

# **Sons, children, servants**

**Our authority as true sons**

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# **Introduction**

The various translations from the Greek are easily misunderstood or misrepresented. We can be left unsure or even confused – especially when it comes to the authority of believers.

This study is to try to bring clarity. In so doing we will find deeper understanding and greater reliance on the scripture, and we will discover the meaning of true sons.

All references are from the New King James Bible

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## Chapter 1

### Born into a family

There is usually great joy when a child is born. He or she is welcomed into the family as a new born baby. He or she is helpless and needs to be looked after. In our bibles the Greek word is *'brephos'* meaning either unborn as in Luke 1:41 where Elizabeth's unborn babe leaped in her womb when Mary greeted her. Or newborn as we find Jesus in Luke 2:12 - He being the babe wrapped in swaddling cloths.

As the *'brephos'* grows he or she quickly becomes a *'nepios'* - that is an infant or toddler without coherent speech. See Matthew 21:16.

Soon the *'nepios'* is growing into a young child, a *'paidon.'* When the Magi come to see Jesus He is by then described as a *'paidon,'* not a new born and not a toddler without coherent speech. When Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt Jesus is described as a *'paidon'*, a young child. That confirms to us that He was of speaking age and is consistent with Herod ordering the slaughter of all the male children up to two years old.

Back from Egypt the next we hear of Jesus He is 12 and has accompanied His parents to Jerusalem for the Passover. When the party leave Jerusalem to return to Nazareth we are told the boy (*'pais'*) Jesus is not with them. When Joseph and Mary return to Jerusalem, a day's travel, they find Him in the temple, saying, 'Son (*teknon*) why have you done this to us.' We have met two more Greek words -so to explain:

'pais' signifies a child, with particular reference to descent. A boy or a girl with reference to age, which is older than 'paidon.' Subservient in relation to status or position. Sometimes we find it translated as child and sometimes as servant so discernment is required.

'teknon' is from the verb 'tikto' which means 'to bear.' So the emphasis of 'teknon' is 'that which is born.' So we see its use referring to any age – in Matthew 2:16-18 we see both 'pais' and 'teknon' in use. *'Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the Magi was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children ('pais' descendants) who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the Magi. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying; "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping and great mourning. Rachel weeping for her children ('teknon' – that which was born), refusing to be comforted for they are no more."*

Bar Mitzvah is when a child becomes 'of age' and responsible to keep the law. Now set at age.

So 'teknon' is used for children of all ages to emphasize 'that which is born.' We are 'teknon' of the flesh until we are born again and become 'teknon' of God. You must be born again! After Bar Mitzvah it refers to what are recognized as having transitioned into young adults. So Paul, writing to Timothy and to Titus refers to them as his true sons (*teknon*) – those having been nurtured under his ministry.

In John 1:12 we are given the 'right and might' to become children (*teknon*) of God. *'But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name,'*

As '*teknon*' of God we see the emphasis on being born by God - this is the new birth and it is meant to be taken literally - as Jesus said, 'you must be born of the Spirit,' when talking to Nicodemus in John 3. A literal rebirth of the human spirit which until that point was 'in death.' (You have been transferred from death to life. 1 John 3:14, John 5:24)

We are literally born into God's family. We were born of water into the human race and by the Spirit into God's family.

Jesus returns to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary and is subject to them. Until .....

Next time we see Jesus He is baptized by John. The Father speaks, *'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'* Matthew 3:17

Here we meet the Greek word '*huios*' translated son.

*'Huios'* has particular relevance in the realm of the Spirit - *'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons (huios) of God.'* Romans 8:14

The emphasis of '*huios*' is relationship - more later. From Galatians 3:26-9 we know that in this respect all are 'sons.' There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female - for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Back in Romans 8 verses 16 and 21 we are referred to as children of God (*teknon*). As such we are heirs, joint heirs with Christ. So Romans 8 has us as both '*teknon*' and as '*huios*.'

However there is another element promised in this passage – that is the Spirit of adoption (verse 15) This is God's plan from the beginning – '*He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons (huios) by Christ Jesus to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.*' Ephesians 1:4-5

So we have seen:

*Brephos* a unborn or newborn babe.

*Nepios* an infant – not yet speaking properly

*Paidon* a little child

*Pais* primarily a descendent, also used for a servant

*Teknon* that which is born

*Huios* a son in relationship

We have seen that we are literally born into God's kingdom when we believe in Jesus and are born again.

We will discover more about the promise of adoption as sons in chapter 3.

## Chapter 2

### From responsibility to authority

Our lives start as babes. We are unable to do anything for ourselves and we are under the complete authority of our parents. Even though at birth we become the heirs to the family fortune we do not differ from a slave. *'Now I say that an heir, so long as he is a child (nepios) does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.'* Galatians 4:1-2

There is a process to undergo to come into our calling and destiny as fully accountable adults. For the Jews Bar Mitzvah (now at age 13) is the point when one becomes responsible for keeping the Law. At 13 a boy becomes Bar Mitzvah. Personal responsibility starts here! Roman culture had a similar 'coming of age,' when a youth became recognized as a Roman citizen in his own right.

Our experience will develop as we grow from babes, though infancy, becoming young children heading to the point where we are expected to be responsible.

Peter writes in his first letter calling his hearers obedient children, using the word *'teknon.'* [That which is born, in this case of God.)

He is clearly expecting them and urging them into responsible behavior - they are not described as infants. (1:14.)



Then in chapter 2 he advises and again urges them to act in the same manner as newborn babes in eagerly desiring the pure milk of the word - that they may grow thereby. They are not newborn but are urged to be like newborn in this respect.

In the letter to the Hebrews the writer is saying to them, *'For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and you have become in need of milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe (nepios).'* (5:12-13)

### **Coming to responsibility**

The moment we are born again we are expected to be responsible - we have made the choice to recognize Jesus and to believe in Him. We are not *'brephos'* or *'nepios'* - we are responsible. Nevertheless in knowledge and understanding we need the spiritual milk of the word to grow.

As believers we have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside to help and to guide - to lead us into all truth.

That is why it is so important for us to study the word of God - which is likened to both milk and solid food. Yet the experience within the early church was that many were in need of milk and had not progressed to solid food. *'But solid food belongs to those who are of full age (mature), those who by reason of use ('hexis' constant use or habit) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.'* (Hebrews 5:14)

We are expected to love the truth and to grow thereby. Indeed Paul advises the Thessalonians that those who do not receive a love of the truth are open to deception – because it is only the truth, which is in Jesus, and is expressed in the word, that leads to salvation. Salvation meaning deliverance from danger and encompassing eternal salvation and deliverance from things in the temporal realm. (2 Thessalonians 2:10)

Prayer: ‘Holy Spirit fill me with love of the truth.’

It is vital to recognize that God’s word as we have in the scriptures is God breathed in the original manuscripts – and therefore absolutely perfect, accurate and without contradiction when rightly divided. It is THE TRUTH.

*‘The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of the earth. Purified seven times. You shall keep them O Lord. You shall preserve them from this generation forever.’ Psalm 12:6-7*

We believe and understand that God has and is fulfilling the above word. We have the word of God.

## Chapter 3

### Adoption and destiny

We will take a more detailed look at the meaning of 'huios' to help us understand the importance of being God's 'huios.'

We have referred to it's meaning being 'son in relationship.' The concept carries with it a sense of influence and of destiny.

Consider:

Jesus speaking to the Jews:

*'You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.'* John 8:44

In Matthew, just before His crucifixion, Jesus speaks very plainly to the scribes and Pharisees. (Chapter 23) Eight times Jesus says 'Woe to you' and goes on to describe the gross errors of their ways and actions, culminating with, *'Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell.'*

So now we can see how "huios" carries this meaning of son in relationship. Because the scribes and Pharisees, in particular, are sons of the devil they are in relationship with him and manifest his will and share his destiny. Of course this applies to all of mankind in various degrees. Hence the need to be born again and to have a new Father, and to become like Him with a new eternal destiny.

## *The promise of adoption as sons.*

*'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to **adoption as 'huios'** by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.'* Ephesians 1:3-5

*'But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His 'Huios,' born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive **the adoption as sons.**'* Galatians 4:4-5

Our adoption bearing this result - *'And because you are sons God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, 'Abba Father.'* Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.'  
Galatians 4:6-7 (every reference to son is 'huios')

Now as, 'huios' of God we have a new Father and in that very close relationship, we desire more and more, to do His will. We also become heirs sharing His destiny. We are true sons.

Yet our adoption is not yet fully complete. In terms of the realm of the Spirit our adoption is done and the Spirit has taken up residence within us as a guarantee of its final completion.

We turn to Romans 8 to understand our current position:

Verse 19 *'For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the 'huios' of God.'*

Verse 23 *'Not only that. But we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.'*

### ***'Teknon' and 'huios.'***

When we discussed *'teknon'* – that which is born, we saw that we are literally born of God. Our human spirit, that part of us made in His image, was dwelling in death and in darkness, until we believed in Jesus and were *'born again,'* – our human spirit being transferred into God's kingdom of light and truth and the Spirit indwelling us as a guarantee. Truly we became born of God, His sons, true sons.

The Romans 8:28-30 tells us that the Lord foreknew that we would believe in His Son and because of that He predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son – the adoption. True sons.

And so we come to be described as God's *'huios,'* God's sons. In the realm of the Spirit there is no male or female, all are sons, true sons.

We see there is no contradiction between *'teknon'* and *'huios'* as their meanings are complimentary – we are literal children of God being born again and as such we come into a relationship where we increasingly share the desires and the eternal destiny of our Father.

## Chapter 4

### Our authority as true sons

We have to look to Jesus to see how a true son exercises authority. We have already seen that a true son shares the desires of the father and therefore is happy to align his actions with the will of the father.

Jesus shows exactly this as He clearly states that He does not do things on His own account:

*'Most assuredly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does the Son also does in like manner.'* John 5:19

Jesus authority ruled over everything – over storms, over all the works of the enemy, over all sickness and over all aspects of creation. We know that when He acted He did what He saw His Father doing.

Then He said to us, *'I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions. And over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.'* Luke 10:19.

John confirms in his first letter, *'He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.'* (4:4)

So we establish that the expectation of authority we, as sons, can exercise is complete and found in Him who is in us - our authority is in the Spirit not in our flesh.

In the Spirit nothing is impossible for us because of what we have learnt above. However we remember that it is found in the realm of the Spirit.

Jesus taught exactly this when He said:

*'Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'* Matthew 4:4

Of course we need bread and physical food for the well being of our human frame – but that is not the be all and end all of our human existence. We live in two realms at the same time - the physical realm of this world and in the spiritual realm we call the kingdom of God.

The two realms co-exist and the spiritual realm can and does effect the natural or physical realm – that is why we pray!

### *Ask and ask again*

Scripture invites us to bring our needs before the throne of grace – that is before the Father and to seek Him and ask Him in Jesus name.

How He answers our prayers is clearly up to the Lord, but from the quotation above we can see that one way is by speaking to us – what in Greek is a *'rhema'* word.

Then Jesus confirms that, so long as we take hold of the word spoken to us, and it abides in us, we can ask whatever we will and it will be done - nothing is impossible. This is not an open cheque. It does not mean if we hear God speak we can then ask any old thing we like. It means when we hear and take hold of what He says we can be sure it will come to pass.

Nothing is impossible. We can only do what we see the Father doing, just like Jesus.

*'If you abide in Me and My words (rhema) abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you.'*  
John 15:7

*Then: 'By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you will be My disciples.'* John 15:8

So our context is to bring glory to the Lord not to obtain riches and fast cars! Indeed James has something to say about that:

*'You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.'* (4:3)

### ***God's eternal purpose***

We discover what this is all about in Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

*'to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church (ekklesia – the true sons) to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (3:10-11)*

And so we come to consider the concept of being a servant.



## Chapter 5

### Servants

The principle Greek words are:

'*diakonos*' which is describing the work, the service of all kinds. Probably best known to us due to our word deacon, but widely covering all types of service.

'*doulos*' commonly translated servant, but really relates to slaves as it carries the meaning of being in bondage. It is specifying the relationship with the master.

Paul writing to the Romans (Chapter 6) gives clear teaching about what constitutes being a '*doulos*,' a slave or servant.

His teaching makes it clear we are '*doulos*' to whom or what we obey, whether that be to sin or obedience to righteousness. (verse 16)

Paul writes, '*having died to that which held us (sin), so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit.*' (7:6)

We are in relationship with Jesus, our Lord and Master and He has every right to demand our obedience to His will. But - '*No longer do I call you 'doulos' for a slave does not know what His master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made know to you.*' John 15:15

Though Jesus could call us slaves and rule us accordingly instead He treats us in love and as His coming bride.

Nevertheless we can see that our choice of what we do is very important. If we choose to sin we put ourselves under slavery to sin. All the time we are urged to put on the new man in the Spirit because it is in the Spirit that the fruit that the Lord seeks is found. The fruit the Lord seeks in us is that which He has prepared for us to do.

There will always be tension between the desires of our flesh and the righteous way the Lord has prepared for us found by 'walking in the Spirit.'

Paul described the way for us in Ephesians 4 and 5 :

Walk worthy of your calling (4:1-16)

Do not walk in futility - put on the new man (4:17-32)

Walk in love (5:1-7)

Walk in light (5:8-14)

Walk in wisdom (5:15-21)

He went on with advice about relationships - family and work.

Then the warning - *'Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.'* You are in a battle whether you like it or not! *'Put on the whole armour of God.'* This battle is not against flesh and blood but against numerous levels of spiritual opposition.

*'Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.'*

Ephesians 6:10 and 13.

Spiritual warfare is essential if we are to fulfill His eternal purpose.

Jesus made it very clear, when speaking to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew chapter 23, that parading around with a show of religiosity is meaningless. He called them fools for many misdemeanors and insincerity. They cleaned the outside but were like whitewashed tombs – full of death!

We should take note true sons have a close relationship with the Father and desire to do His will.

*'I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.'* Romans 12:1

**The key features of a true son. As we saw earlier all are referred to as sons, women included.**

He is born again.

He loves the truth.

He hears the Lord and knows how to move by the Spirit, doing what He sees and hears.

He is happy to be the Lord's servant in everything he does.

He discerns between good and evil and resists the work of the enemy.

He loves and respects other people and is ready to minister the gifts he has received from the Lord.

Above all the true son loves  
the Lord with all his heart, all  
his soul and all his mind and  
strength.

## Appendix

### Various uses of the Greek words

Extracted from Strong's Concordance which uses the King James Bible. Other translations including the New King James, may differ in many places.

***Brephos*** Strong's number 1025

**Translated** Babe or baby

Luke 1:41 and 44. Luke 2:12 and 16.

(Hebrews 5:13 'babe' is actually '*nepios*.)

1 Peter 2:2

**Translated** Young child

2 Timothy 3:15

**Translated** Infants

Luke 18:15

**Translated** Young children

Acts 7:19

***Nepios*** Strong's number 3516

**A child not coherently speaking** from 'ne' not and 'epos' a word

**Translated** Child or children or childlike or childish

1 Corinthians 13:11

Galatians 4:3

Ephesians 4:13

**Translated** Babe or babes

Hebrews 5:13

Matthew 11:25

Matthew 21:16

Luke 10:21

Romans 2:20

1 Corinthians 3:1

***Pais*      Strong's number 3816**

According to Greek dictionaries the word 'pais' carries various meanings. In relation to descent and age it means a child. In relation to condition a servant. See Galatians 4:1 where a child is in no better condition than a slave - being under authority.

**Translated    Son**

John 4:51

Acts 3:13

Acts 3:26

**Translated    Servant or servants**

Matthew 8:6      See commentary below \*

Matthew 8:8      “

Matthew 8:13      “

Matthew 12:18 (God speaking of Jesus should be Son?)

Matthew 14:2      Herod to his servants

Luke 1:54          Speaking of Israel

Luke 1:69          Speaking of David

Luke 7:7           See commentary below

Luke 15:26        Servant in the parable of the prodigal

Acts 4:25          Speaking of David

**Translated    Child or children**

Matthew 17:18

Matthew 21:15

Luke 2:43

Luke 9:42

Acts 2:47

Acts 4:30

**Translated    Maid or maiden**

Luke 8:51

Luke 8:54

**Translated    Menservants**

Luke 12:45

## Translated Young man

Acts 20:12

### **\*Commentary:**

We bear in mind that the original manuscripts are God breathed and therefore exactly accurate, but that our translations are affected by the thoughts and actions of the translators. In that respect Luke 7:7 where the Centurion uses '*pais*' (which could be a term of endearment as this one is 'dear to him',) which is translated servant but relates to a slave as clearly stated in verse 2 and verse 10 where the Greek is '*doulos*' - slave. (And in Matthew 8:9)

In Matthew 8:6, 8 and 13 '*pais*' is translated servant, it would be better and more correctly translated 'son.' It seems that the translators had attempted to make the two accounts of the healing of the Centurions son and of his slave into one -ignoring all the differences, including timing which make it clear these are two different occasions, indeed the only common aspects are the words of the centurion and the words of Jesus - thus the translators erroneously suggest that the God breathed scripture is contradictory.

### ***Paidon* Strong's number 3813**

**This is the diminutive form of '*pais*.' It refers to young children. It is translated - child, children, young child, little children, damsel. Any reference not listed under '*brephos*, '*nepios*' or '*pais*' above is '*paidon*.'**

***Teknon* Strong's number 5043**

The emphasis of 'teknon' is 'that which is born.'

**Translated Child and Children**

77 references

**Translated Son and sons**

Matthew 9:2

Matthew 21:28

Mark 2:5

Mark 13:2

Luke 2:8

Luke 15:31

Luke 16:25

John 1:12

1 Corinthians 4:14

1 Corinthians 4:17

Philippians 2:15

Philippians 2:22

1 Timothy 1:2

1 Timothy 1:18

2 Timothy 1:2

2 Timothy 2:1

Titus 1:4

Philemon 1:10

1 John 3:1

1 John 3:2

**Translated Daughters**

1 Peter 3:6

***Thygater* Strong's number 2364**

**Translated Daughter and daughters.**

All references



***Huios*      Strong's number 5207**

Sons and true sons. Those who have faith are the sons of Abraham Galatians 3:7. In faith there is no distinction between male and female Galatians 3:28.

In considering its translation as children we note that many times the NKJ uses sons instead of children.

**Translated    Child and children**

Matthew 23:15

Acts 13:10

Revelation 12:5

Matthew 5:9

Matthew 5:45

Matthew 8:12

Matthew 9:15

Matthew 12:27

Matthew 13:38

Matthew 17:25 and 26

Matthew 20:20

Matthew 23:31

Matthew 27:9

Matthew 27:56

Mark 2:19

Luke 1:16

Luke 5:34

Luke 6:35

Luke 16:8

Luke 20:34

Luke 20:36

John 4:12

John 12:36

Acts 3:25

Acts 5:21

Acts 7:23

Acts 7:37  
Acts 9:15  
Acts 10:36  
Acts 13:26  
Romans 9:26 and 27  
2 Corinthians 3:7  
2 Corinthians 3:13  
Galatians 3:7  
Galatians 3:26  
Ephesians 2:2  
Ephesians 5:6  
Colossians 3:6  
1 Thessalonians 5:5  
Hebrews 11:22  
Hebrews 12:5  
Revelation 2:14  
Revelation 7:4  
Revelation 21:12

**Translated Son and sons**

**All references apart from those 'pais' and 'teknon'  
above are 'huios.'**

**Other titles:**

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\*Daniel (introductory level)

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Health and Healing  
The sign of Jonah – solved  
Understanding the parable of the 10 virgins  
The Kingdom Way  
The Persistent Widow  
Can I lose my salvation?  
Meet the Teacher  
Love, 153 fish and seven signs  
Paul's thorn in the flesh - its message for today  
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