

Adoption Service (Talking Points)

Not flesh of my flesh, nor bone of my bone
But still miraculously my own
Never forget for a single minute
You never grew under my heart, but in it.

Galatians 4:4-7 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. ⁶ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. ⁷ Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Romans 8:12-18 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. ¹³ For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

ADOPTION is the giving to anyone the name and place and privileges of a child who is not a child by birth. There are three kinds of adoption referred to in the Bible:

1. **NATURAL** – There were no provisions in OT Jewish Law for adoption, so any examples come from outside Israelite culture (i.e. Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses in Egypt, Mordecai adopted Esther in Persia). In the NT, only the Apostle Paul refers to adoption, and he refers to the Greek and Roman customs of his day.
2. **NATIONAL** – God adopted the nation of Israel. (Deuteronomy 7:6 - For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.)
3. **SPIRITUAL** – Spiritual adoption is an act of God's grace by which he brings us into His redeemed family, and makes us partakers of all the blessings he has provided, including a future glorious inheritance. Literally, we are made "sons" and "heirs" of God even though we were not born with this nature (i.e. like Jesus Christ, who was the "only begotten" son of God).

In the Greek and Roman cultures of NT times, the idea of adoption actually conveyed much more than it does in our day. It meant to become a son or daughter of the adoptive father in a way that was **INDISTINGUISHABLE** from being a son or daughter by birth.

Paul uses the common legal term for adoption in his writings (Romans, Galatians & Ephesians), but of course he emphasizes the spiritual application. Half of the people living in his time were slaves to the other half, but slaves could be adopted to become "sons" and "heirs."

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- Fathers in ancient times had absolute control over their families.
- The person buying a slave would purchase them three times; this broke the control so that the former father had no more legal claim.
- All ties with the old family were cut – it was literally a brand new life.

We were both of these in our old life – "children" of the devil and "slaves" to him. But Jesus Christ purchased us and set us free! That's why Paul combines these adoption pictures and says that we have no obligation to our old life, our old father or our old nature any more. And if we are free, we need to ACT like it! The old life is DEAD. The old nature is DEAD.

Spiritual adoption involves:

- A deliverance from the past
- A status in the present
- A hope for the future

In ancient Rome, there was a private act of adoption, and later a public recognition of the adoption. That is the custom Paul is referring to when he begins to talk about our future resurrection and life in Heaven:

Romans 8:22-23 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. ²³ And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

1 John 3:1-2 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. ² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

In adoption, we leave behind our past ... and we take on God's name, His Spirit, His family, and ultimately a glorious inheritance!