

Sons and Daughters of God

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Jumala pojad ja tütre

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We truly believe that we are all literally the children of God, and because of that, we have the potential to become like Him.

Today I would like to address one of the most joyful, glorious, and powerful gospel truths that God has revealed. At the same time, it is ironically one for which we have been criticized. An experience I had some years ago profoundly deepened my appreciation for this gospel truth.

As a representative of the Church, I was once invited to a religious conference where it was announced that from that moment on they would recognize as valid all baptisms performed by almost all other Christian churches, as long as the ordinance was done with water and in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Then it was explained that this policy did not apply to baptisms performed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

After the conference I was able to delve deeper into the reasons for that exception with the leader in charge of the announcement. We had a wonderful and insightful conversation.

In short, he explained to me that that exception had primarily to do with our particular beliefs about the Godhead, which other Christian denominations often refer to as the Trinity. I expressed my appreciation for him taking the time to explain to me his beliefs and the policy of his church. At the end of our conversation, we hugged and then said goodbye.

As I later contemplated our discussion, what this leader said about Latter-day Saints not understanding what he called the “mystery of the Trinity” stayed in my mind. What was he refer-

Me tõepoolest usume, et oleme kõik sõna otseses mõttes Jumala lapsed ja tänu sellele on meil potentsiaal saada Tema sarnaseks.

Ma tahaksin täna käsitleda ühte kõige rõõmsamat, hiilgavamat ja vägevamat evangeeliumitõde, mida Jumal on ilmutanud. Samas on see huvitaval kombel selline, mille pärast meid on kritiseeritud. Minu tänulikkust selle evangeeliumitõe vastu süvendas üks mõne aasta tagune kogemus.

Kord kutsuti mind Kiriku esindajana religioonikonverentsile, kus teatati, et sellest hetkest peale peavad nad kehtivaks kõiki peaaegu kõigis teistes kristlikes kirikutes tehtud ristimisi, peasi, et seda talitust tehakse veega ning Isa ja Poja ja Püha Vaimu nimel. Seejärel selgitati, et see reegel ei kehti Viimse Aja Pühade Jeesuse Kristuse Kirikus tehtud ristimiste puhul.

Pärast seda konverentsi oli mul võimalik kaevuda selle teadaande eest vastutava juhiga sügavamale selle erandi tagamaadesse. Meie jutuajamine oli imeline ja kaemuslik.

Lühidalt selgitas ta mulle, et see erand oli peamiselt seotud meie teatud tõekspidamisega Jumaluse kohta, millele teised kristlikud usulahud viitavad sageli kui Kolmainususele. Ma tänasin teda, et ta võttis aega, et mulle oma tõekspidamisi ja oma kiriku reegleid selgitada. Me kallistasime oma jutuajamise lõpus ja jätsime siis hüvasti.

Kui ma hiljem meie arutelu üle mõtisklesin, jäi mind vaevama, mida see juht oli öelnud selle kohta, et viimse aja pühad ei mõista tema sõnul „Kolmainususe mõistatust”. Millele ta viitas? See

ring to? Well, it had to do with our understanding of the nature of God. We believe that God the Father “is an exalted man” with a glorified “body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; [and] the Son also.” Thus, every time we talk about the nature of God, in some way, somehow, we are also talking about our own nature.

And this is true not only because we all were made “in [His] image, after [His] likeness,” but also because, as the Psalmist recorded, God said, “Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.” This is for us a precious doctrine now recovered with the advent of the Restoration. In summary, it is nothing more or less than what our missionaries teach as the first lesson, first paragraph, first line: “God is our Heavenly Father, and we are His children.”

Now, you might say, “But many people believe we are children of God.” Yes, that is true, but their understanding may be a little different from the implication of its deeper meaning that we affirm. For Latter-day Saints, this teaching is not metaphorical. Rather, we truly believe that we are all literally the children of God. He is “the Father of [our] spirits,” and because of that, we have the potential to become like Him, which seems to be inconceivable to some.

It has now been over 200 years since the First Vision opened the doors to the Restoration. At the time, young Joseph Smith sought guidance from heaven to know what church to join. Through the revelation he received that day, and in later revelations given to him, the Prophet Joseph obtained knowledge about the nature of God and our relationship to Him as His children.

Because of that, we learn more clearly that our Heavenly Father has taught this precious doctrine from the very beginning. Allow me to cite at least two accounts from the scriptures to illustrate this.

You might remember God’s instructions to Moses as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price.

We read that “God spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name.” In other words, Moses, I want you to know who I am. Then He added, “And, behold, thou art my son.” Later he said, “And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son; and thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten.” And then finally, He ended with, “And now, behold, this one thing I show unto thee, Moses, my son.”

pidi olema seotud meie arusaamisega Jumala olemusest. Me usume, et Isa Jumal „on ülendatud inimene”, kellel on hiilgav „lihast ja luust keha, sama käegakatsutav nagu inimeselgi; [ja] Pojal samuti”. Seega iga kord, kui me räägime Jumala olemusest, räägime mõneti ka iseenda olemusest.

Ja see on tõsi mitte ainult seetõttu, et meid kõiki loodi „[Tema] näo järgi, [Tema] sarnaseks”, vaid ka seetõttu, nagu laulude kirjutaja pani kirja Jumala sõnad: „Teie olete jumalad ja olete kõik Kõigekõrgema lapsed!” See on meie jaoks hinnaline õpetus, mis on nüüd taastamise tulekuga ennistatud. Kokkuvõttes pole see midagi rohkemat või vähemat kui see, mida meie misjonärid õpetavad esimese õppetunni esimese lõigu esimeses reas: „Jumal on meie Taevane Isa. Meie oleme Tema lapsed.”

Te võite nüüd öelda: „Paljud inimesed usuvad, et me oleme Jumala lapsed.” Jah, see on tõsi, kuid nende arusaam võib olla veidi erinev selle sügavama tähenduse tagamõttest, mida meie kinnitame. Viimse aja pühade jaoks ei ole see õpetus kujundlik. Me usume tõeliselt, et me oleme kõik sõna otseses mõttes Jumala lapsed. Ta on meie „vaimude Isa” ja seetõttu on meil võimalik saada Tema sarnaseks, mis võib tunduda mõne jaoks käsitamatu.

Sellest on nüüd möödunud üle 200 aasta, kui esimene nägemus avas taastamisele ukсед. Tookord otsis nooruke Joseph Smith taevast juhatust, et teada, mis kirikuga liituda. Tol päeval saadud ilmutuse kaudu ja talle hiljem antud ilmutustessai prohvet Joseph teadmisi Jumala olemuse kohta ja meie suhtest Temaga Ta lastena.

Tänu sellele saame selgemalt teada, et meie Taevane Isa on õpetanud seda hinnalist õpetust päris algusest peale. Lubage mul osundada selle kirjelduseks vähemalt kahte ülestähendust pühakirjadest.

Võib-olla mäletate Jumala juhiseid Moosesele Kallihinnalises Pärlis.

Me loeme, et „Jumal rääkis Moosesele, öeldes: Vaata, mina olen Kõikvõimas Issand Jumal ja Lõputu on minu nimi”. Teisisõnu, Mooses, ma tahan, et sa tead, kes ma olen. Ta lisas seejärel: „Ja vaata, sina oled minu poeg.” Hiljem ütles Ta: „Ja mul on sinu jaoks töö, Mooses, mu poeg; ja sina oled minu Ainusündinu sarnane.” Ja siis lõpetuseks ütles Ta järgmist: „Ja nüüd, vaata, seda ühte asja ma näitan sulle, Mooses, mu poeg.”

It appears that God was determined to teach Moses at least one lesson: “You are my child,” which He repeated at least three times. He could not even mention the name of Moses without immediately adding that he was His son.

However, after Moses was left alone, he felt weak because he was no longer in the presence of God. That is when Satan came to tempt him. Can you see a pattern here? The first thing he said was, “Moses, son of man, worship me.”

In this context, Satan’s request to worship him may have been only a distraction. A significant temptation for Moses in that moment of weakness was to become confused and believe that he was only a “son of man,” rather than a child of God.

“And it came to pass that Moses looked upon Satan and said: Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten.” Fortunately, Moses was not confused and did not allow himself to become distracted. He had learned the lesson of who he really was.

The next account is found in Matthew 4. Scholars have entitled this “the three temptations of Jesus,” as if the Lord was tempted only three times, which of course is not the case.

Hundreds of gallons of ink have been used to explain the meaning and content of these temptations. As we know, the chapter begins by explaining that Jesus had gone into the desert, “and when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.”

Satan’s first temptation apparently had only to do with satisfying the Lord’s physical needs. “Command that these stones be made bread,” he challenged the Savior.

A second enticement may have had to do with tempting God: “Cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee.”

Finally, Satan’s third temptation referred to the aspirations and glory of the world. After Jesus had been shown “all the kingdoms of the world, ... [Satan] saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

In truth, Satan’s ultimate temptation may have had less to do with those three specific provocations and more to do with tempting Jesus Christ to question His divine nature. At least twice, the enticement was preceded by the challenging accusation from Satan: “If thou be

Paistab, et Jumal oli otsustanud õpetada Moosesele vähemalt ühte: „Sa oled mu laps”, mida Ta kordas vähemalt kolm korda. Ta ei saanud isegi mainida Mooses nime, lisamata otsekohe, et ta on Tema poeg.

Kuid kui Mooses jäi üksi, tundis ta end nõrgana, kuna ta polnud enam Jumala juures. Ja siis tuli Saatan teda kiusama. Kas näete mustrit? Esimene asi, mida Saatan ütles, oli: „Mooses, inimese poeg, kummarda mind!”

Selles kontekstis võis Saatan paluda tal end kummardada vaid selleks, et ta tähelepanu kõrvale juhtida. Moosesel oli tol nõrkusehetkel märkimisväärne kiusatus segadusse sattuda ja uskuda, et ta ongi vaid „inimese poeg,” mitte Jumala laps.

„Ja sündis, et Mooses vaatas Saatanat ja ütles: Kes sina oled? Sest vaata, mina olen Jumala poeg, tema Ainusündinu sarnane.” Õnneks ei sattunud Mooses segadusse ega lasknud oma tähelepanu kõrvale juhtida. Ta oli õppinud ära õppetunni, kes ta tegelikult on.

Järgmise selgituse leiame Matteuse 4. peatükist. Õpetlased on pannud sellele pealkirjaks „Jeesuse kolm kiusatust”, otsekui oleks meie Issandat kiusatud vaid kolm korda, mis ei ole muidugi tõsi.

Nende kiusatuste tähenduse ja sisu selgitamiseks on kasutatud sadu liitreid tinti. Nagu me teame, algab see peatükk selgitusega, et Jeesus oli läinud kõrbesse: „Ja kui ta oli paastunud nelikümmend päeva ja nelikümmend ööd, tuli temale viimaks nälg kätte.”

Saatana esimene kiusatus oli seotud ainult Issanda füüsiliste vajaduste rahuldamisega. „Ütle, et need kivid leibadeks saaksid!” ütles ta Jeesusele.

Teine ahvatlus võis olla seotud Jumala kiusamisega: „Kukuta ennast alla, sest kirjutatud on: tema annab oma inglitele käsu sinu pärast.”

Lõpuks osutas Saatana kolmas kiusatus maailma pürgimustele ja hiilgusele. Näidanud Jeesusele „kõik maailma kuningriigid .”, ütles [Saatan] temale: „Selle kõik ma annan sinule, kui sa maha langed ja mind kummardad!”

Tegelikkuses võis Saatana ülim kiusatus olla vähem seotud nende kolme konkreetse provokatsiooniga ja rohkem sellega, et ahvatleda Jeesust Kristust kahtlema oma jumalikus olemuses. Vähemalt kahel korral eelnes ahvatlusele Saatana väljakutsuv süüdistus: „Kui sa oled Jumala

the Son of God”—if you really believe it, then do this or that.

Please notice what had happened immediately before Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray: we find the account of Christ's baptism. And when He had come out of the water, there came “a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Do we see the connection? Can we recognize a pattern here?

It is no wonder that every time we are taught about our divine nature and destiny, the adversary of all righteousness tempts us to call them into question.

How different our decisions would be if we really knew who we really are.

We live in a challenging world, a world of increasing commotion, where honorable people strive to at least emphasize our human dignity, while we belong to a church and embrace a gospel that lift our vision and invite us into the divine.

Jesus's commandment to be “perfect, even as [our] Father which is in heaven is perfect” is a clear reflection of His high expectations and our eternal possibilities. Now, none of this will happen overnight. In the words of President Jeffrey R. Holland, it will happen “eventually.” But the promise is that if we “come unto Christ,” we will “be perfected in him.” That requires a lot of work—not just any work, but a divine work. His work!

Now, the good news is that it is precisely our Father in Heaven who has said, “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”

President Russell M. Nelson's invitation to “think celestial” implies a wonderful reminder of our divine nature, origin, and potential destination. We can obtain the celestial only through Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Perhaps that is why Satan enticed Jesus with the very same temptation from the beginning to the end of His earthly ministry. Matthew recorded that while Jesus hung on the cross, those “that passed by reviled him, ... saying, ... If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” Glory be to God that He did not hearken but instead provided the way for us to receive all celestial blessings.

Let us always remember, there was a great price paid for our happiness.

Poeg”—kui sa seda tõesti usud, siis tee seda või teist.

Pange palun tähele, mis oli juhtunud vahetult enne seda, kui Jeesus läks kõrbesse paastuma ja palvetama. Me leiame aruande Kristuse ristimisest. Ja kui Ta tuli veest välja, kostis taevast hää, mis ütles: „See on minu armas Poeg, kellest mul on hea meel!”

Kas me näeme seost? Kas märkame siin mustrit?

Pole ime, et iga kord, kui meile õpetatakse meie jumalikust olemusest ja saatusest, kiusab kõige õigemeelsuse vastane meid neid kahtluse alla seadma.

Kuivõrd erinevad oleksid meie otsused, kui me tõesti teaksime, kes me päriselt oleme.

Me elame väljakutseid täis maailmas, kus on üha enam ärevust, kus auväärt inimesed püüavad vähemalt rõhutada inimväärikust, ning kuulume samas kirikusse ja võtame omaks evangeeliumi, mis parandab nägemist ja kutsub meid jumalik-kusesse.

Jeesuse käsk olla „täiuslikud, nõnda nagu [meie] taevane Isa on täiuslik”, peegeldab selgesti Tema kõrgeid ootusi ja meie igavesi väljavaateid. Muidugi ei juhtu midagi sellist üleöö. Juhataja Jeffrey R. Hollandi sõnul juhtub see „ühel päeval”. Kuid meile on lubatud, et kui me „tul[eme] Kristuse juurde”, saame „täiuslikuks temas”. See nõuab palju tööd – mitte mingit suvalist tööd, vaid jumalikku tööd. Tema tööd!

Nüüd hea uudis on see, et just meie Taevaisa on öelnud: „Sest vaata, minu tööja minu hiilgus on see – tuua inimesele surematus ja igavene elu.”

President Russell M. Nelsoni üleskutse „mõelda selestiliselt” sisaldab imelist meeldetuletust meie jumalikust olemusest, päritolust ja võimalikust sihtpunktist. Me võime jõuda selestiliseni vaid Jeesuse Kristuse lepitushoiu kaudu.

Võib-olla sellepärast ahvatleski Saatan Jeesust ühe ja sama kiusatusega kohe algusest kuni Ta maise teenimistöö lõpuni. Matteus kirjutas, et kui Jeesus ristil rippus, siis „möödaminejad pilkasid teda .. ning ütlesid: .. Kui sa oled Jumala Poeg, siis astu ristilt maha!” Au Jumalale, et Ta seda kuulda ei võtnud, vaid andis meile võimaluse saada kõik selestilised õnnistused.

Pidagem alati meeles, et meie õnne eest maksti suurt hinda.

I testify as with the Apostle Paul that “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Ma tunnistan otsekui koos apostel Paulusega, et „seesama Vaim tunnistab ühes meie vaimuga, et me oleme Jumala lapsed. Kui me aga oleme lapsed, siis oleme ka pärijad, nii Jumala pärijad kui ka Kristuse kaaspärijad, et kui me ühes temaga kannatame, siis meid ühes temaga ka austatakse”. Jeesuse Kristuse nimel, aamen.