

Our Children Are Blessed

Family life is something most of us desire, but those who struggle to obtain children can more easily recognise that “children are truly a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.” (Psalm 127:3) Children are a God given, precious gift, sadly unacknowledged by some, but the delight of those who worship God. Of them He says “your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the heart of your home, your children like olive plants around your table.” (Psalm 128:3)

Nothing gives a wise man or woman more pleasure than to see their children grow and prosper – develop into stable, happy and balanced individuals, contributing to society and further generations, but there are biblical conditions to such success. God says “He will bless them *that fear the Lord*, both small and great” and give you increase more and more, you and your children.”

Christ chose to give us the example of blessing little children in Mark 10:16, ‘And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.’ They won’t remember it but that’s why we in the Church of God have a special ceremony where our children, still small enough to be placed in arms, are blessed in the name of Jesus Christ. They may not remember it, but God never forgets. That’s what most parents long for – to see God’s blessings pass down their generations, but though some blessings are assured to the children of those who fear (take heed of) God, most will depend upon the actions their children take.

The first step though, must be taken by the parents. God says “Now therefore, listen to me, my children, for blessed are those who keep my ways.” They can expect to see their family grow, Psalm 128:6. ‘Yes, may you see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel!’ Their family will be their pleasure, Proverbs 17:6. ‘Children’s children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children is their father.’

We see that the Bible calls True Christians the ‘children of God’, Romans 8:16. ‘The spirit itself bears witness ... that we are the children of God.’ All of God’s children are led by the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:14. ‘For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.’

It is only through the power of that spirit that we are enabled to keep God’s ways, and God actually rewards us for keeping them, for as we saw at the start, children are a blessing He commands. So, the children of the righteous Christian are actually God’s grandchildren, a very special and blessed group. In Isaiah 65:23 God says ‘They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; (terrible calamity) for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord.’

There are good reasons why God’s grandchildren are blessed, Proverbs 20:7 tells us that ‘the righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him.’ That blessing includes prosperity, as we saw in Psalm 115:14 ‘May the Lord *give you increase* more and more, you and your children,’ and also protection from the coming calamity upon Israel where our nation faces invasion. Isaiah 49:25, ‘For I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children.’

We gain some indication of why our children should be so blessed, in Acts 2:38-39. ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’ Here the apostle Peter is talking to the Jews whose consciences pricked them after Christ’s crucifixion, verse 37. ‘Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’

The promise then, is to all those who God shall call, *and that includes our children*, as those verses make clear.

Has God called our children? Yes, He has, because God’s people follow the instructions given to them in Deuteronomy 6:7. ‘You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up’.

Our children are brought up on God's word. They learn it at home and at church, day by day and year by year, as they grow. As children, it becomes as much a part of their diet as their daily food, and because we teach them God's way, and correct them when they stray over those years, it gradually becomes part of their character, whether they like it or not! The majority of teenagers rebel against their parent's teaching for some time, but their desire to find their own way in the world can never eradicate that foundational teaching and the standards that are inculcated in their youth.

Proverbs 22:6 says 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'

Our children then, by virtue of the education about God, which they are given *by their parents*, **are** called. However, that does not mean that they are chosen (Matthew 22:14 'For many are called, but few are chosen.') God watches those who receive a calling to see how they react. Do they respect and apply the principles they learn in their youth? If they fear (take heed) of God, then, in His own time, God will bring them to repentance. (Romans 2:4 'Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God *leads you to repentance?*')

Hopefully, that turning point will be early enough in adulthood for them to teach their own children about God, for if they do not, the blessings they enjoy are likely to fade somewhat in the next generation, unless their children are receptive to the example of their grandparents, which I have seen occur in God's church.

Those who are led by God's principles, notice that sometimes they feel uncomfortable with the way society seems to be heading. They see right described as wrong, evil encouraged by lawmakers and they recognize that they don't fit in comfortably with the direction society is taking. This is God leading them towards repentance.

So, we have learned that children are a blessing from God, and blessed again because they are reared up in, and educated in, God's way of life – the instructions contained in the Bible. As it says in Isaiah 54:13, 'All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.'

When God sees children raised in God-fearing families, He rejoices and directs His Divine favour towards them **for their success**. Deuteronomy 30:9, 'The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers.'

The natural result of that favour and education in God's way is prosperity for those children and their parents, Psalm 25:12-13, 'Who *is* the man that fears the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity and his descendants shall inherit the earth.'

King David of Israel noticed that. Psalm 37:25-26, 'I have been young, and now am old ; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lends; and his descendants are blessed.'

God's eye is always upon those children for their care and protection, even in danger, lest the descendants of His people are lost – Proverbs 11:21, 'Though they join forces, the wicked will not go unpunished; but the posterity (offspring) of the righteous will be delivered.' These are the blessings enjoyed by our children of right, but then other blessings come from their own personal choices.

We have seen that righteous parents are blessed, and of course their children naturally become parents themselves in time. Brought up to understand what is right and wrong, our children will gain the same blessings as their parents as they learn to apply the things they were taught from God's word.

A clear and specific promise is given by God to children who honour that way of life which they were taught and which was exemplified by their parents. Deuteronomy 5:16, 'Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.' Ephesians 6:2 says that is the first commandment with a promise attached!

Our children naturally learn that we pray to God and that He answers our prayers. They have the chance to see how walking in His ways results in a stable, happy marriage, peace of mind, and a life full of purpose. They cannot help but witness the fact that God blesses those who chose to obey Him - Deuteronomy 28:1-14, 'Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God:

"Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country.

"Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

"Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

"Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

"The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

"The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

"The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. And the Lord will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them'.

If they are observant and wise, they will notice that others do not enjoy such blessings, and that things don't work out as well for those who fail to follow God's way. Over the years they will notice that despite any problems and difficulties, God works things out for their parents. Romans 8:28, 'And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.'

This is not because of their parent's perfection, for they recognize that their parents are far from perfect, but that God is most merciful to them because they **try** to follow His law. Psalm 103:17, 'But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children' or to their grandchildren.

Both parents and their children raised up in the knowledge of God's way have the chance for a wonderful future, even though the world is heading for disaster.

God has revealed that He will protect and preserve His people right through the seven years of the coming tribulation. Yes, some of His chosen firstfruits will give their lives in witness to the world, in faith and confidence that they will soon be resurrected, but these are only the strongest in faith. Many will still be alive and changed in the twinkling of an eye, at the return of Christ, 1 Corinthians 15:52, 'in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.' Wherever they are at Christ's first return for His Saints, they will join their martyred brethren for 3½ years on the Sea of Glass. (read our End Time series, Part Two, in General Literature)

Others, not as spiritually mature, will be preserved and provided for by God in a place of safety in the modern nation of Jordan, where for the 3½ years the Beast does not go. (read A Place of Safety) Still more who leave their conversion too late, are unable to reach that place, and will experience the horrors of the tribulation. Those of our children who come to recognize their need to repent too late will

face this trial, but the indicators are, as we have read, that God will bring them through to Christ's final return with His Saints to establish His Kingdom. (read End Time series Part Four)

To God, such children are an invaluable and irreplaceable treasure – physical human beings, specially blessed while small, who have repented and were brought up as children knowing how to live God's way – exactly who are needed, to provide a living example to the few survivors who survive those desperate years of the tribulation to come.

Yes, our children might not now realize it, but they are very special, blessed by God, who plans a tremendous future for them in His Kingdom.

Finally then, let's visit just a few of the scriptures that describe that glorious future.

Psalm 112:1-2, 'Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, Who delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed.' Their knowledge and example will provide just the example God needs, after Christ's final return. They will become the physical leaders of their communities and so hold authority under God's family.

Isaiah 54:3 'For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities inhabited.'

As the years go by, our children and their children will spread out and re-colonise the empty but regenerated lands of America, Canada, Australia, Europe and the British Isles, when Israel in the Middle East becomes full. (Isaiah 49:20) 'The children you will have, after you [thought they were lost], will say again in your ears, 'The place is too small for me; give me a place where I may dwell.'

Isaiah 49:22-23 'Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples; They shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders; Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers; they shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord, For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.'

Some of our children will become ambassadors to the Gentile nations, their children greatly respected, even by their kings.

Isaiah 61:9 'Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the posterity (offspring) whom the Lord has blessed.'

Isaiah 65:19 'I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.'

So, if you who read this are a son or daughter of a true Christian, count your blessings and make those right choices for the sake of your own children. Or, if you are a Christian whose children at this point have not yet been chosen by God, for He brings people to repentance in His own time, never give up on them, stay close, for families are forever!

Finally, in conclusion, at the close of the millennium, and the following 100 years of the 2nd resurrection, when all men and women have had their chance to gain immortal life in the expanded family of God, our children and their children's children will still remain as a witness to the choices, the right choices, we and hopefully they, have made.

Isaiah 66:22 'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,' says the Lord, "So shall your descendants and your name remain."