**Adopted Children of God**

**By Gary Whipple**

The word adoption means, “placing one as a son.” Contrary to popular belief, one is not placed as a *son* at the moment of salvation. To understand why, one must first understand Eastern culture concerning adoption, as opposed to that of the West. In the West, adoption means taking someone else’s natural child and legally “placing him as your own son.” In the East, it means taking your own natural child and “placing him as your son.” In the West, a child can become a son the moment you adopt him no matter what his age may be. In the East (the Jewish culture), your own child cannot become a son until his thirteenth birthday. The Jews call this the “bar mitzvah.”

In the West a child can inherit his father’s property at any age. In the East, he must first be placed as a son at his bar mitzvah. Since the scriptures always use patterns of truth connected to Israel in order to teach the truths of the New Testament (1 Corinthians10:11), there must be a *heavenly bar mitzvah* after the rapture of the church in order for the whole body of Christ (children of God) to be *adopted* as “sons of God.” We get a further understanding of this in the book of Galatians, chapter four.

*“Now I say,* [That] *the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;*

*but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.*

*Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:*

*But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*

*To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”* (Galatians 4:1-5).

Here, the Apostle Paul tells us that a child born into a family is no different in position than a servant of that family when it comes to rights and privileges, even though he has been born an heir (Galatians 4:1). He must grow under tutors and governors (teachers) until the appointed time of being placed as a son (Galatians 4:2). Likewise, all who are elected to sonship must first be born again (redeemed from the law) and have the opportunity to grow in the Word under the direction of the Holy Spirit (tutors and governors) with a view to becoming adopted as sons (Galatians 4:5).

In principle, all who have been born again, are sons. But that sonship has not yet been *manifested,* and cannot be until the body is *redeemed.* Until that occurs, scripture refers to all believers, except in a few cases, as “children of God.” This is in opposition to many translations of scripture, which translates “children of God” as “sons of God.” The translators, not knowing the difference, used these expressions interchangeably. For instance in John 1:12 KJV we read, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the **Sons of God....”** The Greek text here however, renders the word sons (*huios*) in this verse as **children** (*teknon*).

It is an interesting observation that God does not use the word “son” (Gr. ‘*huios’*) in the New Testament except in connection with Christians who are striving to have their *souls* saved. Those who are being *led* by the Holy Spirit; those who are living a life *separated* from sin (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18); those who are experiencing a father-son relationship. But, as to one being “placed as a son” (Gr. ‘*huiothesis’*), that cannot occur until we reach the heavenly “bar mitzvah” after the redemption of the body.

The question may be asked, “Why does one have to strive to become a *firstborn* son while growing up under his tutor (the Holy Spirit)? Isn’t he automatically placed as a *first born son* when he arrives at the judgment seat?” The answer is “no.” Scripture teaches that only those children of God who present a saved *soul* will *inherit* the kingdom, and as a result will be placed as firstborn sons, i.e. *“the church of the firstborn”* (Hebrews12:23). This inheritance will be manifested in the “out-resurrection” (a higher resurrection at the Judgment Seat of Christ out from among those who have been raptured Philippians 3:11). Those who fail to present a saved soul (at the Judgment Seat of Christ) will lose all rewards and inheritance of age life (millennial life).They will however, remain as “sons of God” as a result of their adoption, even though they will fail to share in the out-resurrection.

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