter edition of the ETB Quarterly. And even though he has some life-style adjustments to make, and also has a few complications that need to be dealt with, with this second quarter edition we hope to resume publishing the Quarterly on our regular schedule.” (Blades, *EBQ* 2nd Quarter 2009, 2)
- After this point, Keith’s health seems have deteriorated fast. The very next and final issue of the *EBQ* from the 3rd Quarter of 2009 reported the following regarding Keith’s health.
 - “At the time of this writing Keith is recovering from surgery for colon cancer. He underwent a complete colectomy and ileostomy.

During surgery a second active cancer was found in the upper portion of the small intestine, but it was not able to be completely removed. In addition subsequent pathologies have indicated that cancer is also present in at least one other system.

So he has now been turned over to oncology for a full and thorough assessment of the nature of the cancers and their stages of development. He will then be given a prognosis of their activities and effects, along with a determination of treatment options.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3rd Quarter 2009, 2)

- Within a year, Brother Blades went home to be with the Lord. Keith R. Blades died on July 4, 2010.

The Table of Contents in Proverbs One

- As my review and collation of the *EBQs* came to a close, I realized that Keith never stated in print (in the *EBQ* or anywhere else to my knowledge) that Proverbs One serves as a Table of Contents or curriculum overlay for Paul’s epistles. While Keith does clearly connect various aspects of SE curriculum with the book of Proverbs in the *EBQs*, the connection between Proverbs One and Paul’s epistles is never EXPLICITLY made. *EBQs* that contain clear connections between the book of Proverbs and SE include the following (please follow the links below to the *EBQs* and the corresponding Lesson to review the details of each point of contact between Proverbs and Paul’s Epistles in the writings of Blades.):
 - [1st Quarter 2002](#), Page 5 (See [Lesson 163](#))
 - [3rd Quarter 2006](#), Page 5 (See [Lesson 165](#))
 - [4th Quarter 2006](#), Page 6 (See [Lesson 165](#))
 - [2nd Quarter 2007](#), Page 5 (See [Lesson 166](#))
 - [3rd Quarter 2007](#), Page 4 (See [Lesson 166](#))
- At this time, and to the best of my knowledge, I am not aware of any publicly released audio/visual resources on which Keith can be found teaching the concept that Proverbs One serves as a Table of Contents for Paul’s epistles. In summation, Keith R. Blades does not appear to have EXPLICITLY taught this concept in any format, written or otherwise, prior to his death in 2010. Mark Newbold, Pastor of Triangle Bible Church in Raleigh, North Carolina appears to have been the one to PUBLICLY ARTICULATE this concept.
- Upon realizing this, my first question was whether or not this was an example of an SE concept that Newbold introduced into the SE thought stream after the death of Blades? After investigating the matter I have concluded that the answer is no. Newbold traveled to Strathmore, Alberta Canada in April 2010 (prior to Keith’s death) to teach at a [Sonship Conference](#). At this meeting, Newbold taught three lessons on “The Sonship Curriculum” which included a discussion of the “Table of Contents” as well as Levels I, II, and III of the curriculum. The audio from this meeting is available on the Triangle Bible Church (TBC) webpage by following the link

above. This of course means that Newbold was in Keith's back yard just months prior to his death teaching the Table of Contents aspects of SE.

- Further investigation reveals that Newbold had been teaching all three of the following concepts for years before Keith passed away in July 2010: 1) Proverbs One Table of Contents, 2) Proverbs One Curriculum Overlay/Map for Paul's Epistles, and 3) Three Levels of Sonship.
- In his notes on [Romans 5](#) and [Romans 6](#), Newbold talks about the Three Levels of sonship. According to my calculations, Newbold was in Romans 5 in 2005 and in Romans 6 in 2006 (see below for a fuller treatment of dating Newbold's teaching ministry).
 - "But later on, **as we get out into the second and third courses or levels of our sonship education**, it's not going to take near that much explanation - i.e., you're not going to have 5 times the statement of (:5) to get it to effectually work within us - in fact, in some places the word "love" won't have to be used!" (Newbold, [Romans 5:1-21](#), 70)
 - "And (even though the same kind of terminology isn't used) we will come to see that God has designed the power of grace to still abound even more in our exaltation - which is why when you get to Level II sonship edification you get terminology like "the riches of his grace" (see Eph. 1:7-8)." (Newbold, [Romans 6:1-13](#), 30)
- The "Table of Contents" concept shows up in Newbold's notes on Romans 7 for the first time in 2007. On page 23 of his notes on [Romans 6:14-7:25](#) one reads the following:
 - "**Prov. 1 - The basic table of contents of the curriculum for sonship education and sonship edification. Yet while the basic structure or skeleton of the table of contents is the same for a Father to properly educate a son in either program**—the doctrinal information—or the packages of doctrine that is given for a son's education in Proverbs is not in keeping with God's designed purpose for the particular business or vocation He is in with His son who is the "one new man" or the "new creature" of the church, the body of Christ, today." (Newbold, [Romans 6:14-7:25](#), 23)
 - "In fact, the truth of the matter is, **that near the end of Level I of sonship education**, you begin to learn some things, and be taught some things that are designed to enable you to understand and appreciate how angels think!" (Newbold, [Romans 6:14-7:25](#), 24)
- Sometime in late 2006 or the first half of 2007, before Newbold began teaching on Romans 8:14-15 on Sunday, June 17, 2007, he taught on [Romans 8:1-13](#). It is here that talk of the Table of Contents in Proverbs really heats up and is fully flushed out.
 - "And you're going to see that all matches up perfectly and wonderfully to your own education as we would expect it to, if this is the format for a Father/son education!"

So we've come to recognize that what we're being given here is in all reality (not in theory) a TABLE OF CONTENTS for the book of Proverbs, in verses 2-6." (Newbold, [Romans 8:1-13](#), 269)

- "RECAP: SONSHIP EDUCATION CURRICULUM (Table of Contents):
- (Proverbs 1:2-6)
 - LEVEL I = vs. 2 and vs. 3
 - Phase 1 = (:2)
 - Part 1 = To know wisdom and instruction; (:2a)
 - Part 2 = to perceive the words of understanding; (:2b)
 - Phase 2 = (:3) To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;
 - LEVEL II = vs. 4
 - Phase 1 = To give subtilty to the simple, (:4a)
 - Phase 2 = to the young man knowledge and discretion. (:4b)
 - LEVEL III = vs. 5 and vs. 6
 - Phase 1 = (:5a)
 - Part 1 = A wise man will hear, (:5a1)
 - Part 2 = and will increase learning; (:5a2) –
 - Phase 2 = (:5b-6)
 - Part 1 = and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: (:5b)
 - Part 2 = To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. (:6)" (Newbold, [Romans 8:1-13](#), 289-290)
- We could go further with our documentation here but there is no need. The following three aspects of SE were all being taught by Newbold by 2007 some three years before Keith passed away in July 2010: 1) Proverbs One Table of Contents; 2) Proverbs One Curriculum Overlay/Map for Paul's Epistles; and 3) Three Levels of Sonship.
- While Keith himself never wrote or taught publicly on these subjects it is beyond doubt that they were part of the subject matter that was discussed in the private phone conversations between Newbold and Blades. There is no way that Newbold would have been out publicly teaching an aspect of SE without Keith's knowledge and/or approval.
- This highlights that Newbold's public teaching of SE in his assembly was far out pacing the rate at which Keith was writing about SE in the *EBQs*. In other words, Newbold was teaching SE related subjects during the time frame between 2001 and 2010 that Keith had not written about during that same time period in the *EBQ*.

The Post-Blades Sonship Frontier

- One question that has surfaced multiple times throughout the course of our studies on SE is where was Newbold with respect to the SE curriculum when Keith died? Related questions include:
 - What aspects of SE is Blades responsible for as opposed to Newbold and vice versa?
 - How much of the SE curriculum had Blades and Newbold discussed and/or established before Keith died?
 - At what point has or will Newbold exhaust the material he discussed with Keith and be forced to proceed through the rest of the curriculum on his own?

- While I believe the information required to answer these questions exists on the audio recordings of the phone conversations between Blades and Newbold, they are not at this time being made available for public consumption and scrutiny. Therefore, in their absence, one is left to piece together a chronology based upon those aspects of the historical records that are available.

- Mark Newbold, began teaching Sonship Orientation (Romans 8:14-15) on Sunday, June 17, 2007 with lesson #1597. This is the first dated lesson in the audio archives of Triangle Bible Church. All messages in the Romans series prior to this date (6/17/07) are numbered but not dated. The following is a list of the lesson numbers and totals for each category, as well as date ranges for all datable categories as of Wednesday, March 18, 2015. Please note items in italics in the following list indicate numbered but undated lessons.
 - *Romans 4 (#1045-1163)—118 Lessons*
 - *Romans 5 (#1164-1350)—186 Lessons*
 - *Romans 6 (#1351-1445)—94 Lessons*
 - *Romans 7 (#1446-1547)—101 Lessons*
 - *Romans 8:1-13 (#1548-1896)—48 Lessons*

 - Romans 8:14-15 (#1597-1773)—176 Lessons 6/07 through 7/08
 - Romans 8:16-39 (#1774-1989)—215 Lessons 7/08 through 9/09
 - Romans 9:1-5 (#1990-2007)—17 Lessons 10/09 through 11/09
 - Short Survey of Israel (#2008-2101)—93 Lessons 11/09 through 7/10
 - Romans 9-11 (#2102-2175)—73 Lessons 7/10 through 12/10
 - Romans 12:1-2 (#2176-2208)—32 Lessons 1/11 through 3/11
 - Romans 12:3ff (#2209-2792)—583 Lessons 3/16/11 to present

- Beginning with the commencement of Sonship Orientation on 6/17/07 (#1597) and working forward (using the datable lessons listed above), I have been able to plot Newbold's progression through the sonship curriculum on a series of calendars. Doing so reveals that Newbold was near the end (within two weeks) of the 93 part study title "Short Survey of Israel" when Blades passed away on July 4, 2010. This of course means that everything from Romans 9-11 on was taught

without the benefit of Blades' tutelage. Once again, given the unknown nature of the recorded phone conversations between Blades and Newbold, it is impossible to know for sure how much of the content brought forth under the banner of SE since Blades' departing was discussed beforehand and how much of it Newbold (himself) is responsible for.

- Given the fact that 2008 is the first year for which assembling an accurate teaching calendar is possible (started dating the Lesson in June 2007), I was able to average how many lessons a year Newbold taught between 2008 and 2013. Over the five years in question (2008-2013) Newbold taught an average of 162 lessons per year. The totals from 2014 were not included in this average because Newbold inexplicably took a two month "sabbatical" for all of September and October 2014. At this time I am not aware of the reason for the sabbatical, consequently, any reason I might give would be pure speculation at this point.
- Using Newbold's five-year average of 162 lessons per year (based upon the math, I have no reason to believe that this was different before June 2007) and his lesson numbering system, it is possible to speculate backwards from June 2007 and get an approximate understanding of where Newbold would have been in the curriculum the previous June.
 - June 2006—Lesson #1435 (Romans 6)
 - June 2005—Lesson #1273 (Romans 5)
 - June 2004—Lesson #1111 (Romans 4)
 - June 2003—Lesson #949 (Romans 3)
- There is no audio available on the Triangle Bible Church webpage for Romans 1 through 3. Regarding Romans 1 and 2, Newbold has included the following note:
 - "A note from Pastor Mark Newbold:

It was during the time when I was teaching Romans chapters 1 and 2 that I came to understand and appreciate God's word 'rightly divided' as well as many other issues about the apostle Paul, "the mystery," this dispensation of grace, the King James Bible, and so forth. Wherefore a great transition was taking place in my ministry. So then, to avoid confusion and corrupted doctrine, the lessons taught in Romans 1 and 2 will not be made available.

The purpose of these pages is to offer past lessons that we feel are worth archiving for future reference and the serious study of the word of God." ([Click here](#) to read note at the top of the page.)
- Despite the fact that there are no audio recordings offered for Romans 3 on the [Triangle Bible Church website](#), there are two sets of printed notes that have been made available. One set appears to be a scanned PDF document of Newbold's typed notes and contains handwritten marginal notations. A second set of PDF notes appears much more polished, lacks the marginal notes, and include notes for Romans 4.

- Set 1: [Romans 3 P. 1-39](#) & [Romans 3 P. 40-212](#)
 - Set 2: [Romans Chapters 3-4](#)
- The notes titled [Romans 3 P.40-212](#) include a smattering of sonship terminology.
 - Sonship—11 times
 - Sonship Edification—4 times
 - Sonship Privilege—2 times
 - Sonship Discipline—1 time
 - Sense & Sequence—3 times
- The notes titled Romans Chapters 3-4 include the use of the following sonship language and are not completely identical to the previous set noted above.
 - Sonship—6 times
 - Sonship Edification—3 times
 - Sonship Doctrine (contained in Proverbs 1-9)—1 time
 - Sonship Issue—1 time
 - Sense & Sequence—6 times
- All this proves that as far back as 2003, when Newbold was in Romans 3, he was being influenced by Blades and was beginning to teach rudimentary SE concepts. Over time, as we have already demonstrated, this would grow to become the focus of Newbold’s entire ministry.
- These observations regarding Newbold’s teaching of SE concepts in his notes on Romans 3 in 2003 coincide nicely with the following general timeline we presented in Lessons [145](#) and [162](#). SE concepts show up in the notes of Newbold in 2003 at precisely the same time he says that Blades began to teach him everything he knows about SE.
 - Exact date uncertain—Newbold learns right division and purchases Blades’ book *Satan and His Plan of Evil* on recommendation. Enclosed was a pamphlet listing of Blades’ tapes. Newbold orders the tape “The Battle on the Cross” and is so impressed with Blades’ teaching that he orders Blades’ entire audio library with assistance from Triangle Bible Church. (Triangle Bible Church Audio #[2094](#), 7/11/2010)
 - 2000—Newbold begins emailing Keith Blades with questions (TBC Audio #[2094](#))
 - 2001—Newbold begins phoning Keith Blades and recording the conversations (TBC Audio #[2094](#))
 - 2003—Newbold asks Blades to teach him everything he knows about SE (TBC Audio #[2094](#))

Conclusion

- SE is a recent theological system to develop within the Grace Movement over that past fifteen years.
- Where the SE movement is ultimately heading is uncertain at this point and is anybody's guess. Will it fizzle and die out or grow and spread? Only time will tell.
- Supporters of SE have a strong presence on the internet and utilize websites such as YouTube effectively to spread their message. Moreover, social media websites such as Facebook have been utilized effectively to spread the message of SE.
- What is certain is that Keith R. Blades was the fountainhead of the position, and that Mark Newbold was his primary understudy. Beyond the *EBQ*, Newbold became the primary champion of SE and advanced the position further via his local church ministry than Blades had in print prior to his death in July 2010. Others, such as Mike McDaniel, have followed Newbold closely, in some cases even copying his notes verbatim, in their enunciation of SE. It is clear that the ministry of Triangle Bible Church has become a prime conduit through which many have been exposed to the theological system of SE.
- For other sonship teachers, for example David Winston Bush who has written extensively on the subject in his "Sonship Stablishment Series" of books, it is more difficult to determine where the roots of his exposure to SE reside.