

## ISRAEL, MY FIRST BORN

I was reading about the fatherhood of God in Exodus 4:22 which says, *And you are to say to Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, even my first born.*<sup>i</sup> Hmmm ... first born. How is that so, I asked the Holy Spirit, I thought that position was allotted only to Jesus the Christ?

He directed my thoughts to consider who the parties were in that verse. As I did, He provided (*their positioning or example to others*). There is Moses (*a believer*) and Pharaoh (*who is not*). Then, there is the Lord (*Who is claiming fatherhood*).

Next, we turned to *Romans 9:4, 5*. Herein, the Apostle Paul is pointing out the eternal benefits of the Israelites:

1. To them belong God's adoption [as a nation] (v. 4);
2. To them belong the glorious Presence [Shekinah] (v. 4);
3. With them were the special covenants made (v. 4);
4. To them was the Law given (v. 4);
5. To them [the temple] worship was revealed (v. 4);
6. To them [God's own] promises were announced (v. 4);
7. To them belong the patriarchs (v. 5) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to whom, in the same order, the covenant was made, the nation formed, and the nation birthed; and, as far as His natural decent was concerned,
8. From them is the Christ (v. 5); Who, in fulfilling the law and words of the prophets (*Matthew 5:17*), has enabled God, the Father, *to draw us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness* [death] (into which ALL who have stumbled because of unbelief and iniquity have fallen) *and transfer us into the kingdom of the Son of His Love* (His Firstborn from the dead, Jesus the Christ) (*Colossians 1:15-23*).

Please review *Matthew 5:1 – 7:27*. These verses from The Sermon on the Mount along with *Colossians 1:15-23* provide us with a simplified look at His divine authority in the matter, the purpose for condensing the Law and words of the prophets to only two commandments, and instructions by which we, too, can accomplish them (*Matthew 22:37-40*). Of specific note are the following:

1. He is calling for a **personal relationship** with each of us. He knows that we cannot do anything without Him (*John 15:5*); hence, He is welcoming us into a relationship. Seeking His face is not solely related to inviting His presence to be with us or looking to His word for advice ... it is to be upfront and personal ... face-to-face, confronting and being confronted as were Jacob (*Genesis 32:30*) and Moses (*Exodus 33:11*). This will also require that we develop discernment as to the legitimacy of the voice we hear (*John 10:27-30*).
2. One must engage with Him in prayer and in relationship with His Word. To properly engage, one must be baptized by immersion in water as a sign of repentance (*Matthew 3:11*) and, as a separate act, to be baptized with the Holy Spirit such as those gathered together on the day of Pentecost to receive power to not only perform service for Him as each has been called (*Luke 24:49*) but also to be able to gain a fuller understanding of His Word (*2 Timothy 3:16*).
3. This should also help each one of us to more intimately understand and realize salvation as a work in progress (*Colossians 1:23*), not through a one-time declaration as some profess is afforded by *John 3:16*.
4. For those who do not believe in the truth of His Words, He says, Behold all you [enemies of your own selves] who attempt to kindle your own fires [and work out your own plans of salvation], who surround and gird yourselves with momentary sparks, darts, and firebrands that you set aflame! – walk by the light of your self-made fire that you have kindled [for yourself, if you will]! But this shall you have from My hand: you shall lie down in grief and in torment (*Isaiah 50:11*). And if you will not heed His pleas, stand and testify against Him (*Micah 6:3*).

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<sup>i</sup> All scriptures area from the *Amplified Bible*. (Zondervan : Grand Rapids, 1987).