

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.”

(Hebrews 13: 8)

Circular Letter

March 1980

Completion of the Church of the Firstborn

Dear brothers and sisters, dear friends, I greet you warmly in the previous name of Jesus Christ. Today's reflection is based on a quote from Hebrews 12:22-23:

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all...”

At first glance, it might seem as though the apostle was addressing the perfect Church in heaven, yet it was still on earth. It was Paul to whom the mystery with the Church was revealed until its completion. It was him whom God used to write about deeper truths, including election, predestination, transformation and rapture. What Moses meant to those called from the Church of Israel in the Old Testament, Paul was to mean to the Church of God in the New Testament. In this reflection, we want to place before the eyes of every true child of God a state of faith based on the RIGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN so that there is no room for doubt and unbelief.

In the biblical text, the word BIRTHRIGHT appears, applied to the Church of the living God. We want to take a closer look at this concept. God placed a special blessing on the BIRTHRIGHT from the beginning. Indeed, the promise given by Him was not bound by any condition, but is based on predestination. When God sent Moses to the ruler of Egypt, He commanded him to say this sentence first:

“Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my FIRSTBORN. And I said unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me.” (Exodus 4:22-23).

That *“Thus saith the Lord!”* stood in Israel and stands in the Church at the beginning of God's message to all THE FIRSTBORN and applies to all the sons and daughters of God until the end. Someone may be slightly offended at first by the fact that God considered not only the FIRSTBORN SONS, but also the FIRSTBORN OF CATTLE, to be sanctified and consecrated to Him.

This is of particular importance because the FIRSTBORN animals were sacrificed for the FIRSTBORN of ISRAEL.

All the firstling males that come of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep. Thou shalt eat it before the Lord thy God year by year in the place which the Lord shall choose, thou and thy household.” (Deuteronomy 15:19-20).

The people to whom God, by His free decision, promised the BIRTHRIGHT, were to sacrifice the FIRSTBORN animals – males – for reconciliation and to eat them in a place designated for this purpose. Christ, the sacrificial Lamb of God, who gave His blood and life for us as the FIRSTBORN said:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:53-54).

We all know what that means. Most readers overlook this basic fact of the BIRTHRIGHT, which is already emphasized in the first God-satisfying sacrifice:

And Abel, he also brought of the FIRSTLINGS of his flock and of the fat thereof. (Genesis 4:4)

A bright light shines even in the deepest darkness for those who are spiritually minded. Abel, who held THE BIRTHRIGHT, sacrificed the best of the FIRSTBORN from his flock. *“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”* (Hebrews 11:4)

No one had to instruct Abel. In the biblical sense, faith is not an empty word that anyone can treat as they would like, but it is a God-given revelation of His will. God's favour only rests on the sacrifice that is offered in such faith. Abel became the first example for all the FIRSTBORN.

“And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.”

Isn't our heart burning when we read this text? The Lord had respect unto Abel, who brought the FIRSTBORN FROM HIS FLOCK as an offering to God. It reminds us of the words the Lord spoke to Moses:

“And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.” (Exodus 33:19)

“But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.” (Genesis 4:5)

The invisible process within Cain's heart was reflected in his face. Hatred, envy and jealousy do not remain hidden, they penetrate, come to the fore and become visible. Then we read the sad words:

“... Cain rose up against Abel, and slew him.” (verse 8).

From the beginning, there were two different seeds and lineages that the Lord showed us again in the Gospel of Matthew 13, in the parable of the sower. It is in this context a number of thoughts and Scriptures could be mentioned. However, to stay on topic with BIRTHRIGHT, we will continue with the story of Esau and Jacob.

“And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy BIRTHRIGHT. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this BIRTHRIGHT do to me?” (Genesis 25:31-32)

Esau did not understand the meaning and importance of BIRTHRIGHT at all. After all, Jacob and all other people had to expect that they would die someday.

“And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his BIRTHRIGHT unto Jacob.”(verse 33)

What meant nothing to one person meant everything to the other. As we know, God led it that way. Jacob and Esau were born as twins. Even though Esau was born, Jacob was already holding his heel. When Rebecca was pregnant, she went to ask the Lord, who gave her this answer:

“Two nations are in thy womb...” (Genesis 25:23)

Jacob (“cunning”) had a meek nature, but he knew what he wanted, not of himself, but by the grace of God. Anyone who follows this event with intellectually and judges humanly can say: *“This was all just a deception, he deceived his brother.”* However, those who believe in predestination observe everything from God's point of view.

Again, it is the apostle Paul who was given this biblical truth by divine revelation, specifically the truth about the events involving Esau and Jacob.

“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.” (Romans 9:11-12)

So far, we can still understand what Paul is explaining, but when he refers to the Old Testament Scripture from Malachi and literally writes:

“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated”, then it is difficult for us to understand. Who doesn't wonder if God did the right thing?

Let us not be afraid, all He does is perfect. It is in this event that the meaning of the BIRTHRIGHT is most clearly presented before our eyes. God established everything in advance on the basis of His omniscience, according to the good pleasure of his will. He knew who would believe and who would not believe, who would receive salvation and who would not receive it.

The BIRTHRIGHT was connected with the requirement for the BLESSING of the FIRSTBORN, which consisted, among other things, in the fact that the heir received a double portion of the inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17). In Genesis 27, we can read how Jacob deceitfully obtained the BLESSING of the FIRSTBORN from his father Isaac, who was blind in his old age. In our eyes it is certainly reprehensible, in God's eyes it pleases Him.

Among other things, Isaac said:

*“May God give you from the dew of heaven and from the fatness of the earth, an abundance of grain and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: **cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.**”* (Genesis 27:28-29)

The blessing, which was equivalent to a prophecy and was pronounced directly by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, is still valid today for the Israelites, Jacob's descendants. Whoever blesses Israel will be blessed, whoever curses it is cursed. **What God has blessed remains blessed forever.**

When Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, Esau came to his father. He asked him, *“Who are you?”* And he said, *“I am your son, the first-born, Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly...”*. If we read this story to the end, we are extremely shaken. Isaac explains to his son

Esau that he has already given the BLESSING of the FIRSTBORN to Jacob.

„And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.“ (verse 34)

He seems to have finally understood the value of the BIRTH-RIGHT. How he must have felt when he got the answer:

“Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.” (verse 35)

First Jacob deprived his brother of the BIRTHRIGHT and then of the BLESSING of the FIRSTBORN. **Who belongs to the FIRST-FRUITS** will have the full blessing of God.

“Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.“ (verse 38)

This event shows us the importance of the BIRTHRIGHT. **God blesses in a number of different ways, but the BLESSING of the FIRSTBORN is a one-time event.** Many will give a report of blessings on that day, but then they will weep and mourn. For Esau, the hour of wisdom came too late. The time of blessing was gone. He began to cry loudly. There are many who call God their Father, but who do not know anything about the BIRTHRIGHT of the true Church of God, who do not seek the BLESSING of the FIRSTFRUITS, yes, they underestimate it, but at the crucial moment they will miss it. Then they will also weep and mourn. We reflected on the story of Cain and Abel and found that true faith is a revelation. Abel received it from God. After the Lord graciously accepted his sacrifice, Cain became his enemy. We see this similarly in the account of the events of Jacob and Esau. We read: *“And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing where-with his father blessed him.”* (verse 41)

This still exists today among the brethren who call God their Father, namely, that they will become enemies of one another because of the blessing that the Lord has given. In Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of the nation, the salvation history of the New Testament was outlined. Pagan nations stood outside the Divine Plan of Salvation. Paul writes of the Jews: *“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises...”* (Romans 9:4)

God has blinded the eyes of the people of Israel so that we might see. They rejected Christ, the FIRSTBORN, so that we might be given the opportunity to receive Him. Before we delve into this concept from a New Testament perspective, we want to emphasize Jesus Christ in particular as the FIRSTBORN.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29)

The same blessing that was upon Christ, the FIRSTBORN, is prepared for all who, born through the same Spirit, receive the BIRTHRIGHT. We do not want to deal with God's sonship in general, as it happens everywhere, but with the CHURCH OF the FIRSTBORN, as we read in Hebrews 12. **The FIRSTBORN are entitled to receive the divine inheritance and have already been blessed through Jesus Christ.**

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ...” (Ephesians 1:3)

The blessed of the Lord are the bearers of God's promises, the heirs of God, and the joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. They are begotten by the same Spirit of God and receive the same fullness of the Holy Spirit.

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption...” (Romans 8:15)

Hebrews 9:12 speaks of the sacrifices that were offered in the Old Testament and then of Christ as the sacrifice of the New Covenant. *“... but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”*

The blood of animals brought only temporary atonement, but Christ was the Redeemer Himself, of whom the prophets prophesied, who brought us redemption and salvation.

“... How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (verse 14)

In the Old Testament, it was the FIRSTLINGS of lambs without blemish which were offered as a temporary atonement for the FIRSTBORN of Israel, but here it was the Lamb of God who shed His divine

blood once and for all. On Golgotha the perfect redemption was brought for all the FIRSTBORN who will brought to perfection in eternity.

“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” (Hebrews 10:14)

All the FIRSTBORN are redeemed by Him, cleansed by His blood, sanctified by the truth of the Word revealed by the Spirit, and in Him they are made perfect. We rest in the finished work of God's redemption for us.

“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” (James 1:18)

The Lamb of God, who was without blemish, redeemed us, who were like Jacob. He, the One without sin, has graciously granted us forgiveness and the BIRTHRIGHT. Notice, He sacrificed His human body, His divine blood, but as it is written:

“... by the power of the eternal Spirit.” (Heb 9:14, German trans.)

It is by the power of the Spirit of God that new life is begotten in us. **The promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, of which the Lord Jesus spoke, is the BLESSING of the FIRSTBORN, and every believer has the right to it from the first sermon on Pentecost.**

“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Romans 8:23)

The FIRSTFRUITS receive the Holy Spirit as the GIFT OF THE FIRSTFRUITS. This is a divine blessing for the FIRSTBORN. Whoever really possesses the fullness of the Spirit will have the same supernatural effects of this experience. We can read about it in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. This is not some intellectual faith in the Word, but the true acquisition of what God has promised for His own.

Although the eternally valid redemption has already happened on Golgotha, we are still waiting for the final realization, namely the transformation of our mortal bodies.

“For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame

thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”
(2 Corinthians 5:4-5)

All who have the BIRTHRIGHT receive the promise of the Father – the BLESSING of the FIRSTBORN, just as in early Christianity on the day of Pentecost and afterwards. **The Spirit is the guarantee, the earnest, the right to have our bodies changed.** What happened to Christ, the FIRSTFRUITS, will happen to all who belong to Him as the FIRSTFRUITS.

“But every man in his own order: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.” (1 Corinthians 15:23)

In the same way that every promise of the Word that applied to Christ was fulfilled in Him, the Head of the Church, so will every promise be fulfilled in all the members that make up His body.

Our ultimate destiny is to be completely transformed into His image. Just as surely as He received His resurrected body and was taken up into glory, so surely our mortal bodies will be changed and raptured to meet Him.

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Romans 8:11)

Since the foundation of the New Testament Church, the Acts of the Apostles and subsequent letters have been available to us as an eternally valid testimony of God. The Spirit of God will work in the end in the same way through the same gifts of the Spirit and ministries as then. In theory, there may be different opinions about receiving the Holy Spirit, but the effect remains the same in divine practice. There is no change in what God does. **For those chosen by God, predestined, FIRSTBORN, the Holy Spirit is the SEAL of GOD.**

“... who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (2 Corinthians 1:22)

Not a seal, but HIS seal, not a spirit, but HIS SPIRIT. This is the Church of the firstborn written in heaven, who were predestined before the foundation of the world to be sons and daughters. Wherever there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the redeemed are baptised into one body. After all, it is not only baptism by the Spirit, but also by fire, by which all members are transformed into a single unity and become a living organism of the body of Jesus Christ. According to Romans 5:5, the LOVE OF GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

The completion of the Church of the Firstborn will take place in GOD'S LOVE. GOD'S LOVE is the bond of perfection that cannot be broken. Since we have come so close to the great event of the return of Jesus Christ and we can expect the transformation and the rapture at all times, we should all read, if possible every day, 1 Corinthians 13 and earnestly ask God for help to put His Word into practice.

We wish you all of God's rich blessings, whether you live alone or gather with others. Jesus lives. He has risen.

May you be greeted as warmly as possible with His greeting of peace.

United in the love of God

Bro. Frank