

Module : Firstborn Sonship
Session 1 : Panoramic Overview of Firstborn Sonship
Focus : A Summary of the Broad Issues



We begin this series entitled 'Firstborn Sonship', which promises to be extremely enlightening, encouraging and emancipating. In this first session, I sketch out the broad framework of this principle, providing a cursory overview of its scope of understanding and application. In subsequent sessions I will fill in the detail. The Firstborn Sonship principle essentially concerns the **restoration of an accurate identity to the sons of God.**

Belief Informs Behaviour: Perspective influences practice. As a man thinks, so is he (**Prov.23:7**). The quality of and sense of purpose attendant with your life is reflective of your mentality and state of mind. Your thinking circumscribes the boundaries of your identity and destiny.

Gideon saw himself as the 'least' when God viewed him as a 'valiant warrior' (**Judges 6:12-16**). To be used by God (destiny), he had to adjust his thinking to conform to God's estimation and appraisal of him (identity). God can never use you beyond the bounds of your concept of yourself. Think of yourself as God perceives you and not what your history or present circumstances have led you to believe about yourself and your ability. Today, God calls you, "... (Your name) ..., you are my FIRSTBORN SON."

Divine supply to you is conditional upon your internal mindset, for the Scriptures teach that He is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all we ASK or THINK (**Eph. 3:20a**) – the point being that we have got to THINK as though we are expecting God to come through.

God will give nothing to a 'double-MINDED' man (James 1:7-8). As much as HE wants to, God cannot work beyond the level of agreement you grant Him in your THINKING – and when you do, God goes beyond what you think, but THINK accurately, you must. He only does exceedingly, abundantly above what you think, - when you think! Think like God's firstborn son.

The fact that we are firstborn sons in Christ must predominate in our thinking, for this will attract to it resource necessary to execute God's will. God will respond to this mental state within us with abundant supply.

Identity reveals destiny. Identity relates to who you ARE; destiny involves what you DO. Who you ARE reveals what you should DO. You will never know what to do until you understand who you are. Actually, you need to BE what you called to DO. **Embodiment of Divine nature is in essence an assertion not just of 'BEING' but empowerment and authorisation to 'DO'.** Gideon saw the Lord as 'Jehovah Shalom' – 'The Lord is Peace'; He was transformed into the nature of God he saw and become the embodiment of peace (**Judges 6:23,24**). This was very essential for him, because this nature of peace was his authority to defeat the Midianites, which means 'strife'. Peace destroys strife (**Is. 9:6; 32:18; Rom 16:20**). Dethroning strife (Midian) was his destiny, but to do so, he had to become the very nature of God, viz.

'peace' (identity) - designed to overthrow it. First **BE**, then ... **DOing** will flow effortlessly and authoritatively.

Firstborn sonship is not something you strive you 'DO'; it is who you 'ARE' in Christ, as He becomes this in you. It involves a simple but substantial mind-shift from orphanity into sonship as the light of this revelation comes to you. **It is what Christ becomes within you (Rom. 8:29) and not what you strive to be in Him.** You 'become' only in response to Him coming to full formation as the patterned Firstborn Son within you.

Gal. 1:16 But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to **reveal His Son in me** so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood

The Christ must be FORMED in us. He wants to be disclosed in us – revealed.

Reveal = apokalutpo = to take off the cover; to disclose.

It not so much a matter of us becoming all that He is as much as it is about HIM – all that He is - being revealed in us.

We often inaccurately misquote "I must decrease and He must increase", when the verse actually reads, **"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30)**. The former places a burden on us, whereas the latter permits Christ to increase in stature within us - and the natural result of this would be that we decrease. **You don't decrease to make Him increase; He must increase, so you will decrease. As He increases in you as Firstborn Son, every residue of the orphan in you will diminish until it's thoroughly removed.**

When we allow Christ to BE all He desires to BE in us, anything that we strive to be in Him will diminish in the light of all He is becoming and increasing in us. The same is true of the firstborn reality: HE, the Firstborn Son, must increase in us, and the carnal, Adamic, orphaned nature will be reduced into nothingness. **My 'decrease' is only possible, because it is a natural result of, and response to, Him 'increasing' in me.** As His nature and identity increases in me, remaining unchanged and neutral does not become an option – nor is it possible. No man has ever had sight of God and remained the same. In terms of our current study, **Christ is increasing TO and IN us** as the FIRSTBORN SON. As your sight of this reality grows, so too will you emerge with great strength in the same reality.



Christ must increase TO you (i.e. in your perception of Him) in order for Him to increase IN you. The challenge is to **SEE Christ** – have **a revelation of Him as Firstborn Son, for as you 'behold' Him, you are changed into what you see (2 Cor. 3:8)**. You will never be as He is, until you SEE Him as He is. Your representation of Him demands a revelation of Him. You will never see yourself as firstborn son

until you see Christ, not only as that reality, but that reality being formed within you. This is an enduring Scriptural principle of whatever you see will be given to you (see **Gen. 13:14,15**).

Attempting to 'do' (i.e. pursue destiny) outside of the framework of an accurate understanding of who you 'are' (Firstborn identity), can be futile - yielding poor results. Worse still, it is potentially disastrous and injurious to both yourself and to those within your sphere of influence and function. What we have witnessed historically in the church was men and women with substantial giftedness in one respect or another, gifts which were part of their spiritual arsenal/tools designed to facilitate their effective accomplishment of divine purpose, but yet had seriously flawed character issues and a dwarfed understanding of the value of relationships within the corporate Body of Christ. Firstborn Sonship, if properly understood and applied, will ensure God's people have a healthy estimation of themselves, mature in Christ-like nature/character, value the brotherhood and also execute divine purpose with no relational collateral damage.

Image and Likeness precedes fruitfulness, multiplication and dominion. The issue of 'identity' radically determines the efficacy and efficiency with which we execute the purpose (destiny) of God for our lives. God made man in His image and likeness and instructed him to be fruitful, multiply and have dominion (**Gen. 1:27,28**). 'Image' has got to do with exactly representing all of God's nature/character. Dominion, the exercise and expression of Divine rule/administration, which incorporates the idea of 'work' and 'fruitfulness', was given to the 'image' of God in man. 'Dominion and fruitfulness' relates to our destiny, and image relates to our identity, which includes character/nature. Dominion (destiny) is given to the Divine image (identity). No image, no dominion or fruitfulness.

We are the firstborn sons of God and this truth will drastically alter how we view, posture and position ourselves in the world. It will deeply alter issues of our self-concept, self-worth, estimation of ability, placement within a corporate dynamic within the Body of Christ, etc. In this study series, we seek to uncover the meaning of the firstborn sons of Christ.

I cannot over-emphasise the importance of the recovery and re-instatement of the principle of firstborn sonship into the mentality of all sons of God. Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by His Father at His baptism (Matt 3). Immediately thereafter, the devil challenged His identity as God's Son by three temptations in the wilderness (Matt 4). **The enemy knew that if he could erode into and so diminish an understanding within Jesus that He was God's Son, that he would incapacitate Him in His desire to execute His function in His Father's will.** This satanic strategy has not changed. Destiny is deferred or denied, so long as identity is dented.

In this study series, we shall explore the biblical principles of Firstborn Sonship using CASE STUDIES of various firstborn sons. Both positive and negative factors in these case studies will be noted. We will examine those that accurately exhibited firstborn characteristics, and those who, for various reasons, forfeited firstborn status. Here are some of the case studies we intend exploring:

- Israel as a nation
- Isaac, a son of promise, instead of Ishmael
- The Levites as a tribe
- Jacob who replaced Esau as firstborn
- Abel who functioned as firstborn instead of Cain
- Joseph who replaced Reuben as firstborn

- Ephraim who replaced Manasseh as firstborn
- Samuel as a firstborn son offered as a firstfruit
- David as a type of the Firstborn
- David who replaced Saul as the first king.
- Jehoram as a negative example of firstborn.
- Jesus Christ
- The Church

Jesus Christ – the Firstborn: In our discussion of all of the above, we shall give **primary attention to Jesus Christ**, who in His days on earth as the Son of Man, modelled to us how we should function as the Sons of God. We are the firstborn sons of God in Christ Jesus.

Christ desires to mature in each of us as the firstborn of God.

Rom 8:28,29 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. **For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON so that He would be THE FIRSTBORN among (i.e. 'IN') many brethren.**

Our firstborn status has very little to do with ourselves. We are God's firstborn son in Christ. In the verse above, the word 'among' is inaccurately translated so. It should read '**IN**', according to the meaning of its Greek counterpart, '**EN**'. Hence Christ, who is the firstborn, desires to be the firstborn son **IN** us. It is not so much about us trying to be it; rather it is simply allowing HIM to become all He is within us.

Christ is intent on bringing many sons to glory (**Hebrews 2:10**). We are heirs of our Heavenly Father and joint-heirs with His son, Jesus Christ (**Rom.8:16,17**). We are to be all that He is. We have access to all that He has.

Here is a brief summative overview of Jesus Christ as the patterned Firstborn Son:

- He lived with a **specific mindset** concerning His identity and status. He knew who He was. The firm grip He had on who He was, was probably the greatest secret to His success.
- His firstborn reality was rooted in the **knowledge of His Father's love and care** for Him.
- He came as an **exact representation of the Father**. His nature, character and sense of function or purpose mirrored that of the Father. His identity (nature) and destiny (function) flowed directly out from an intimate and dependant relationship with His Father. A son's identity emits from and is strongly rooted in his indisputable, incontestable knowledge and unswerving conviction of His Father's love. A son's identity is in the name (nature) of his father. Consider how David is described and thus identified in reference to the one who fathered him, viz. Jesse. [**1 Sam. 17:58**: Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, " I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."]
- He was fully aware of the **rights and privileges** attendant with His status as firstborn. He was conscious of His pre-eminence over all things and that all things will be consummated in His firstborn identity. He knew all resource was at His command in so far as it facilitated His Father's will.

- He came also with a **clear mandate of function**. Firstborn sons are purpose oriented. They exhibit a keen sense of responsibility. Jesus functioned as a King and High Priest (Prophet also). Kingship and High Priestly ministry are key facets of Firstborn Sonship.
- He was fully aware of **the satanic scheme** to destroy the firstborn reality within Him; thus, He overcame temptation and did not forfeit firstborn status, privilege and function by not being faithful to the nature, character, responsibility and obedience attendant with firstborn sonship.
- By His individual **commitment to obedience to His Father's will** in all things, He **set a pattern** for many **other sons** of God to follow in the same order. He always had 'others' at the forefront of His mind in applying Himself personally in any spiritual activity.
- He was also aware of **His placement as the 'head son'** – senior brother in the family of God – and His role in leading other sons into the same stature as Himself – the **corporate awareness**. He understood that He in His singularity or individuality, represented and thus embraced a plurality. His personal, private acts and attitudes had corporate effect and repercussions.

ISRAEL (A TYPE OF THE CHURCH) WAS GOD'S FIRSTBORN SON

The exodus account of Israel from Egyptian bondage will receive our attention as well. The exodus from Egypt with all its associated drama was about one simple truth – **the activation, release and thus emergence of a firstborn son identity and reality**. Israel, as a representation of God's firstborn son, demands our keen consideration. Their release from Egyptian bondage was really a liberation of an entire corporate community into their firstborn identity and function. Their observance of the Passover prefaced this. The observance of the spiritual principles embedded in Passover are prerequisite to our exit from mentalities that keep us enslaved and thus impoverished in our mindsets, into our privileged position as God's firstborn sons. These issues too will be covered in this series.

Firstborn sonship encapsulates the representative principle, i.e. one has the capacity to stand for many. Consistently we will draw reference to the sheer power of representation locked up in the firstborn principle. How did God smite Egypt? **Psalms 136:10a** succinctly and poignantly explains the answer, viz. **"IN their FIRSTBORN."** To render a potentially powerful corporate entity impotent, don't seek to attack it in its entirety; only just kill its firstborn. To cripple Egypt, the super-power of their day, God simply obliterated their firstborn, for inherent within the firstborn principle is power, force, strength and pre-eminence.

Psalms 136:10a To Him who **smote the Egyptians in their firstborn** ...

The corollary of this fact then is also that, in order to empower a corporate community, simply strengthen their firstborn identity. Every single individual son of God must elevate into their status as God's firstborn son and by doing so, consolidate and empower their corporate strength of the global church.

Bondage and enslavement (as symbolically depicted by Egypt) of any kind is prohibitive to the release of a firstborn sonship identity. **"Let my son go"** is still the cry of the Father to Pharaonic systems of religion or false mindsets.

Exodus 4:22,23 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, "Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I said to you, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.

Note that firstborn sonship is a **corporate reality** – the entire nation (plural) is accorded a description in the singular, viz. 'son' and 'firstborn'. Firstborn sonship concerns the emergence of a whole community of God's people into their birthright as heirs of the Father and joint heirs with His Son – and not just sporadic expressions of it here and there in one or two people or groups.

Num. 3:13 "For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am the LORD." {See Also **Psalm 78:51**}

When God released Israel, His firstborn son from Egypt, He simultaneously destroyed the firstborn son in Egypt. These two processes are juxta-positioned and are in essence bi-directional. The angel of death could not kill the firstborn of Israel, but only of Egypt. Egypt represents a system of religion (Egypt is often referred to as the 'house of bondage') as well as a mindset. Israel's firstborn was preserved, while Egypt's perished. To release one, God had to destroy the other. The destruction of one meant the liberation of the other.

This reminds me of another dual but opposite processes recorded **2 Samuel 3:1** - "Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David grew steadily stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker continually." In both cases, the oppressor (Saul/Egypt) is weakened by the growing strength of the one oppressed (David/Israel). Actually, the growing strength of David is the weakening factor in Saul's house. Also, the increasing groan for the manifestation of firstborn sonship in Israel is eroding factor to Egypt's strength. Interestingly also is the fact that both Israel and David are representation of firstborn sonship (Ps. 89:27)

In a sense, if **Egypt is a type of a false system of church/religion**, then that system has a false representation of the firstborn principle which must be destroyed.

Also, if **Egypt represents a wrong mentality of enslavement and orphanity**, then that mindset has got to be expunged and eradicated if the thought/reality of firstborn sonship is to be erected and established.

Further, **Egypt may represent any worldly system, e.g. economic, political, educational, commercial, medical**, etc. Elements within these systems which are not aligned with God's nature and will are being 'shaken'. This manifests itself in the form of global crises affecting every part of the planet, all of which is initiated by God and not the devil (**Heb.12:25-29**). All of this is for one purpose, viz. the liberation of the sons of God into their firstborn sonship identity and function. In the present era, it seems like all systems are failing, and this day of global calamity and crisis is really a day of the restoration of divine identity to sons of God. From crisis, can come 'kairos' (Thamo Naidoo). To heal the identity crisis within us, and bring us back fully to our identity in Christ, at times God will permit crisis in our world in order

for us to emerge fully into our firstborn sonship status and function. We must migrate from 'identity in crisis' to 'identity in Christ'.

The terms, '**smote, kill and struck down**' in the verses cited above imply '*to obliterate something before potential is attained or purpose released*' (Shalien Singh). To render the church ineffective, satan is intent on keeping us from accessing our firstborn sonship status in Christ. He is aware that if the corporate church comes into this understanding, that God's purposes will begin to run with swiftness upon the whole earth.

Israel, as God's firstborn son, was preserved because of the blood. We too have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God. We will give attention to the issue of redemption and awesome significance for us within the economy of firstborn sonship.

Here are some broad issues that will be covered in this series:

- Sonship in Christ
- Church of the Firstborn Patterned after Christ, the Firstborn.
- Release of Firstborn identity and destiny: Escaping Egypt
- Firstborn Mentality and Reality
- Firstborn Character
- Firstborn Privileges
- Firstborn Function and Responsibilities
- Forfeiture of Firstborn Privilege
- Prophetic Perspectives regarding the Firstborn

I pray that as we engage this series of study together, unpacking the details of the summative overview presented above, that you would meditate weekly upon the truths released. Meditate earnestly upon your identity as the firstborn sons of God in Christ and become and accomplish all He has destined for you. Let this principle SATURATE your THINKING. Let it become your 'default' mindset.

"You become what you think. If you think like a firstborn son, you will become it" (Thamo Naidoo).

Let the **CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN** in Christ **ARISE!**

Heb. 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect

In closing, can I implore you to deeply and repetitively meditate on the principles highlighted in the study above, as well as on the passage below:

Heb. 12:18-24

- 18 For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind,
- 19 and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them.
- 20 For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned."
- 21 And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling."

- 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and
to myriads of angels,
- 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the
Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,
- 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better
than the blood of Abel.

Without fear, hesitation, doubt or unbelief, forget your past experiences of failure, expunge any remorse and regret - break off any negative mindset of guilt or condemnation - migrate from your previous levels of success or failure - etc. ... and ... in confident faith and expectant hope, believe with me that you would in your subjective experience amount to God's desire for you to be His firstborn. You are about to access a whole new world and reality in God.

Firstborn Sons, ARISE! May Great Grace and Peace be yours.

Acknowledgement and Gratitude: I am hugely indebted and eternally grateful to Apostle Thamo Naidoo and Prophet Shaun Blignaut for providing spiritual keys granting access and penetrative insight into the firstborn sonship reality. Most of what we shall explore in this current series will essentially be an amplification of truth these men of God have imparted to me concerning this subject. I encourage you to listen to the six audio teaching sessions of Thamo Naidoo's series on the Firstborn Son, as well as to the three sessions of Shaun Blignaut's on the same subject. [These are available at www.thamonaiddoo.com; click on these specified links to go there directly <http://thamonaiddoo.com/gate-ministries/sunday-messages-from-2014>; <http://thamonaiddoo.com/resources/october-2013-asom>]

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