

BEYOND A FRIEND

“But you, O Israel, are my servant, You, O Jacob, whom I have chosen, The offspring of Abraham my friend.” – *Isaiah 41:8*

Yes, the prophet Isaiah identified the patriarch Abraham and his offspring as Jehovah’s friends. Even James, the brother of Jesus, acknowledged that Abraham was considered to be a friend to Jehovah:

“You see that his faith was active along with his works and his faith was perfected by his works, and the scripture was fulfilled that says: “Abraham put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness,” and he came to be called Jehovah’s friend.”
– *James 2:22-23*

But is friendship with God the relationship a Christian should have with God? The prophets introduced Jehovah as a friend, but Jesus introduced Him as a Father, and we as His children.

“Happy are the peacemakers, since they will be called **sons of God.**” – *Matthew 5:9*

“However, to all who did receive him, **he gave authority to become God’s children**, because they were exercising faith in his name. And they were born, not from blood or from a fleshly will or from man’s will, but from God.” – *John 1:12-13*

Jesus taught us to pray to God, not by name, but as Father:

“You must pray, then, this way: ‘**Our Father** in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth. Give us today our bread for this day; and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one.’ For if you forgive men their trespasses, **your heavenly Father** will also forgive you; whereas if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will **your Father** forgive your trespasses.” – *Matthew 6:9-15*

And if God is our Father, we are all brothers:

“But you, do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas **all you are brothers**. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, **for one is your Father, the heavenly One.**” – *Matthew 23:8-9*

“However, I say to you: Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you; **that you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens**, since he makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous.” – *Matthew 5:44-45*

The apostles also acknowledged man’s true relationship with God:

“You are all, in fact, sons of God through your faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one [person] in union with Christ Jesus.” – *Galatians 3:26-28*

“Now I say that as long as the heir is a young child, he is no different from a slave, although he is the lord of all things, but he is under supervisors and stewards **until the day set ahead of time by his father.** Likewise, we too, when we were children, were enslaved by the elementary things of the world. **But when the full limit of the time arrived,** God sent his Son, who was born of a woman and who was under law, that he might release by purchase those under law, **so that we might receive the adoption as sons.** Now because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts and it cries out: **“Abba, Father!”** So, then, **you are no longer a slave but a son;** and if a son, also an heir through God.” – *Galatians 4:1-7*

“For all who are led by God’s spirit, **these are God’s sons.** For you did not receive a spirit of slavery causing fear again, but you received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which spirit we cry out: **“Abba, Father!”** The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that **we are God’s children.**” – *Romans 8:14-16*

Our being no longer considered friends but sons has been the Father’s purpose from the beginning of creation, even before Adam and Eve:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in union with Christ, just as he chose us in union with him **before the founding of the world**, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love. **For he foreordained us to the adoption through Jesus Christ as sons to himself,** according to the good pleasure of his will.” – *Ephesians 1:3-5*

This gift of sonship IS the sacred secret that had been withheld from man until he was able to comprehend and accept the ‘new covenant’ written in the heart. (*Jeremiah 31:33-34*)

“For the creation is waiting with eager expectation for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but through the one who subjected it, on the basis of hope that the creation itself will also be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.” – Romans 8:19-21

What the Hebrew prophets understood was based upon a veiled understanding and incomplete knowledge of God.

“We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” – 2 Corinthians 3:13-17 New International Version

This is the problem with many modern day teachers of the Bible. They fail to realize that by imitating the ancient Hebrews, they remain as slaves. For this reason, it is not wise to establish our ‘Post-Christ’ relationship with God by means of the ‘old wine’ of the ‘old covenant.’ (**Luke 5:38**)

The new wine establishes that we are sons, not friends and certainly not slaves. It instills dignity, self respect and a true belonging. We enter ‘the kingdom of the son of his love’ (**Colossians 1:13**) as citizens of the heavens. (**Philippians 3:20**) We experience a spiritual Jubilee where we are taken in by the Father as His sons and daughters (**2 Corinthians 6:17-18**) because we have exercised faith in our elder brother Jesus and we have trusted his words and promises that we are ALSO sons of God, and heirs to the glorious kingdom of the Heavens. (**Roman 8:17**)

Let’s think about that. The teachings of Jesus are universally transcendent because they instantly elevate man’s status to where he had been groaning and searching for. But no generation was privy to this sacred secret until the Master Son came to reveal it. This is something that should warm our hearts, stimulate us and move us to a deeper appreciation for the life and ministry of the man Jesus and his depth of spiritual insight that enabled him to reveal the Father based on personal first hand knowledge in the very presence of God. We should have a deep appreciation for the gifted status we have been given in the household of the Grand Creator of all, Our Heavenly Father.

The psalmist, writing before the advent of Jesus, asked “O Jehovah, who may be a guest in your tent?” (**Psalms 15:1**) But a Christian does not seek to be a guest. He seeks permanent residence:

“In the **house of my Father** are many dwelling places. Otherwise, I would have told you, for **I am going my way to prepare a place for you**. Also, if I go my way and prepare a place for you, I will come again **and will receive you home to myself**, so that where I am you also may be.” – *John 14:2-3*

“Moreover, the slave does not remain in the household forever; **the son remains forever**. So if the Son sets you free, you will be truly free.” – *John 8:35-36*

Dear brothers, continue regulating your mind in order to follow the leadings of the Spirit of Truth that is unerringly guiding you step by step (*John 16:13*) closer to the Father as His faithful sons on earth, soon to become His full spirit sons in the Kingdom of the Heavens. (*Romans 8:23*) We may temporarily share our Father with the neighbors who may look at Him as a friend. But know that when the day is done, the friends go their own way without parental guidance, love or discipline, for ‘only the Sons remain in the house forever.’

Let no man deceive you and manipulate your perceptive powers. Let not the eloquent speech and cunning words prevent you from acknowledging and attaining your rightful inheritance. Jesus, as the first and foremost Son of God presented before all mankind a new and enduring way . . . to imitate our Friend? No! To ‘be perfect **as our Heavenly Father** is perfect.’ (*Matthew 5:48*)

We welcome your comments.

“Elaia Luchnia”
