

can destroy the firstborn, he has a better chance of destroying the other children as well. It would be like a domino effect because the firstborn sets the pace and maps out the path for the younger siblings. This is why the training of the firstborn is so important. Parents fail many times with their firstborn because they are learning how to be parents. If the firstborn is properly trained, he will have a positive influence on the rest of the children in the home. He is to be an example and serve and help the younger. His life is to be dedicated to the Lord. He is to be a leader and a blessing to others. He is to be strong, faithful, and a visionary. Character must be instilled in the firstborn if we are to see it in the rest of the children. The good qualities of the firstborn will rub off on the rest of the family; likewise, the bad qualities will also rub off.

In conclusion, parents must work and pray hard to establish the right attitude and actions of their firstborn if they desire the blessings of God upon their home (**Proverbs 13:24, 23:13-14, 29:17, Ephesians 6:1-4**). Most children will follow the lead of the firstborn. If we allow the firstborn to throw fits, argue back, or stomp off, rest assured, the other children will follow suit. Our children are to be raised for the glory of God's kingdom. If we can establish this principle with the firstborn, we have a better chance of being successful parents, **Proverbs 22:6**, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"; **Proverbs 22:15**, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."

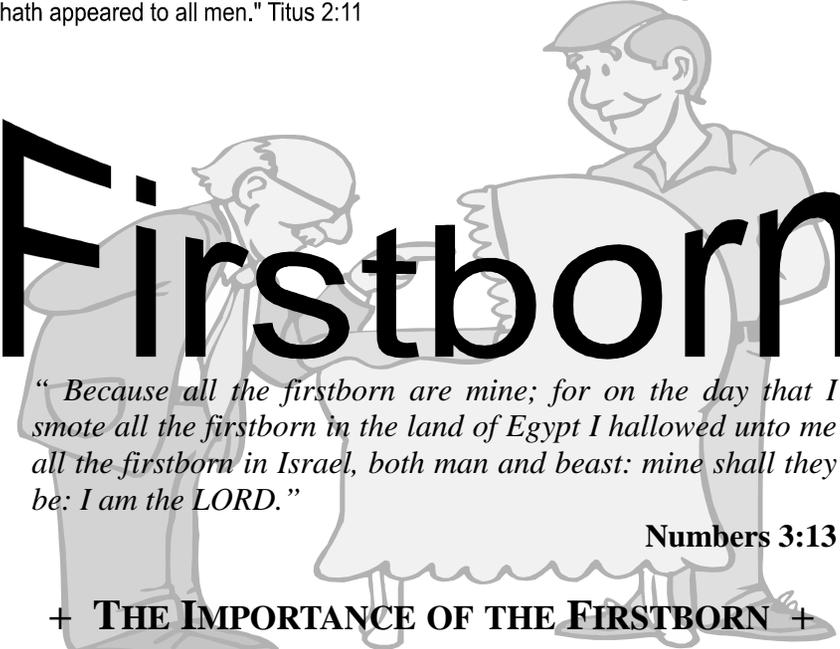
Amen

The RICHES OF GRACE

Robert W. Reed
April 2005

"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Firstborn



"Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the LORD."

Numbers 3:13

+ THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRSTBORN +

The term firstborn appears many times throughout the Holy Scriptures. The word firstborn means more than just being born first, it carries the idea of honor, dignity, and superiority. In the Bible, the words firstborn and firstling are used. Firstborn generally refers to man, and firstling refers to a beast. It is an established fact that the firstborn belongs to God showing the importance of this issue. God wants first things: the first part of our life, the first part of our finances, the first part of our day, etc. If this principle is true, and it is, parents must take notice when it comes to the training of their firstborn child. Amen.

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Colossians 1:18



Victory Baptist Church
Pastor Robert W. Reed
14473 Bellingrath Road
P.O. Box 257
Codan, Alabama 36523
(251) 873-4422

*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
Acts 16:31*

My goal in this article is to speak on the term firstborn and also to show the importance of the training of our firstborn child. The devil, as well as God, desires the firstborn because it is the firstborn that sets the pace for the other children in the family. If the Devil can steal the firstborn, he has a better opportunity of stealing and destroying the entire family.

THE POSITION OF THE FIRSTBORN

The position of the firstborn in the Scripture is clearly seen in places like **Numbers 3:11-12**, “*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine.*” These verses show that the firstborn belong to God. Our text is given to us in memory of the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians and the deliverance of Israel’s firstborn (**vv. 41, 45-46, 8:13-19**). The Levites became a substitute for the Israelites firstborn and they served in the sanctuary. The Levites represented the whole congregation of Israel and acted on their behalf. They were separated unto God from the rest of the nation and used in a special way for His glory. They performed the holy duties of God in the tabernacle. Again, the firstborn belongs to God whether it is man or beast (**Exodus 12:11-15; 13:2, 15; 22:30; 34:19, Leviticus 27:26, Numbers 18:15**).

In **Genesis 49:3**, the firstborn represented the prime of human vigor and was regarded as the beginning of strength for a young married couple. “*Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.*” The firstborn is called the chief of strength in both **Psalms 78:51** and **Psalms 105:36**, and the opener of the womb in **Numbers 18:15**. As we have already stated, the word firstborn means far more than just being born first (**Deut. 21:15-17, Genesis 25:5-6, 27:35-36, 43:33, Psalm 89:27**). Firstborn is an honored and special place. It deals with rank, dignity, leadership, superiority, preeminent status, special rights, privileges, managements, and responsibility. In the Hebrew home, the firstborn son received twice as much inheritance as the other sons. He was a special heir for a number of reasons in which we will discuss later on in this article.

To illustrate the importance of the word firstborn, we can consider the nation of Israel in comparison to other nations; and, Jesus Christ in comparison to other people. Israel as a nation is called firstborn in **Exodus 4:22**, “*And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.*” Israel enjoyed priority status over the other nations in that they were chosen of God as His special people (**Exodus 19:5-6, Jeremiah 31:9, Amos 3:1-2**). Also, we see the preeminence of Christ in the fact that He is called firstborn. In **Matthew 1:25**, He is the firstborn son of Mary in relation to His incarnation. In **Col. 1:15**, He is called the firstborn of every creature. Here, we see His exalted position as Creator of all things. He occupies authority over the entire universe, for it was created by Him and for Him (**vv.16-19**). In **Col. 1:18**, He is called the firstborn among many

brethren. These Scriptures let us know that Jesus Christ was the first to rise from the dead to never die again and, that the saints of God will one day follow him in resurrection being conformed to the image of the Son of God. Alleluia, Amen.

THE PRIVILEGE OF THE FIRSTBORN

The firstborn possessed definite privileges that other members of the family did not have. The Law of Moses said that the firstborn could not be disinherited (**Deut. 21:15-17**). Using the nation of Israel again as an example, they possessed privileges, blessings, and promises that no other nation had in the Old Testament times, **Romans 9:4**, “*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.*” This nation occupied a unique covenant relationship with the Lord (**Psalms 147:19-20, Genesis 12:1-4, John 1:11, Romans 15:8**). These privileges are known as the birthright (**Genesis 25:31**). This inheritance of birthright was passed to the firstborn upon the father’s death. This truth is seen also among kings, where the throne was passed from the father to the firstborn son unless other arrangements were made because of the failure of the firstborn (**II Chronicles 21:3**).

The birthright consisted of basically three things. First, the firstborn has the headship over the family or the clan. He had authority over the younger members similar to that which the father possessed. The eldest son generally took care of the mother after the father’s death and cared for the sisters until they married. Second, the firstborn received a double portion of the estate, that is twice as much as the other sons, who received a single portion each (**Genesis 25:22-33**). Third, the firstborn received a blessing of close and favored covenant relationship with the Lord. These are some of the wonderful privileges of the firstborn.

THE POTENTIAL OF THE FIRSTBORN

The firstborn had great potential for good and the kingdom of God. Along with the position and privileges came great responsibility. If the firstborn failed in his God-ordained position and forfeited his birthright, it was a serious offense. The Bible says that Esau despised his birthright and he is called a profane person (**Hebrews 12:16, Genesis 25:29-34, 27:1-34**). In **Genesis 4:9**, Cain, the firstborn, failed to be his brother’s keeper and Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob, lost his birthright because of his grievous sin. His birthright was passed to Joseph and his two sons (**I Chronicles 5:1**). Throughout Scripture, there are many firstborns who rebelled against God and failed in their calling (Adam, Samson, King Saul, Ammon, Uzziah, Korah, Nadab, etc.). Israel as a nation eventually failed in their responsibilities and rejected the Messiah. They were to be the means whereby the world would hear the gospel and be saved.

God controls the birth order and we must accept our God-given place. Satan wants the firstborn, **I Peter 5:8**, “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*” If he