

How do we become a “Child of God”? Through baptism and obedience to God...

According to the Old Testament,¹ God made man in His image when He breathed life into his nostrils and gave him a soul (spirit)². For those born of Jewish heritage, they were considered God’s “Chosen People”³ and the “Sons of God”:

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, [2] That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. [3] And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. [4] There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. (The Old Testament, Genesis 6:1-4)

For all non-Jews, God eventually gave us all the chance to become His “Chosen People” and be called “His Children”. This happens when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and live our lives according to His Authority, and not our own. This was all part of our “Father’s Plan”⁴ for the Salvation of *all* mankind:⁵

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 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. (The Gospel, John 1:11-12)

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (The New Testament, 1 John 3:1)

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, [4] just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him In love [5] He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, [6] to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (The New Testament, Ephesians 1:3-6)

John the Baptist said, "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (The Gospel, Matthew 3:11)

Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. [6] That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (The Gospel, John 3:5-6)

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. [9] Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” (The Gospel, Matthew 5:8-9)

...but those conscious of the goal of our calling (as Christians) realize that we are to become like God, as far as this is possible for human nature. But we cannot become like God unless we have knowledge of Him, and without lessons there will be no knowledge... -St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, Ch. 1

1. Please see, “Proof from the Qur’an the Bible is not Corrupt” at www.MuslimsSeekingJesus.com.

2. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (The Old Testament, Genesis 2:7)

3. See, “God’s Chosen People” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chosen_people.

4. Listen to, “Our Father’s Plan” <http://www.ewtn.com/vondemand/audio/seriessearchprog.asp?seriesID=-306548622>.

5. See, “We Must Be Born Again” http://muslimsseekingjesus.com/We_Must_Be_Born_Again.html.

We can never be God. But God has instructed us to become worthy to be called His Children, His favorite creation...

"It is by taking up our humanity and redeeming it in himself that the Son accomplishes our salvation. And the consequences of this is that we are enabled to be joined to him, and through the Spirit to be transformed progressively into his image.

Christ himself as the Second Adam becomes the locus of what we are to become as "sons of God" (children of God). By being born of Mary in our humanity, the Son of God assumes our nature in order to effect the restoration of that nature. At his baptism, the incarnate Son (Jesus Christ) receives the Holy Spirit, not only for his own unique mission as Messiah, but also as a representative reception of the Spirit for the human race, providing for the Spirit a fitting temple for his dwelling.

By resisting the devil both in the wilderness and in Gethsemane, the New Adam (Jesus) conquers where the old Adam failed, and by his obedience wins the victor over Satan. By offering himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin, the Son takes our punishment upon himself, cleanses our nature from the stain of Adam's sin, and inaugurates the new humanity. And by his resurrection and ascension, he raises up our nature to new life, and opens up the way for "many sons" ([Hebrews 2:10](#)) to be joined to their heavenly Father ([Ephesians 2:6](#)). -*Daniel Keating, Deification and Grace, pg. 24-25.*

This understanding is supported by many other parts of Sacred Scripture:

By means of the [indwelling of God](#), we are set on a course in which we freely cooperate, to be conformed to the image of the Son ([Romans 8:29](#)). It is only in the life of the age to come that this transformation will be completed, and we shall see him as he is ([1 John 3:2](#)).

When we examine how the Fathers do in fact interpret [2 Peter 1:4](#), we find that in no way do they understand this text as compromising the fundamental distinction between God as Creator and human beings as creatures.

Origen applies [2 Peter 1:4](#) directly to our becoming "sons of God" by [adoption](#) through the [gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit](#), who infuses the love of God into our hearts ([Romans 5:5](#)). This leads in turn to communion with the Father and the Son through the Spirit: "[As you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be one in us](#)" ([John 17:21](#)). This is, of course, to be sharers of the divine nature by the fullness of love furnished through the Holy Spirit. -*Daniel Keating, Deification and Grace, pgs. 34-35*

It is that only God can properly sanctify and deify. No creature can accomplish this. It is only through the effective indwelling of the Son and the Spirit that human beings are regenerated, sanctified, adopted as children of God, and deified. This is a most crucial point. If we fail to grasp it, we will misunderstand the heart of what deification is. -*Daniel Keating, Deification and Grace, pg. 40*

[Deification, however, also requires our full response and cooperation.](#) Moreover, it is a process that continues through the whole of our lives, and reaches completion only with the redemption of our bodies in eternal life with God. Here it can be seen how closely synonymous deification and sanctification are.

In certain Fathers, for example in Cyril of Alexandria, "sanctification" and "deification" are nearly identical terms. Deification—like sanctification—can be viewed as occurring in three stages. According to Aquinas, [these three stages unfold as follows: First, by the infusion of grace](#); hence anyone having sanctifying grace through Baptism ([1st by faith, then by water](#)) is made a son of God. "You did not receive the spirit of slavery . . . but the spirit of adoption as sons," as said in [Romans 8:15](#). "Because you are sons of God, God sent the Spirit of his Son into [Secondly](#), we are like God by the perfection of our actions, because one who acts justly is a son: "[Love your enemies ... so that you may be the children of your Father](#)" ([Matthew 5:44](#)). [Thirdly](#), we are made like God by the attainment of glory: the glory of the soul by the light of glory, "When he appears we shall be like him" ([1 John 3:2](#)), and the glory of the body, "He will reform our lowly body" ([Philippians 3:21](#)). Of these two it is said in [Romans \(8:23\)](#), "We are waiting for our adoption as sons of God."?

For Aquinas, our divine sonship is begun in us through the gift of the indwelling Spirit and the impartation of grace; it progresses as we walk in the new life we have received and become like Christ through imitation; and it is completed in the age to come when we are fully transformed, body and soul. *-Daniel Keating, Deification and Grace, pg. 41*

Jesus established a Covenant between God and mankind that guarantees our sins will be wash away from our soul if we confess our sins to him. Confessing our sins creates a clean heart within us by putting his steadfast Spirit within us ([Psalm 51](#)). This steadfast Spirit is the love of Christ that is poured out into the hearts of man for whoever wishes to receive it ([Romans 5:5](#)).

That is the consummation of the New Covenant.⁶ That Jesus will live in us if we want him too. Jesus will live in us if we invite His Holy Spirit to live with our Soul. Jesus will live in us when we write his words on our hearts. And Jesus will live in us when we consume him as the Bread of Life through the Holy Eucharist.

Through the resurrection of Jesus we know that he is alive today in mind, body and soul. We too must have Christ living in us if we are to live forever in mind, body and soul. Why wouldn't we want that which is eternal, God, living in us so we can be assured that we too will live eternally in God's Kingdom?

The history of mankind's pattern of sin in the Old Testament proves to us that mankind is not capable of living according to God's Covenant by our own spiritual power. We MUST invite the Holy Spirit of God to live and grow in us, every day. St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans "The love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit." ([Romans 5:5](#))

It is the Love of Christ dwelling in us through the Holy Spirit that gives us the spiritual strength to resist temptation and sin. If we truly love someone, we will not want to do anything to harm that person. If we truly love someone, we will be content to remain in their love and not go seeking after that which is sinful. The love of Christ dwelling in us compels us to be at peace with Christ and ourselves. It is in this contentment that our hearts finally discover what we have been seeking all our lives. The presence of God, that which is eternal, nourishing our soul with that which is eternal. God's love. God's life.

Why we need God's presence living in us...

Our human nature is fallen, corrupted by a legacy of sin since the days of Adam and Eve that continues to thrive in our culture. We want to be obedient to God's laws (see, [Psalm 1 and 109](#)) but society keeps telling us we don't have to.

Instead, we run around in circles chasing after the next fad or form of entertainment. We create golden calf, after golden calf pouring our love and affections into what the world thinks is important, not what God has told us is important. We have never really known the joy and inner-peace that comes from loving God's commands because we are content living by the "wisdom" of man. We are cheating ourselves from what Jesus truly wants us to experience through him...

Jesus will teach us what we are missing. In fact, his teachings are even tougher than what was given to us in the Old Testament. Jesus raises the bar on holiness by telling us to do just the opposite of what our human

6. New Covenant. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Covenant

nature wants us to do. Instead of coveting our possessions, he will tell us to give them away. Instead of enriching our egos, he tells us to be spiritually poor. Instead of hating our enemies, he tells us to love them and “turn the other cheek”. Instead of holding a grudge against someone, he tell us to forgive them or our sins will not be forgiven. ([Matthew 6:14-15](#))

Jesus’ Passion, the torture and death on the cross that endured for us, is the greatest Covenant ever made with mankind and we should be telling the world about it...