



Adoption

Jesus encourages us to think of God as our heavenly Father. This is a thrilling idea, but there is a false notion of the fatherhood of God. People say God is the father of us all, and that we're all children of God. So it doesn't matter what we believe: we're all God's children and, therefore, all going to heaven.

Jesus flatly contradicts this idea in John 8:42-47. There he talks about some very religious people belonging to their father the devil:

Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.'

So if God is not the father of us all, how can we know him as our father and how can he become our father?

The New Testament has only one answer to that, and it's obvious when we think about it. If a boy is not the natural offspring of a particular man, how can he have that man as his father? The answer is, through ADOPTION.

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Roman legal system of his day. In this system of law an adopted son was given the right to the name and property of the one who had adopted him. From a position of not belonging and having no rights, he became a son with a father. His

relationship and standing were changed, and these changes were initiated by the adopting father.

Do you know what that means in gospel terms?

It means that you can be adopted. From being a nobody in this world, you can become a child of the King of kings.

No social workers are needed to see if you are suitable—it's clear that you are not. You're a sinner, and God is holy. You have nothing in common with God and nothing to offer him. But he knows that and still wants to adopt you.

You don't need a lawyer to draw up legal documents. All that God requires from you is repentance and faith.

Repentance means turning from your sin that

is so alien to God. This doesn't mean that you have to clean up your life before God will have you. It does mean, though, that you recognize what you are and long to be free from that inherent sin.

Faith means trusting only in what Jesus has done to deal with your sin and make you acceptable to God.

Let me now tell you what Jesus did to make it possible for God to adopt a sinner like you.

Jesus is not an adopted Son of God. The words the Bible uses to describe him are 'the only begotten Son'. This means he was exactly like God—holy and sinless.

Jesus left heaven and became man. He became like us except for the fact that he was still sinless and he remained like that all the thirty-three years he was on earth. Because he was sinless, he didn't deserve death. Death is the penalty for sin. Death is inevitable for us because we are all sinners.

Jesus was not a sinner, yet he died. Why?

Here is the heart of the gospel.

Jesus died in the place of guilty sinners—in their stead, as a substitute for them. Whose idea was that? It was God's.

Before God could adopt sinners as his

children, their sin had to be dealt with in the way that God's own law demanded—death.

But if sinners received what they deserved, then they could not be adopted and could not have God as their father. It seems an impossible situation. And it would remain like that apart from the love and grace of God.

God made Jesus responsible for our sin. He laid our sin upon Jesus. Jesus willingly accepted this and with our sin went our guilt and our punishment. Jesus died in the sinner's place. That's the gospel and that's what you have to believe if God is to be your father.

Only Jesus could do this for us and only Jesus did do this for us. That's why faith has to be in Jesus alone.

What is your response to all this?

To put it crudely, here is the bargain of a lifetime—adoption into the family of God, and it can be yours.

Adoption gives us everything that sin makes impossible for us. Aliens become sons, strangers become children, and enemies inherit all the blessings of God. In other words, our relationship to God can totally change, and it is no small change.

To be a child of God makes us 'heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ' (Romans 8:17). To know that we will share in Christ's glory is staggering! We, with all our pedigree of sin,

are elevated to such a place of honour and privilege!

Are you going to say 'no' to all that? Yes, you will, unless you see yourself as an enemy of God, as a sinner who needs saving.

Wake up to the reality of the situation. God is not our father unless Jesus is our Saviour.

Turn to God today in repentance and faith—ask him for forgiveness and salvation.

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