

## The Finality of Adoption

By Natalie Warner

During the Lord Jesus' earthly ministry, He used pictures and metaphors to illustrate spiritual concepts to those He taught so that they could both fully understand His words and so that they could succinctly and accurately pass on to others the same words. For instance, God created the structure of the "family" in the Garden of Eden and used that same concept to illustrate the relationship between Him and His Son and our relationship to Him and other born-again Believers.

Jesus testified to His Father in Heaven and told the Believers He taught that God was their Father, too. For instance, He admonished the people to "*love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 4:45 NASB), and He told them they were "*to be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect*" (Matthew 4:48). In earthly terms, the relationship each one of us had as children with our parents was the most closely-knit relationship we knew. We may have been close to a sibling, relative, or friend, but our biological tie to our parents was strongest and surest. To think of God as our heavenly Father is a wonderful picture of the depth of His love and desire to have a close relationship with us. It should also be a sobering discipline for us to remember He is our Father and that we are to obey, respect, and love Him as we ought to our earthly parents.

Along the same line, the Apostle Paul used the concept of "adoption" to illustrate a Believer's position once he/she is born-again. He encouraged Believers, saying, "*For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'*" (Romans 8:15) Speaking on being a son and heir of Christ, Paul also wrote,

*Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' **Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.***  
(Galatians 4:1-7)

Isn't it extraordinary that the King of the universe sent His Son down to earth to open the way for us sinners to be adopted into His family and made heirs of the King of Kings?

One of the reasons the concept of being "adopted into the family" and "belonging to the family (or household) of God" is so dear to me is that I think it speaks to the *assurance* of our place in it and the security of that familial tie. I believe John was earnest in his desire for the recipients of his letter to have *assurance* in their salvation: "*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may **know** that you have eternal life*" (1 John 5:13). When I think of the household of God, I think about how when we are in the family of God, as Jesus Christ taught, we cannot be "un-familied" or "disowned." Our adoption, our son/daughter-ship, our inheritance is secure and final. God doesn't have foster care, where the child may be removed after a time. What a blessing to know our adoption is final – that God will

not void our adoption (after all, if we don't know whether or not He'll disown us, we pull into question the truthfulness of our Father)!

If we are truly born-again, we are His children! Have you ever tried to cut yourself off from the line of your parents? I would imagine it difficult. It's actually impossible! We cannot *not* have a parent. In this world, though a parent might lose legal custody of a child, that child is *still* the biological child of his/her parent. No legal action can change that. Likewise, our adoption into God's family is sealed and can only be undone by God: "*In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory*" (Ephesians 1:13-14).

As I was writing this article, God brought me to the passage of John 8. Jesus was speaking to the Jews and told them, "*If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free*" (John 8:31b-32). When they questioned him and asked how He could tell them they could become free when they hadn't been enslaved to anyone, Jesus said, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; **the son does remain forever**. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free **indeed***" (John 8:34b-35). Unbelievers are slaves to sin – they belong to the prince of darkness. Only the blood of Jesus can free us from that bondage, and, as the Lord of Lords said, if He frees you, you are free indeed. Thus, if we are truly freed from the bondage of slavery to sin (through repentance and trust in Jesus alone) and adopted by God, we remain in the house of God forever!

Continuing in John 8, the Jews told Jesus their father was Abraham, and Jesus showed them the difference between belonging to the father of darkness (satan) and belonging to the Father of light (God):

*If you were Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father. [...] **If God were your Father, you would love Me**, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. **You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father**. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.* (John 8:39b-47)

I believe Jesus taught that if we belong to God (i.e. in the house of God – saved by God – hidden in Christ), we desire to do the deeds of our Father. If we say we are His children but walk in the darkness, we have not been truly saved in our hearts, and we belong to the father of lies and do his deeds (this is a false conversion). This isn't to suggest Believers never sin, but we are free from the captivity of sin – the hold of sin. Thanks be to God that our being born-again is a full regeneration of the heart ("*Therefore if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a **new creature**; the **old things passed away**; behold, **new things have come***" – 2 Corinthians 5:17). Adoption into the family of God for the born-again Believer is a promise from the Maker of All, the Author of

Faith, the Establisher of our Ways, the Completer of the Work He has started in us.

Thanks be to God that He is a loving Father who forgives His children when we do sin and repent! I am so grateful that as true Believers our adoptive tie to our heavenly Father is not so fragile we could sin and break it. Thanks be to our Father, who has the power to fully cleanse us and who bends from the Heavenly Hosts to gather His children to Him and who gives to us freely the inheritance of eternal life. Amen.