

WordBytes

The Spirit of Adoption – A Key Role of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer

We need to understand the role of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Adoption to give us greater insight into His workings in our lives, and to equip us to co-operate with Him as He leads and guides us day by day.

What is the Adoption of Believers?

In Romans 8:18-21, the apostle Paul tells us that at the end of the age a glorious event will take place - God will reveal believers to all creation as His sons:

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.”

He goes on in verses 21-23 to call this **THE ADOPTION**, and reveals that two wonderful things will happen - our body will be redeemed, and the whole creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption:

“because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”

The redemption of our body is described 1 Corinthians 15:42-54, and the deliverance of creation in Isaiah 11: 6-9.

Why is it Called the Adoption?

The Greek word translated as adoption is *huiothesia*. The literal meaning, according to the Vine's Dictionary, is *placing as a son*. This clearly relates to the common practice in Paul's day of holding a coming of age ceremony when boys would take on the status and responsibilities of adult sons alongside their father. In the Roman culture, it included exchanging children's clothing for a man's toga.

This concept would be very familiar to the Romans, and Paul uses it as a striking image of the time when believers will take our place as His sons, clothed with an incorruptible new body.

Why is the Holy Spirit called the Spirit of Adoption?

The Holy Spirit is called the **Spirit of adoption** in Romans 8:14-17:

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

Before the coming of age ceremony described above, boys would be educated and prepared by a tutor, usually a trusted slave. Paul uses this as an image of the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding and preparing us for the Adoption, when we are revealed as God's sons. As our tutor, He inspires us to call God “Abba, Father”, and witnesses to our spirit that we are God's children and will one day join Jesus as sons and heirs of our Father – an amazing destiny that is worth suffering for!

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The Adoption is Just the Beginning

The Adoption ceremony is just the beginning of what the Holy Spirit is preparing us for!

In 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, the Apostle Paul reveals that believers will judge the world and judge angels.

"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?"

Jesus took this further Matthew 19:28 when He told His disciples they will judge their own nation:

"Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

2 Timothy 2:12 and Revelation 5:10, and other verses in Revelation, reveal that believers will be part of Jesus' government when He reigns on Earth:

"And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

"If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us."

Neither Male Nor Female

The Scriptures tell us that physical gender does not apply to our born-again spirit, and we are all sons of God and joint heirs with Jesus :

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:26-29)

and our future relationships will be totally different as revealed by Jesus to the Sadducees:

"For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."
Mark 12:26

Sometimes we are tempted to think that unless we are "ministering", our daily life doesn't have much spiritual value. However, once we realize that the Holy Spirit is preparing us for our Adoption and future role in the Kingdom of God, **every aspect of our life takes on greater meaning.**

Alan Taylor

Managing Director

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WordBytes are Bible teachings to inspire faith and spiritual growth.

JO-AL Bible Teaching & Publications is based in Melbourne, Australia, and was founded by Alan and Joan Taylor in 2009. Alan and Joan have experience in pastoring and pioneering churches, and in travelling teaching, worship, and music ministry. At the same time they have established a successful secular technical consulting company.