

The Light - Junior Series
Lesson 41

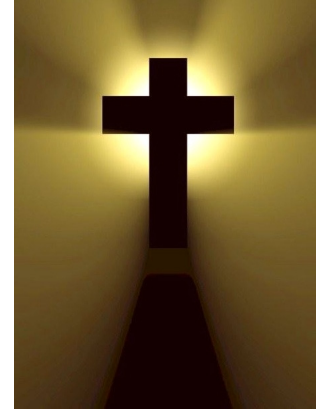
The Giver of Spiritual Gifts...the Holy Spirit

Spiritual Adoption

Thursday, April 14, 2011

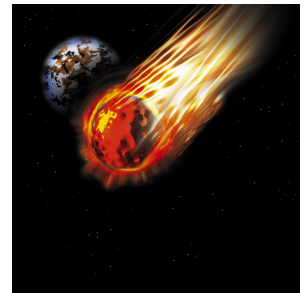
BEFORE YOU BEGIN

If YOU have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have the opportunity to do so right NOW. Simply tell God the Father that you believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, who loved us so much that He came down from heaven and became a man to take our place and pay for the penalty for all the sin of all mankind. Jesus, the Savior died on the Cross for your sins and the sins of the whole world. Then Jesus was buried but He rose again and He is alive today seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. When you make the decision to believe in Jesus in simple faith based on His work on the Cross, you are now a believer and will always be a child of God. When you die, you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven. *(Acts 16:31) "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."* *(John 3:16) "God loved the world so much that He gave is One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."*



Lesson

We've really been studying in a lot of detail all about the Holy Spirit and His ministries and especially about His ministry of regeneration or being "born again." I know that you all will be experts by the time we're finished with this subject of the Holy Spirit but you can NEVER learn enough about Him and the great gifts God the Father has provided for you so you can live in a world that is our enemy. It's our enemy because the devil is the ruler of this world and it is a powerful cosmic force that works night and day to keep you from the beautiful truth of God's Word and about His Son, Jesus Christ.



We have been studying about these gifts from God and I want to remind you of where we have been just to refresh your souls. You get a whole package of these fantastic blessings the moment you are "born again" and I don't want you to forget them. Certain qualities and privileges belong to anyone who is regenerated or "born again" during the Church Age. Let's review them:

1. You have a human spirit that contains eternal life in Christ.
2. You are a child of God.
3. You are an heir of God and co-heir of Christ.
4. You have a new walk or a unique spiritual life that you completely understand through the Word of God and power from the Holy Spirit who also gives you the ability to live it the way God wants you to.
5. You have eternal security...you can NEVER lose your salvation.
6. You have a new nature.

We have studied all these blessings and gifts from God. They are fantastic in case you didn't know that. You NEED to KNOW about how great they are. Today we're going to look at another wonderful gift that God has given us at the moment of salvation or faith in Jesus Christ. It is called "adoption." Yes, you are adopted sons and daughters of God the moment you believed. This is really cool.

A lot of the theology books list adoption under regeneration. Theology means "from God or the study of God." Adoption is described as one of a whole list of gifts or benefits or results of regeneration. However, when you check out the Bible verses that talk about adoption, those verses make us look at it and come to a different conclusion. It is a result of

regeneration but in fact, adoption puts a magnifying glass on the fact that you see a much larger picture in connection with becoming God's child after regeneration. Remember we are studying regeneration, the ministry of God the Holy Spirit at salvation by which we are "born again" and given eternal life.

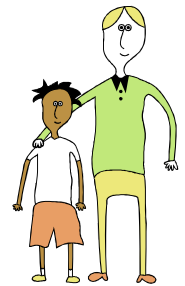


Now, under regeneration, the Bible tells us that the believer is said to be born of God in [John 1:12-13](#). "But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, (13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." The believer is said to be born of the Spirit in [John 3:5-8](#). Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' (8) The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

But the Bible also says there is something called the adoption as sons. The believer is called God's child and God's son or daughter in [Rom 8:23](#). "And not only this (that creation groans for its redemption), but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." Not only that but here in [Rom 8:23](#) this adoption is something that we as "born again" believers are eagerly waiting for. Are you were eagerly waiting for something? Are you eagerly waiting for your resurrection bodies? I am!!! Mine's a lot older than yours so I might be a little more eager than you!!! That's when we inherit what is God's!

On one level, this makes no sense though. Why? If I am born of God, why do I need to be adopted by God? Good question! The point is, that adoption, while it is something that is closely related to regeneration, so, it is separate from it and deserves its own separate handling or explanation.

Let's begin with a definition of Biblical adoption: *Biblical adoption is that grand design of God by which He gives or bestows on us the status or the standing of children (really more clearly as adult sons and daughters). This happens positionally at the moment of salvation when He recognizes us as an adult son or daughter permanently by His assignment of us as adopted sons and daughters.*



This adoption is related to our salvation. Adoption is a separate work of God...all three members of the Trinity or Godhead (God the Father in eternity past; the Holy Spirit at salvation; and Christ at His coming at the Rapture) are involved. It is a separate step but part of the things we receive from God at salvation...they happen together: justification (we get +R), regeneration ("born again"), adoption (we become adult sons and daughters of God), baptism of the Spirit (we are placed in union with Christ), and so on.

But adoption is not the same as regeneration. It is quite separate. In regeneration we are "born again" and given the new nature. In adoption we are declared to be God's son or daughter, and God's heir. We are introduced into and given the privileges that belong to members of God's family. We will inherit when we get our resurrection bodies in Heaven after the Rapture.



Now this is a situation where if we simply take what we mean by adoption today in the USA and use that to interpret the Bible we'll be way off. Biblical adoption is NOT like adopting a baby in America...it is TOTALLY different!! What the Bible means by adoption is based on the Roman adoption in the first century, and it is not the same as our twenty-first century way of adopting children.

Now we need to go back to the first century AD...back into the Roman culture that existed when Paul and the other writers of the New Testament were alive. Roman adoption was an upper-class function that was designed to strengthen Roman society. It was a status of superior quality. It meant granting great position, privileges, opportunities, and responsibilities to one who was qualified for it. In a noble Roman family, the first born male, the natural child, did NOT necessarily become the heir to the family fortune especially if he didn't or could not qualify to inherit. Adoption in Roman society had nothing to do with finding homes for babies that were given up by their birth parents. Today we feel sorry for children that are "put up" for adoption. In ancient Rome, being adopted was one of the most fortunate things that could ever happen to you. It was a step up. It meant more privilege, greater opportunity, and a new inheritance.

So let's travel back in time to the first century, and take a look at the practice of adoption, Roman style. The Roman Empire lasted for hundreds of years and one reason for that was that the Empire had a strong base in the Roman family...God's institution by the way! It was very important to them. Roman parents, particularly fathers, were very strict. They kept strict discipline in the home. If their own kids did not respond well to their authority, they would look for some other young person to inherit their worldly goods who would respect them and the rules of the home. Once the boy got to be around the age of 14, if he was a weak individual, the father would pass him by...his own blood son...in favor of another boy who was more worthy, able and respectful (authority oriented) and therefore qualified to be the heir of the family name and fortune. In other words they would adopt a more responsible boy to inherit and/or take over the family business for him. They would adopt them Roman style.



In order to understand New Testament adoption as Paul would use the idea, you must understand the structure of the Roman family. The father had absolute power (*patria potestas*) over the members of his family. He could even take the life of a family member and it would not be considered murder. He had full legal ownership of everything the family had and he could do with it as he pleased.

Under Roman law, the procedure of adoption had two steps. In the first step, the boy that will replace the Roman father's son had to be released from the control of his real or natural father. This is the same for the believer at the moment of salvation being placed in positional truth in Christ and being RELEASED from ruler ship or fatherhood of Satan and the federal headship of Adam by identification with Christ in his death and burial.

In the second step, since the natural father no longer had any authority over his son the Roman family or the adopter became the new father with absolute control over him. The son was not responsible to his natural father and longer but only to his newly gotten father. The purpose of this adoption was so that the adoptee (the boy) could take the position of a natural son in order to continue the family line and maintain property ownership. This son became the *patria potestas* in the next generation. This person would take over the family business and become the heir. He was now the legitimate heir! Adoption meant acknowledgment of the

legitimate heir. This Roman adoption meant to pass on the family fortune and family opportunities down to that person who was best qualified to be the legitimate mature heir of the family inheritance. Adoption meant great privilege and greater opportunity. The young man who was adopted became the heir of the family fortune, the family business.

So what does this all mean to you and me? It means that we saints chosen by God are predestined (God has a perfect plan for us) as His adopted sons and daughters and we will inherit from God at the Evaluation Seat of Christ after the Rapture. This means that believers, formerly labeled as "sons of disobedience" and "children of wrath" in Eph 2:2-3 have absolutely no responsibility or obligation to their old father the devil. Let's read the passage in John 8:38-44 and see what Jesus meant when he called the Pharisees children of the devil. And we see our former selves in Eph 2:2-3. "...in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience (3) among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." Rather, we are now God's sons and daughters and He controls our lives and property. We saints will always be under God's control. Adoption was the means of recognizing superiority and selectivity in Roman society. We are royal family in Christ.

I hope you see the great difference between Roman Adoption, which the Bible uses as adoption and our adoption today. The two are totally different. I also hope you see the great meaning of what it means to be adopted sons and daughters of God as part of our oh so great salvation in Jesus Christ.

Okay, now we have recently seen that at the moment of salvation we get fantastic things credited to our account and we receive a brand new nature from God. We are going to see soon that we are also placed in permanent union with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ through the Baptism of God the Holy Spirit. All of this makes us recognized by God as His adult sons and daughters. We now have privileges and opportunities that stagger the imagination. Be thankful for all of it.

Close in prayer

Prepared from Pastor John Farley's lesson on November 28, 2010
Lighthouse Bible Church

