

Glen Park Gospel Church  
**Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes**

Rev Chris Trinham

Studies in Romans Series 4

No 17

## Sons by Adoption

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:12-25

Often the Bible uses the metaphor of Christians being the children, or sons, of God. It is a picture which describes a reality of relationship existing between God and those whom He has redeemed through Jesus Christ. There are two metaphors in the one. We are children by birth and children by adoption. Each declares different aspects of the same relationship.

### **First, for comparison, consider Sonship by Birth.**

There are some immediately evident characteristics of such a relationship.

The child receives its life from its parents. John 1:12, Matthew 18:3.

The child derives its nature from the parent 2 Peter 1:4.

The child is born into a family network of relationships John 20:17

The child needs to grow and develop to maturity 1 Peter 2:2, Hebrews 5:14

The child needs nurture and training Ephesians 4:13&14.

You can probably think of some others.

But, let's move on to:

### **Paul is thinking of Sonship by Adoption.** Rather than us being inventive, let's follow Paul's thinking.

Paul writing to the Romans where adoption was practised, deliberately used this word image. He selected a word which means 'to set in the place of a son'. It comes from two words, the first denoting a mature person who is a male or legitimate offspring, descendants male or female, a people group, etc and is coupled to a word meaning 'to set in place'. Paul used it to mean a slave who is set in the place of a son v15.

Under the Roman adoption system a person of other origin was legally recognised as a son and accepted the

new father's name, its honours and problems, civil status and rights and stood in line as his heir. Such is our status.

As Jesus was 'declared' (appointed, decreed) the Son of God by the power of resurrection, so God's declaration before witnesses of His adoptive sons is by the resurrection, by the power of that same Spirit of holiness.

### **Our Benefits Being God's Adopted Children.**

This is a deliberate and pre-planned action by God by divine foreknowledge. He chose those in Christ before the world was created. It was not accident or afterthought. Added to that, 'predestined to adoption' is our present status. Ephesians 1:5.

God has chosen not to hold anything back from His adopted children. All the rights and privileges of the sons of the King of glory are ours in Him. Galatians 4:5.

God has His children under His instruction and tutelage as He introduces us to His will and ways v14.

God does not hold His children under commandment whereby we must fear and obey, but the bond of His love is our liberty. Compare v15 with 1 John 4:18

We along with Jesus our Lord call God, Father. Compare v15 with Galatians

4:6 and Mark 14:36. 'Abba' is an Aramaic word and it is translated for us in all instances. It means 'father'. Paul's use of the terminology is quite intentional. Jesus calls us 'brethren'. Jews were forbidden by Rabbinical law to address the head of a family by this title. It is a baby word, like our 'daddy'. It indicates childlike trust.

We suffer the rebuffs and indignities of those who despise God and His Christ. It is part of being in the family v17. See John 15:18. This word for suffer is used in one other place in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 12:26 where it speaks of all the body parts suffering together with the one which is hurt.

That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death in order that I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Philippians 3:10. NASB

### **Paul's Reason 'For'**

Verse 18, 19, 20, 22 and 24 all begin with the word 'for'. This word mostly indicates a reason or added thought.

Reason 1. There is mighty blessing ahead for 'all them that believed', all His family, as God brings His plan together v18, (2 Thessalonians 1:10) and this will more than compensate.

Reason 2. All creation shared the curse because of the sin of Adam "Cursed is the ground because of you." See Genesis 3:17-19. The curse forced the sentence of death upon all, for all creation works by the same natural law. This curse will be lifted when God reveals His sons.

Reason 3. God's plan for His creation's

healthy, coordinated condition is described in Isaiah 11:6-9, where Isaiah foretells earth's return to that state under the rule of God's Messiah, Jesus. Creation is hurting under the curse of randomness and decay, longing as it were for that day, like labour pains preceding the joy of birth. Reason 4. God will put all this to rights when Jesus comes again in power. See also 1 John 3:1&2. At that time God will reveal His Son and His sons by adoption to the witness of the world and the hosts of Heaven. Only then will adoption be complete.

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1 Corinthians 15:50-53

### **But For Now - We Have Two Things.**

First, we have the firstfruits of the Spirit.

The implementation of the adoption is in the jurisdiction of the Holy Spirit v11. He who raised Jesus from the dead will also change our mortal bodies. But for now, we enjoy the firstfruits of the harvest. We have a taste of Heaven. We do not have to wait for that day to enjoy a little of what is to come. 'Now are we the sons of God' says John.

Second, we have hope, or expectation. One commentator calls hope, eager waiting. Expectation is a powerful motivator.

# Welcome

## Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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