Q3. What is God’s Purpose for the Jews? *B’nei Elohim*: Sons of God and the Son of God.

Because the Hebrew scriptures intertwine so inextricably with the story of Israel and the Jews, most Jews realize that the story of the Scriptures is a family story. Clearly, the Lord God calls the Jewish people the *b’nei elohim* (Gen. 6:2, Psalm 82:6). However, in a twist of religious irony, Jews who accept the scriptures as a family story understand this *sonship* as being a mere figure of speech, whereas Gentiles who largely overlook the family focus of the Bible understand this sonship to be a literal reality.

 Being the *b’nei elohim* for Jews apparently equates to them being God’s chosen people. They are favored by God in a way that the Gentiles are not. Such a view reinforces the primacy of Jewish life and practice as God’s entire purpose for the Jewish people—to simply live differently than the Gentiles by adhering to laws of kosher, keeping Shabbat, and cultivating Jewish thought and *halakah* as distinctives. Taking the idea of *sonship* at face value, that is, to share in the very nature, inheritance, and name of God himself, however, would be the height of Gentile blasphemy.

 However, it is this very *literal* definition of sonship which the psalmist assumes when he speaks to the people of God saying: “I said, “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you” (Ps. 82:6). In fact, the entire line of Adam, as it passed through Noah then the families of all who live on earth today were referred to as the “sons of God”—*b’nei elohim.*

 In order to understand how the Word of God can make the audacious claim that humans can be called *b’nei elohim* and even *elohim,* implying a shared **kindred nature** with God himself, it is best to consider God’s purpose for humanity’s designated **Heir**, **the Son of Man** (Ps. 8:4), that is, Mashiach, the Son of David (2 Sam. 7:13). As God’s designated heir of “the ends of the earth” (Ps. 2:8) and “the works” of the Lord God’s “hands” (Ps. 8:6), the Mashiach inherits all that is in “heaven” and in “earth” as the Son of God (2 Sam. 7:14) and the Son of Man/ David (2 Sam. 7:12). So, Mashiach is God’s heir. And, if He is God’s “heir,” he is also His “firstborn”—the Head of all Israel, the sons of God (Exodus 4:22) as Israel’s “firstborn” Son (Zech. 12:10). That is, if Mashiach is *the* Son of God, then He is the “firstborn” of the many who are to be “born of God” as sons.

 Thus, God’s ultimate purpose for Jews is not to be merely human-born, identifying solely as the sons of Abraham. Rather, God purposes a spiritual birth for Israel, so that they may literally and spiritually born of God. If Mashiach as *elohim* created all things as the Son of God by the Father’s command (Gen. 1:6), He inherits and shares with the “generations” of sons the “heavens” and the “earth” (Gen. 2:4). This is why *elohim* entrusts his *image* with man as a family resemblance (Gen. 1:26) and calls the family of Adam, His chosen lineage, “the sons of God” (Gen. 6:4). Of these sons, God names Israel as the family of His Mashiach, thus His “Firstborn” of all the families of the earth (Ex. 4:22).

 To all who were meant to be the “sons of God,” Jesus as Mashiach brings a spiritual and heavenly birth, for the Word of God promises: “Bot to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). Jesus himself explains that a new spiritual birth as the sons of God by the Holy Spirit prepares us to inhabit and then inherit not just an earthly heritage but God’s eternal Kingdom: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again (that is, from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God”—that is, “born of water (for repentance) and the Spirit” (John 3:3, 5).