

Sunday, February 1, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 160 Sonship Edification: Precursors to Sonship, Part 6

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 159 we considered R.B. Thieme's *Edification Complex of the Soul* as a precursor to Sonship Edification (SE).
 - 1884—*The Theocratic Kingdom* by George N.H. Peters—3 Volumes
 - 1935—*The Berean Expositor, Volume XXV* by Charles Welch
 - 1936—*Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks* by G.H. Lang
 - 1972—*Edification Complex of the Soul* by R. B. Thieme, Jr.
 - 1981—*The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* by Zane Hodges
 - 1992—*The Reign of the Servant Kings* by Joseph Dillow
- It was demonstrated that Thieme's primary contribution to development of SE rests in his hierarchical system of edification. It was from Thieme that SE picked up the terminology of structure of levels, phases, and checkpoints with respect to the process of edification. Thieme's concepts regarding edification provided the structural framework to which the rest of the SE's doctrines were affixed.
- This week, we want to consider one final forerunner to the development of SE, the writings of Zane C. Hodges. In our effort to accomplish this we will consider: 1) Hodges' teaching on Double Heirship in Romans 8:17, and 2) the formation and role of the Grace Evangelical Society.

Precursors to Sonship, Continued

Zane C. Hodges

- Zane Clark Hodges was born June 15, 1932 and was reared in Chambersburg, PA. He came to Dallas TX in 1954 after receiving a bachelor's degree from Wheaton College. He received a master of theology degree from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1958. He then taught New Testament Greek and Exegesis (1959–1986) at Dallas Seminary and was chairman of the New Testament Department for some time. Hodges also served as pastor at Victor Street Bible Chapel, formerly The Old Mission in Dallas, for almost fifty years. He was the founder and president of Kerugma Ministries. ([Obituary](#)) (See also [Wheaton History A to Z](#))
- Theologically, Hodges is known for: 1) "Free Grace theology", a view which holds that eternal life is received as a free gift only through belief in Jesus Christ for eternal life (a person cannot lose their salvation, even if they fall away from the faith); 2) "Eternal Rewards", a view that various

passages in the New Testament are not dealing with eternal salvation but addressing Christians and the opportunity to earn eternal rewards or to caution against their loss; and 3) his position on the Majority Text. ([Wikipedia Entry](#))

- In 1981, Hodges released the first edition of *The Gospel Under Siege: A Study of Faith and Works*. While Hodges argues forcefully in *The Gospel Under Siege* for the eternal security of the believer, it is his teaching regarding double heirship in Romans 8:17 that brought him much criticism. This is evident from a consideration of the endnotes that were added to the second edition published in 1992. In the first endnote for Chapter 9 Hodges states the following:

- **“It is particularly in reference to my discussion of heirship that some critics have thought that my ideas were without precedent in Christian literature.** But in thinking so, they are seriously mistaken. Most of my suggestions on this theme were anticipated before the turn of the century by George N. H. Peters (1825–1909), *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 3 vols. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884; reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1952), his magisterial magnum opus. He was born in Berlin, PA, graduated from Wittenberg College, and pastored a number of Lutheran churches in Ohio.

Another significant volume which anticipates the contents of this chapter to a considerable degree is G. H. Lang, *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights & Risks* (London: Roberts, 1936; reprint, Miami Springs, FL: Conley & Schoettle, 1984).” (Hodges, 180-181)

- That Hodges was taking criticism on account of his position regarding double heirship in Romans 8:17 is evident from the first line quoted above. While I have both editions of Hodges work before me, and there are no substantive differences in meaning between them (only minor differences in wording), I will be taking all my quotations from the updated and footnoted second edition under the premise that it is more emblematic of Hodges’ most recent thinking on the subject.
- After leading off Chapter 9 with a quotation of Romans 8:16-17, Hodges states his awareness that the verses in question are “often read as if only one heirship were in view.” He then proceeds to inform his readers that another reading is permissible “with only a slight alteration of the English punctuation.”
 - “This declaration is often read as if only one heirship were in view. **However, with only a slight alteration of the English punctuation (which is equally permissible in the original Greek)**, Paul’s words may be read as follows:

and if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” (Hodges, 127)

- Please compare Hodges suggested reading and the reading as it stands in the King James Bible (KJB) side by side:

| Hodges Suggested Reading | King James Bible (1769) |
|---|---|
| And if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. | And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with <i>him</i> , that we may be also glorified together. |

- In the very next paragraph Hodges admits that he MUST alter the punctuation of the verse so that it reads in a manner consistent with the position the he is advancing. In other words, Hodges’ comments reveal that unless the punctuation, and thereby the reading, of the passage are altered, his position that there are two forms of heirship in Romans 8:17 is unsustainable. The text is altered first to enable Hodges to state/advance his position rather than Hodges altering his position to match the text.
 - **“Under this reading of the text, there are two forms of heirship.** One of these is based on being children of God. The other is based on suffering with Christ. This distinction is crucial for understanding the New Testament teaching on this subject.” (Hodges, 127)
- Put another way, “now that I have changed the text to read in my favor, it is now apparent that there are two forms of heirship spoken of in the verse. Consequently, one can see how critical this altered reading is to my position. This distinction stemming from my altered reading of the verse is crucial for understanding the issue of inheritance throughout the rest of the New Testament.” In short, Hodges admits that if the text is allowed to stand as it reads in the KJB, there is no basis for arguing for “two forms of heirship” in Romans 8:17. He MUST alter it before advancing his position.
- While this type of text tampering might be permissible for someone like Hodges, it is certainly not permissible for the teachers of SE, regardless of which version of the position they are advancing, who also happen to believe in the inerrancy of the KJB. What our investigation into the precursors of SE reveals is that one has to tamper with the King James reading in Romans 8:17 to advance the position that there is a difference between “heirs” and “joint-heirs” in the verse. This text tampering falls into the following four general categories:
 - First, deny that the textual FACT that *ei per* (“if so be that”) is a 1st class condition. There is no doubt that *ei per* is a condition; the question is which type of condition it is. Even the Oxford English Dictionary acknowledges a variety of conditions that can exist depending on the mood with which the condition “if” is coupled. In Romans 8:17 the condition *ei per* (“if so be that” in English) is followed by a verb in the indicative mood “suffer with.” This is a textual FACT that cannot be distorted or ignored.
 - This view has been adopted by SE teachers Newbold and McDaniel (see [Lesson 154](#) page 3) as well as by the “Joint-Heir View” of Northern California Grace Fellowship (NCGF).
 - Second, deny the textual FACT that *ei per* (“if so be that”) carries the force of “since” in its meaning and usage (see [Ifs, Ands, or Buts](#) pages 8-10 and Lesson 157 pages 6 and 7). See

the translation of *ei per* in I Corinthians 8:5 as “though” and II Thessalonians 1:6 as “seeing.”

- While we are uncertain on the views of SE teachers Newbold and McDaniel regarding the meaning of *ei per* it is clear that NCGF’s “joint-heirs view” does deny the textual FACT that *ei per* carries the force of “since.” If this were not the case, the King James translators would have been mistaken in how they rendered the word in I Corinthians 8:5 and II Thessalonians 1:6.
- Third, retranslate the second occurrence of the Greek word *de* in Romans 8:17 as “but” before “joint-heirs with Christ” instead of “and,” ala G.H. Lang (see Lesson 157 pages 2 to 6). A related but slightly different version of Lang’s view is to argue that EVERY TIME the Greek words *men* and *de* occur together in the same verse in the book of Romans *de* is ALWAYS used to CONTRAST two different things and NEVER serves to CONNECT two things; ala Joseph Dillow in *Reign of the Servant Kings* (see Lesson 157 pages 2 to 6).
 - Dillow’s position identified above has been advocated for as a SECONDARY ARGUMENT by the supporters of NCGF’s “Joint-Heir View.” While Dillow’s view does not go as far as Lang’s in altering the King James text outright, it does, on the basis of an unsubstantiated Greek rule, MANDATE a similar reading of the verse to the one offered by Lang (i.e., the “and” in front of “joint-heirs with Christ” should be read/understood as CONTRASTIVE (as though it were a “but”) and not a CONJUNCTION). While stopping short of correcting/altering the King James text, the net effect of Dillow’s view is the same as Lang’s. At this time we are unaware of any similar arguments being made by SE teachers Newbold and/or McDaniel.
- Fourth, disregard, dismiss, and/or alter the punctuation of King James text so that it reads in a manner conducive to supporting the “two inheritance view” that there is a difference between “heirs” and “joint-heirs” ala Hodges (see above).
 - Once again this is done by a SECONDARY ARGUMENT put forth by NCGF’s “Joint-Heir View.” It is argued on the basis of the fact that the 1611 edition of the KJB contained a colon (“:”) between “joint-heirs with Christ” and “if so be that” and that the 1769 edition contains a semicolon (“;”), so that any argument based upon punctuation is completely bogus and a “red herring.” In other words, the punctuation as it stands in the 1769 edition of the KJB does not matter. While I would maintain that an argument for “heirs” and “joint-heirs” being the same based upon punctuation ALONE is not strong; I would further state that any position that completely dismisses the punctuation found in the 1769 edition of the KJB as having no bearing on how the verse should be read/understood is eerily similar to the re-punctuation position advanced by Hodges. For the sake of fairness and clarity, at this time we are not aware of any such punctuation arguments being offered by SE teachers Newbold and/or McDaniel.

- The bottom line is this; the double heirship view of Romans 8:17 was a vital point of entry into the articulation of SE by Blades in the early half of the last decade (00 decade). The double heirship view of Blades and Newbold is found in varying degrees and forms in the precursory writings of Peters, Welch, Lang, Hodges, and Dillow. With the possible exception of Welch who's exposition of Romans 8:17 is impacted more by his Acts 28 dispensational stance than anything else; all of these precursors to SE in some way, shape, manner, or form seek to alter the King James text in Romans 8:17 so that the passages read in their favor. In our day, the teachers of the various variations of SE have in varying degrees done likewise either directly or indirectly so as to advance their position. This has been done by either denying the TEXTUAL and/or TRASLATION FACTS plainly exhibited by a consideration of the English text of the KJB or by adopting SECONDARY ARGUMENTS that functionally undermine the translation and/or punctuation found in the standard King James text of 1769.
- Moving on, Hodges, in similar fashion to Sonship teachers, appeals to "Old Testament custom" to support his views on double heirship in Romans 8:17.
 - "The concept of two kinds of heirship is very natural indeed in the light of Old Testament custom. As is well known, in a Jewish family all the sons shared equally in their father's inheritance, except for the oldest, or firstborn, son who received a double portion. That is, he inherited twice as much as the other sons.

Against this background, Paul can be understood as saying that all of God's children are heirs, simply because they are children. But those who suffer with Christ have a special joint heirship with Christ. It is of great significance that later in this chapter Christ is actually described as the firstborn among many brethren (8:29).

Naturally, all believers are God's heirs. In the eternal future they will most assuredly inherit all of the blessings which are unconditionally promised to them. Among these is an eternal glory (Romans 8:30) which is inherent in the resurrection itself. . .

But in Romans 8:17, Paul speaks also of a *co-heirship* that results in *co-glory*. This contrast is a bit easier to see in Greek than it is in English.

In the Greek text, Paul juxtaposes two words for *heir*, one of which is the simple word for this, and the other a compound word roughly equal to our word *co-heir*. Likewise, two other compound words in Paul's text express the thought of *co-suffering* and *co-glorification*. As Paul's words make clear, such an heirship is dependent on something more than saving faith. This heirship is contingent on our experience of suffering with Christ.

Romans 8:17 thus confronts us with a double heirship. One of these is for all believers. The other is for believers who suffer in fellowship with Christ. (Hodges, 128-129)

- Hodges follows everyone else we have studied trying to make an argument for double heirship in Romans 8:17 by seeking to connect it with II Timothy 2:12.
 - “Putting Romans 8:17 together with 2 Timothy 2:12, it is natural to conclude that to be co-glorified with Christ involves co-reigning with Him. In other words, the glory of co-heirship is more than merely participating in the glorious future world. It is to share the portion of the Firstborn Son of God and to *reign* in His Kingdom.” (Hodges, 129-130)
- Throughout the rest of Chapter 9, Hodges’ argumentation can be described as dispensationally confused at best. Attempts are made to reconcile/merge and/or harmonize non-Pauline texts such as Luke 19:11-27, I John 5:4-5, 18; Revelation 2:11, 26-27; 3:5, 21 (also see the cluster of Old Testament verses cited on page 135) with Pauline passages such as I Corinthians 6:6-20 and Galatians 5:19-21. (Hodges, 130-141) In short, many appeals are made to the non-Pauline Scriptures by Hodges. Most notable is that we once again see an attempt to connect Romans 8:17 with the “overcomers” of Revelation 2 and 3. This phenomena has occurred in all the precursory writings we have considered, yet it is a connection that is missing from the various SE teachers seeking to argue for two types of eternal inheritance in Romans 8:17.
- Chapter 9 of the second edition of *The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* was reprinted with Hodges’ permission in the fall 2003 issue of the *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal*. Parties interested in reading Chapter 9 and its accompanying footnote may do so by clicking [here](#).

Hodges, GES, and Blades: Establishing a Connection

- Doctrinally there are two primary reasons why a mid-Acts Pauline dispensationalist such as Keith Blades would have been interested in the ministry of Zane Hodges.
- First, Hodges was an outspoken proponent of the Majority Text and was openly critical of the text and methodology of Westcott and Hort in general and the NIV specifically. It was Zane Hodges that penned the Forward to Wilbur Pickering’s well-known and influential book *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (first edition 1977, revised edition 1980). Hodges also coauthored Appendix C “The Implications of Statistical Probability for the History of the Text” found in the 1980 revised edition of Pickering’s book. Pickering’s work was critical of the textual theory advanced by Westcott and Hort and promoted the merits of the Majority Text as a more reliable guide for reconstructing the readings of the New Testament text. In addition to penning the Forward and Appendix C for Pickering’s book, Hodges wrote extensively on the subject for various theological journals including the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society. In addition, Hodges was the co-author of two book length works on the subject:
 - *The Greek New Testament: According to the Majority Text* (1982, 2nd Edition 1985)
 - *The NIV Reconsidered: A Fresh Look at a Popular Translation* (1990)

- Given that Keith Blades was a strong proponent of the KJB, it makes sense the he would be aware of Hodges’ work in the field of textual criticism even if Blades did not agree with all of Hodges’ conclusions.
- Second, Zane Hodges was a vocal opponent of Lordship Salvation as well as a proponent of the eternal security of the believer. In 1989, Hodges opposed the 1988 release of John MacArthur’s *The Gospel According to Jesus*. Hodges spoke out strongly against MacArthur and his Lordship Salvation position through the publication and release of the first edition of *Absolutely Free: A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation* (a second edition was released in 2014).
- Like Hodges, Blades was also very concerned with the following points of doctrine: 1) clarity of the gospel; 2) opposition to Lordship Salvation; and 3) the eternal security of the believer. In addition, to publishing twenty plus gospel tracts devoted to explaining the gospel in a “ cliché ” free manner, Blades also authored a booklet titled *The Gospel of Grace: Make It Clear! Make It Plain!*
- My point here is that theologically, Blades shares certain similar doctrinal interests with Hodges. These areas of common interest speak to a potential/probable awareness of Hodges’ work on the part of Blades. Many in the Grace School of the Bible (GSB) circle of the Grace Movement are aware of Pickering’s book and are, by extension, aware of Hodges. In fact, within the Manuscript Evidence class (MSS) in GSB, Pastor Jordan recommends and quotes extensively from Pickering’s book and includes Hodges’ *The Greek New Testament: According to the Majority Text* in at least two different lists of men associated with the transmission of the text through church history.
 - Quotations or references to Wilbur Pickering’s *Identity of the New Testament Text* in GSB occur in the following lessons (the number in parenthesis corresponds to the page number where the statements can be read in this [PDF document](#).):
 - MSS 102-5 (59); 102-10 (107, 109); 102-12 (131); 102-14 (143); 102-15 (157, 159, 160)
 - References to Hodges’ *The Greek New Testament: According to the Majority Text* see the following lessons and pages numbers:
 - MSS 102-1 (15); 102-12 (125)
- Personal relationships and connections further strengthen the notion that Blades was aware of Hodges as well as the Grace Evangelical Society (GES) of which Hodges was a member. The GES was founded in 1986 and specializes in books that deal with soteriology from a free grace perspective (one of Blades areas of interest). Please recall from Lesson 159 that Richard Jordan first learned of R.B. Thieme from Art Sims, and that Sims mentored Keith Blades early in Keith’s ministry (Keith’s parents attended Art’s assembly). In a recent private Facebook message from January 11, 2015, Brother Jordan told me that he first learned of the formation of the GES from Art Sims, Keith’s mentor. Sims joined the GES for a time and recommended to Richard that he consider following suit (Jordan never joined). In addition, to stating that Sims joined for a time but

did not stay long, Jordan said that Keith knew about the formation of the GES but also elected not to join the society.

- GES is an evangelical Christian advocacy organization based in Denton, TX whose purpose is to promote Free Grace Theology. GES was founded in June 1986 when dispensationalist Bob Wilkin sent out newsletters to likeminded associates regarding soteriology within conservative American churches. Wilkin had obtained a BS at the University of California at Irvine in 1973, a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1982, and a PhD at Dallas Theological Seminary in 1985. In 1988, the *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* (JOTGES) was founded; Arthur L. Farstad became its first editor. That same year (1988), Zondervan published *The Gospel According to Jesus* by John MacArthur Jr., a work which would crystallize the influence of Lordship salvation Theology in Dispensational circles. The Executive Director, Robert N. (Bob) Wilkin, speaks across the country at churches and regional conferences and has written several books. As the representative of the GES in public debates, Dr. Wilkin has engaged Progressive Dispensationalist and the former president of the Evangelical Theological Society, Darrell Bock (Progressive Dispensationalist), and the Calvinist apologist and writer James White. The ministry critiques certain ideas in evangelism and theology, especially strains of Covenant theology, Puritanism and Lordship salvation. ([Wikipedia Entry](#))
- After Zane Hodges died in 2008, the GES secured the copyrights to Hodges' printed material. Hodges' writings are kept in print at this present time via the efforts/resources of the GES.
- All of this means that Keith Blades was aware of the GES via his mentor Art Sims. If he was not already aware of the writings of Hodges, Keith's awareness of the GES would have placed Hodges and other GES writers squarely on Blades radar screen.
- All Blades needed to establish was an awareness of G.H Lang's *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks* which was the second footnoted edition of Hodges' *The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* released in 1992. Via Hodges' endnotes, Blades and possibly Newbold were granted access to G.H. Lang, where they found their definition of Biblical Adoption as well as a host of other concepts that were carried forward and included within the theological system now known as SE (See Lesson 159 for a detailed list of these concepts.).
- This theory raises questions regarding whether or not Blades and/or Newbold were reading other GES writers such as Joseph Dillow. What is certain is that Lang, Hodges, Dillow, and other GES writers maintain very similar views to those advanced by SE teachers Blades, Newbold, and McDaniel as well as the "Joint-Heir View" of NCGF. For further study and comparison, interested parties are encouraged to read [The Reign of the Spiritual Elite: The Theology of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society](#).

Works Cited

Hodges, Zane C. *The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension 2nd Edition*. Redencion Viva: Dallas, TX, 1992.