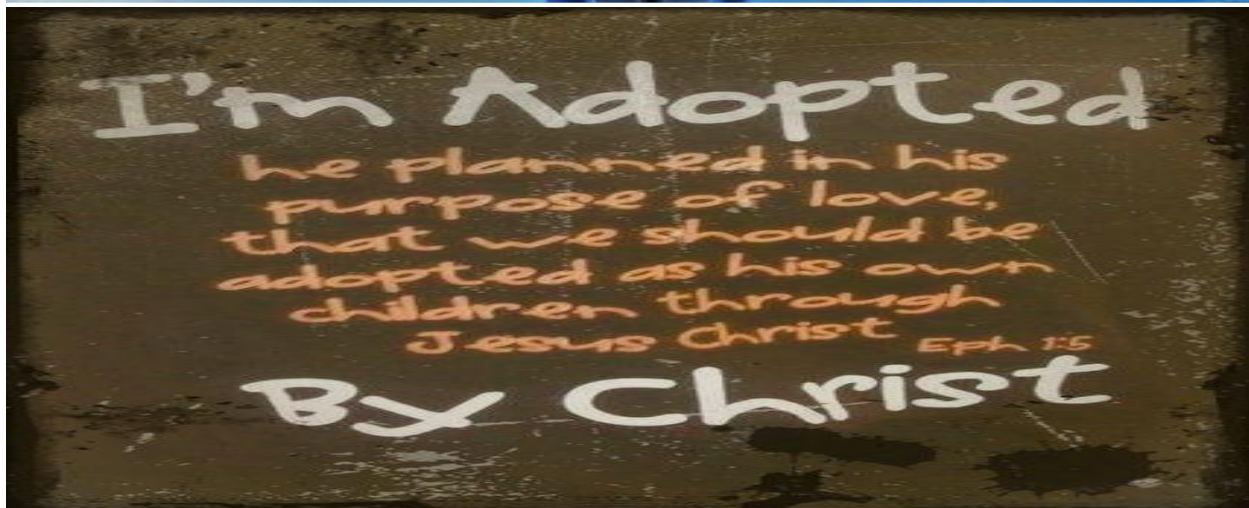
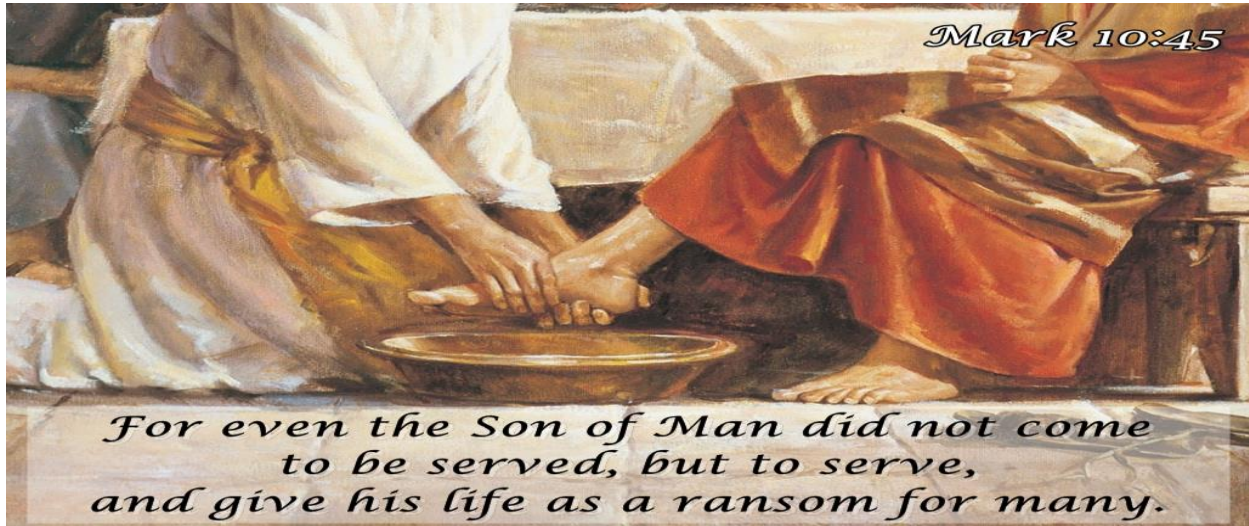
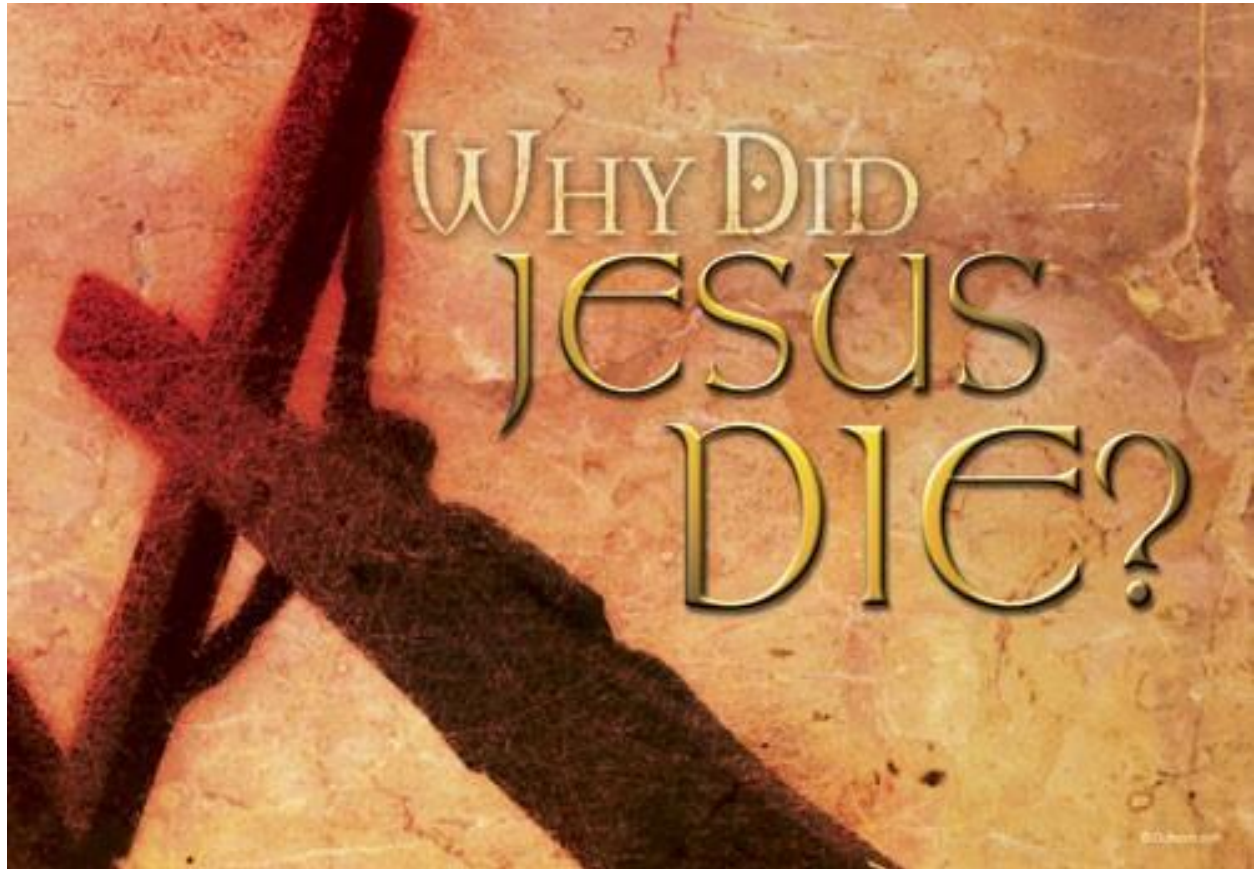


# RANSOMED REDEEMED & ADOPTED

by **David Lee Burris**





## ***IMPUTATION***

❖ “A transfer of benefit or harm from one individual to another. In theology, imputation may be used negatively to refer to the transfer of sin and guilt of Adam to the rest of humankind. Positively, imputation refers to the righteousness of Christ transferred to those who believe on him for salvation.”

\* **Dictionary Of Theological Terms, Grenz & Guretzki**

## **EXEMPLARISM**

❖ “The belief that Jesus’ life and ministry is primarily an example to humans of how to live uprightly before God rather than as a means of providing something that humans cannot gain on their own.”

\* Dictionary Of Theological Terms, Grenz & Guretzki

## **EXPIATION**

❖ “The belief that sin is cancelled out by being covered over. For Christians, expiation suggests that Christ’s death covers our sin.”

\* Dictionary Of Theological Terms, Grenz & Guretzki

# *PROPITIATION*

❖ “Atoning Sacrifice;  
An offering that turns  
away the wrath of God  
directed against sin.”

\* Dictionary Of Theological Terms, Grenz & Guretzki

# *Vicarious Atonement*

❖ “Literally, ‘in place of.’  
Hence in that Jesus died ‘for  
us,’ that is, took upon himself  
the consequences of human sin.”

\* Dictionary Of Theological Terms, Grenz & Guretzki

## **We cannot earn our own escape . . .**

**“The ransom metaphor therefore tells us that salvation is wholly different from drawing up a balance sheet at the end of a person’s life. The ancient Egyptians believed that, after a person’s death, their heart was weighed on a set of scales. Only if their heart weighed less than a feather would they pass on to eternal life. The idea that the eternal destiny of human beings is to be measured on a set of scales and depends on our good deeds outweighing our bad deeds is as mistaken as it is persistent. The ransom metaphor (and, as we shall see, the idea of forgiveness) is completely incompatible with any suggestion that our eternal destiny is a matter of setting our good and bad deeds off against one another.**

**But, if no one can release themselves from our captivity to the powers of evil, it is equally true that no one is too far in thrall to those powers to be beyond rescue. Ours is a culture in which two lies are present: one is the lie that if only we believe in ourselves enough we can save ourselves; the other is the lie that our destiny is fixed and that no one can rescue us.”(Source#1)**

# JESUS “A RANSOM FOR MANY”

## *Answering Satan's Slanderous Charges & Saving Mankind Ransom — An Equivalent*

*Jehovah's Solution Was Both Supremely  
Merciful & Profoundly Just—One That No  
Human Could Ever Have Devised*

*Elegantly Simple - A Purchase, A Reconciliation,  
A Redemption, A Propitiation, & An Atonement*

*(The ransom price for their life is so precious  
That it is always beyond their reach)  
(Psalm 49:8)*

*“There are 70 weeks that have been determined  
for your people and your holy city, in order to  
terminate the transgression, to finish off sin, to  
make atonement for error, to bring in everlasting  
righteousness, to seal up the vision and the  
prophecy, and to anoint the Holy of Holies.”  
(Daniel 9:24)*

*Christ purchased us, releasing us from the curse  
of the Law by becoming a curse instead of us,  
because it is written: “Accursed is every man  
hung upon a stake.”  
(Galatians 3:13)*

*And through him to reconcile to himself all other  
things by making peace through the blood he  
shed on the torture stake, whether the things on  
the earth or the things in the heavens.  
(Colossians 1:20)*

*Consequently, he had to become like his  
“brothers” in all respects, so that he could  
become a merciful and faithful high priest in  
things relating to God, in order to offer a  
propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the people.  
(Hebrews 2:17)*

*The Expression Is Best Described By Jesus Himself:*

*“The Son of man came, not to be ministered to,  
but to minister and to give his soul a ransom  
[Greek, ly'tron] in exchange for many.”  
(Matthew 20:28)*



## How is Jesus a ransom for many? What is ransom theory?

Jesus is recorded in [Matthew 20:28](#) and in [Mark 10:45](#) referring to Himself as "a ransom for many," and Paul uses nearly identical verbiage in [1 Timothy 2:6](#), except that he uses a universal "ransom for all." The Greek words translated "ransom" in these texts indicate the **price paid for redeeming or ransoming either a slave or a prisoner** – a common practice in the time of the New Testament – **or the price for a life, closer to what we might think of today in the context of kidnapping and holding a person "for ransom."**

Closely related to these verses are passages that say Jesus "bought" us. One of these, [Acts 20:28 \(NIV\)](#), helps us understand how Jesus "paid" this ransom, for it says that the church was "bought with his own blood." [First Corinthians 6:20](#) and [7:23](#) both remind the reader that they "were bought with a price," and [2nd Peter 2:1](#) also uses "buying" terminology.

These passages led church theologian Origen (c. 185-c. 245 AD) to develop a [theory of the atonement](#) called "ransom theory." In this understanding, Adam and Eve became captives to Satan and sin at the fall, followed by all of their offspring – the entire world. In order to bring salvation to the human race, Jesus died to give Satan his due price of blood, buying back humanity.

The act by which God restores a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and human beings. The word can be broken into three parts which express this great truth in simple but profound terms: "at-one-ment." Through God's atoning grace and forgiveness, we are reinstated to a relationship of at-one-ment with God, in spite of our sin.

ATONEMENT THEORIES	DESCRIPTION
Moral Influence	A Positive Example Of Love In Action
Ransoming	Buys Lost From Sin Gains The Victory!
Satisfaction	Appease God's Honor Robbed By Our Sin
Penal Substitution	He's Legal Stand-In He Bears Our Guilt





# JESUS' RANSOM FOR ADAM SATISFIES JUSTICE

1 Corinthians 15:22



## **Irenaeus and the Recapitulation Theory of the Atonement**

Adam



**First Man  
Law Broken  
Lost Eternal  
Life for Man**

Christ



**Second Man  
Law Obeyed  
Regained for Man  
What Adam Lost**

## Origen and the Ransom-to-Satan View of the Atonement

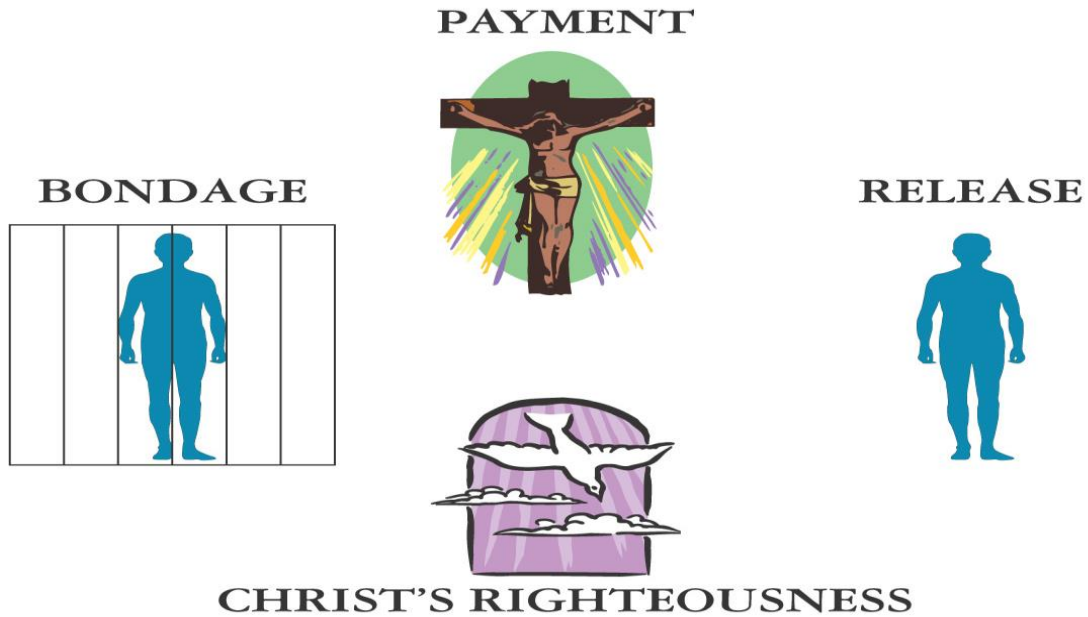


Chart 38

## Anselm and the Meaning of the Atonement

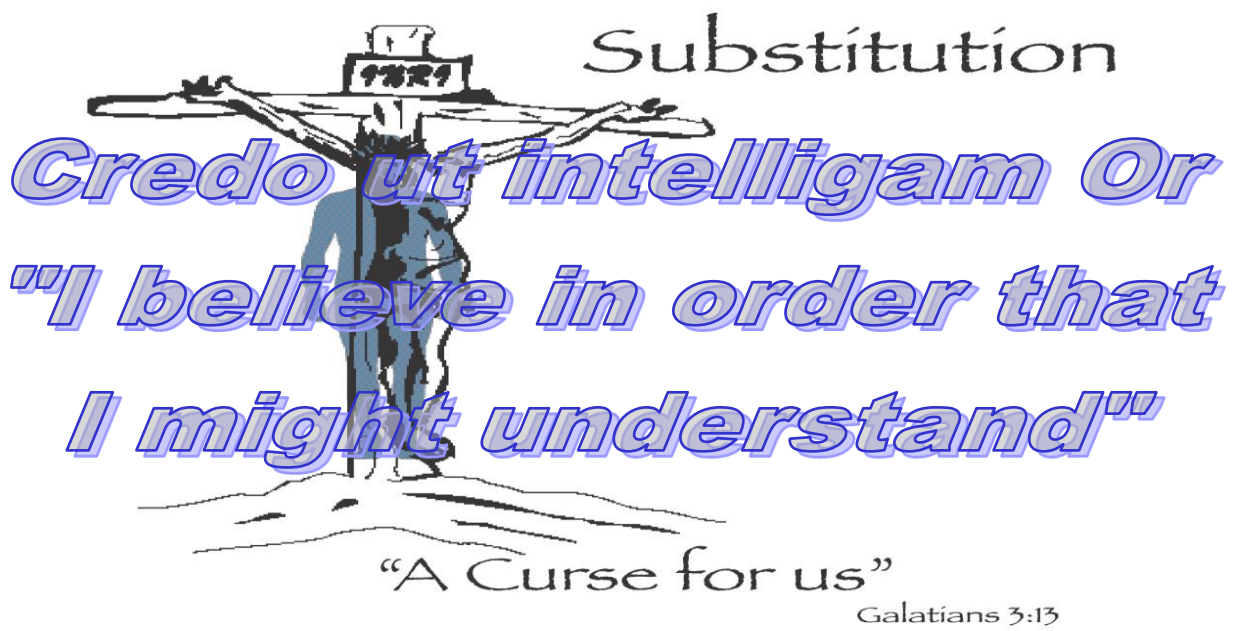


Chart 127



**Abelard and the Meaning of the Atonement**

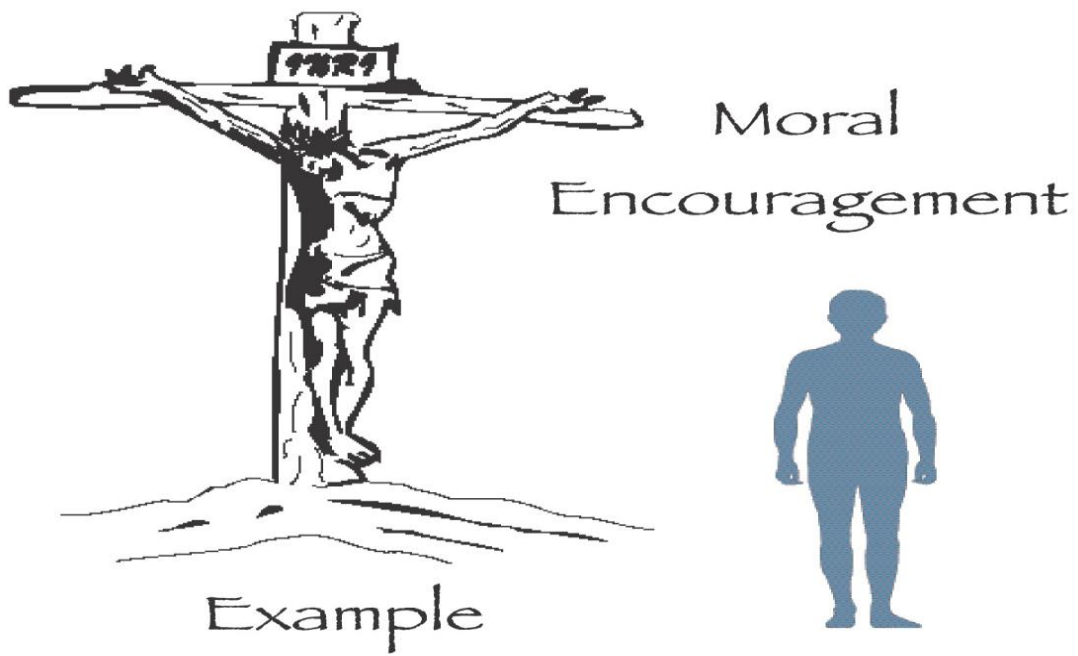


Chart 128

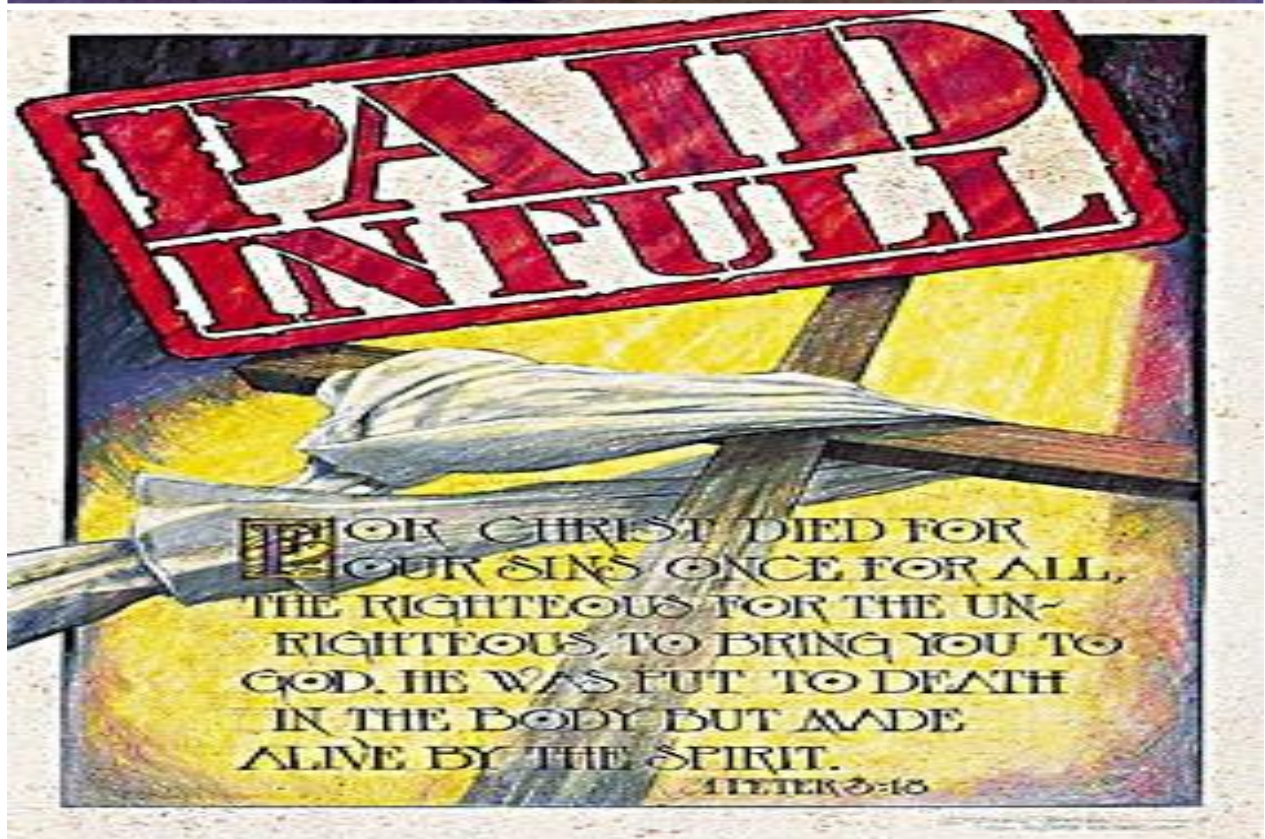
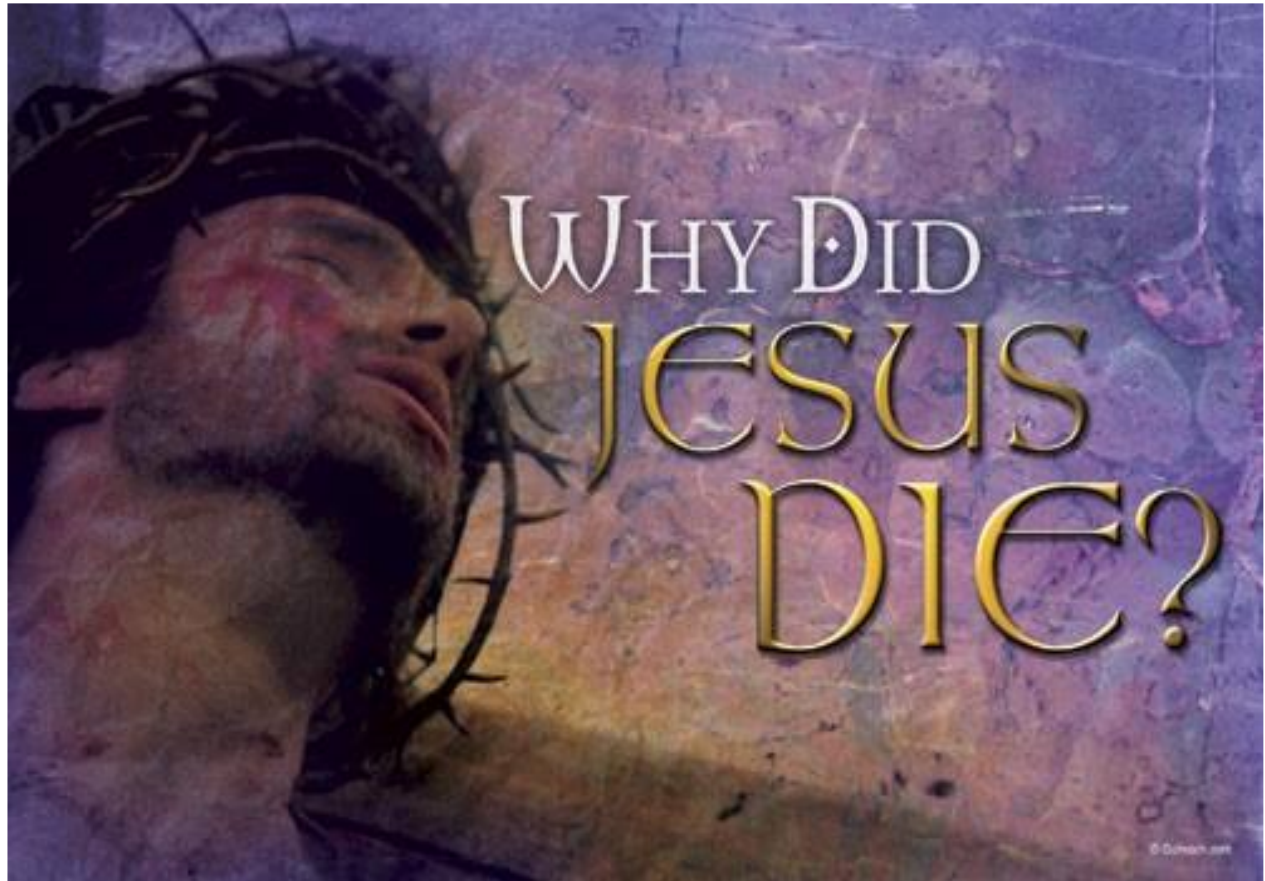
However, Jesus did not remain dead, in the clutches of Satan, but rose back to life, defeating Satan and the death he brings to the world. Ransom theory was widespread until the eleventh century, when Anselm argued against it strongly.

Today, neither the Roman Catholic nor most Protestants accept ransom theory in its original form. The concept of God being a debtor to Satan, or even Satan having a just claim for "owning" humanity is dubitable at best. However, it is interesting to note that C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe* presents, allegorically, Aslan's slaying and resurrection as atoning for sin and breaking the power of evil in a manner very similar to the original representation of ransom theory.

An altered version of ransom theory claims that it was God the Father who required payment for sin, which is far more coherent with biblical representations. This altered version continues to be acknowledged as a part or picture of Jesus' atoning work, though it is not believed, in Protestant and Roman Catholic circles, to be the primary source of or reason for our **salvation**. Most Protestants accept substitutionary atonement as the most complete understanding of Christ's work on the cross available to us.

It may be concluded that in the sense that Jesus paid a ransom to redeem us, it was paid with His blood to God the Father for sin. However, it should be remembered that this is not the totality of how our salvation comes about.

– *Compelling Truth*



## Problems with the ransom metaphor

To whom is the ransom paid?

The major difficulty with the ransom metaphor comes when the idea of the ransom is taken too literally. When this becomes the focus for our exploration, a number of difficult questions seem to arise. To whom is the ransom paid? If the answer is the devil, then this seems to suggest that the devil somehow has acquired rights over sinful human beings and must be paid off. If the answer is God, then this raises questions about what God is really like. We will look at each of these suggestions in turn.

If the devil is paid the ransom, does this mean that the devil has rights over sinful human beings?

Some early and medieval theologians thought that, by sinning, Adam and Eve handed themselves over to Satan (this theory can be found in the twelfth-century *Liber Pancrisis*). Because Adam and Eve had done so voluntarily, he gained rights over them as their lord. As a consequence, all human beings became rightfully subject to Satan. When God became man in Christ, Satan sought to extend his lordship over Christ; but because the attempt failed because Christ was sinless and resisted Satan's temptation. By overreaching himself in wrongfully seeking to claim lordship over Christ, Satan forfeited his rights over the rest of humanity. Christ, as the wronged party, acquired the jurisdiction Satan had forfeited by his own unlawful act.

Anselm (**1033–1109**), did not find this interpretation of the ransom theory convincing. He was adamant that the devil, who was a traitor against God, a liar, and a thief, did not have just dominion over human beings.

Anselm developed his own theory, the satisfaction theory of the atonement, as a reaction against this idea. For Anselm, only God has rights, the right to be obeyed by God's creatures. The devil's jurisdiction over human beings is only ever a matter of fact and never a matter of right. The devil is a usurper. The might of evil does not make evil's hold over human beings right. Like a kidnaper, the devil has power over human beings which he has no right to.

Anselm's view seems to be supported by Acts **10:38**, which is translated in the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) as, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and . . . He went about doing good and curing all who were under the tyranny of the Devil."

T. F. Torrance agrees with Anselm that "the whole notion of ransom paid to an evil power is impossible on the biblical view . . . [In Romans **3:21–25** and the whole of the apostle Paul's thinking] evil is revealed as having no right over man, and to have usurped the right of the law of God and through that right to have robbed God of his inheritance in his people and of his people of their inheritance in God."

If the devil is not paid the ransom, then how is  
humanity to be freed?

Another disturbing consequence of conceding that Satan had rights over human beings was what it implied about how Satan had lost those rights. Satan's rights were the result of human beings having sinned. Because Jesus had never sinned, Satan had no rights over Jesus. Satan's attempt to claim rights over Jesus resulted in him forfeiting his rights over human beings.

Attempting to explain how Satan had lost his rights, some ancient theologians (most notably Gregory of Nyssa) suggested that God had hidden Jesus' deity from Satan so that Satan, thinking he was dealing with a mere human, had been tricked by God into overplaying his hand.

René Girard is surely correct that the release of humanity from the power of evil "does not include the least bit of . . . dishonesty on God's part. It is not really a ruse or a trick; it is rather the inability of the prince of this world to understand the divine love." It is Satan himself who "transforms his own mechanism into a trap, and he falls into it headlong."

Satan, in his pride, cannot imagine loving anything other than himself. As a result, Satan is completely blind to the possibility that Jesus might sacrifice himself in order to ransom others

If the ransom is paid to God, what sort of God  
are we dealing with?

An alternative way of making sure that the devil has no rights over human beings is to suggest that the ransom was not paid to the devil at all but rather to God the Father. The picture here is of God the Father as the one whom human beings have offended by their actions. God the Father is angry and hurt by human beings' actions. He must be compensated for the wrong which we have done to him. Only then will he look kindly on us once again. Jesus, God the Son, through his death, pays the ransom which God the Father demands and as a result pacifies the Father's wrath.



The problem with this approach to the metaphor is the picture of God it suggests. Christians do not believe in three gods but in one God. This picture risks suggesting that God the Father hates human beings while at the same time God the Son who loves human beings is working to turn the Father's hatred into love. This implies that the triune God has a split personality, with one Person of the Trinity hating humanity whilst another Person of the Trinity loves humanity. Such a view of God is not what the Bible teaches. John **3:16** tells us that God (the Father) so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. The Father and Son both love humanity and agreed together that the Son should ransom us from sin, evil, and death.

We do not need to work out to whom the ransom was/is to be paid

Gregory of Nazianus (c. **325–89** AD) rejected the idea that on the cross God paid the devil. He recognized that at this point the ransom metaphor has reached its limit: “I enquire to whom was the blood of God poured out? If to the evil one—alas! that the blood of Christ should be offered to the wicked one! But if you say ‘To God’—how shall that be, when it is to another (than God) that we were enslaved?”

*We were under the reign of the devil, sold to sin, after we had gained corruption on account of our sinful desire. If the price of our ransom is paid to him who has us in his power, I ask myself: Why is such a price to be paid? If it is given to the devil, it is outrageous! The brigand receives the price of redemption. Not only does he receive it from God, he receives God Himself. For his violence he demands such a disproportionate ransom that it would be more just for him to set us free without ransom.*

*But if the price is paid to the Father, why should that be done? It is not the Father who has held us as His captives. Moreover, why should the blood of His only Son be acceptable to the Father, who did not wish to accept Isaac, when Abraham offered Him his son as a burnt offering, but replaced the human sacrifice with the sacrifice of a ram? Is it not evident that the Father accepts the sacrifice not because He demanded it or had any need for it but by His dispensation? It was necessary that man should be sanctified by the humanity of God; it was necessary that He Himself should free us, triumphing over the tyrant by His own strength . . . Let the rest of the mystery be venerated silently.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> McIlroy, D. (2022). [Ransomed, redeemed, and forgiven: money and the atonement](#). Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock.



# 1 TIMOTHY 2:5,6

FOR THERE IS ONE GOD, AND ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS; WHO GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM FOR ALL, TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME.

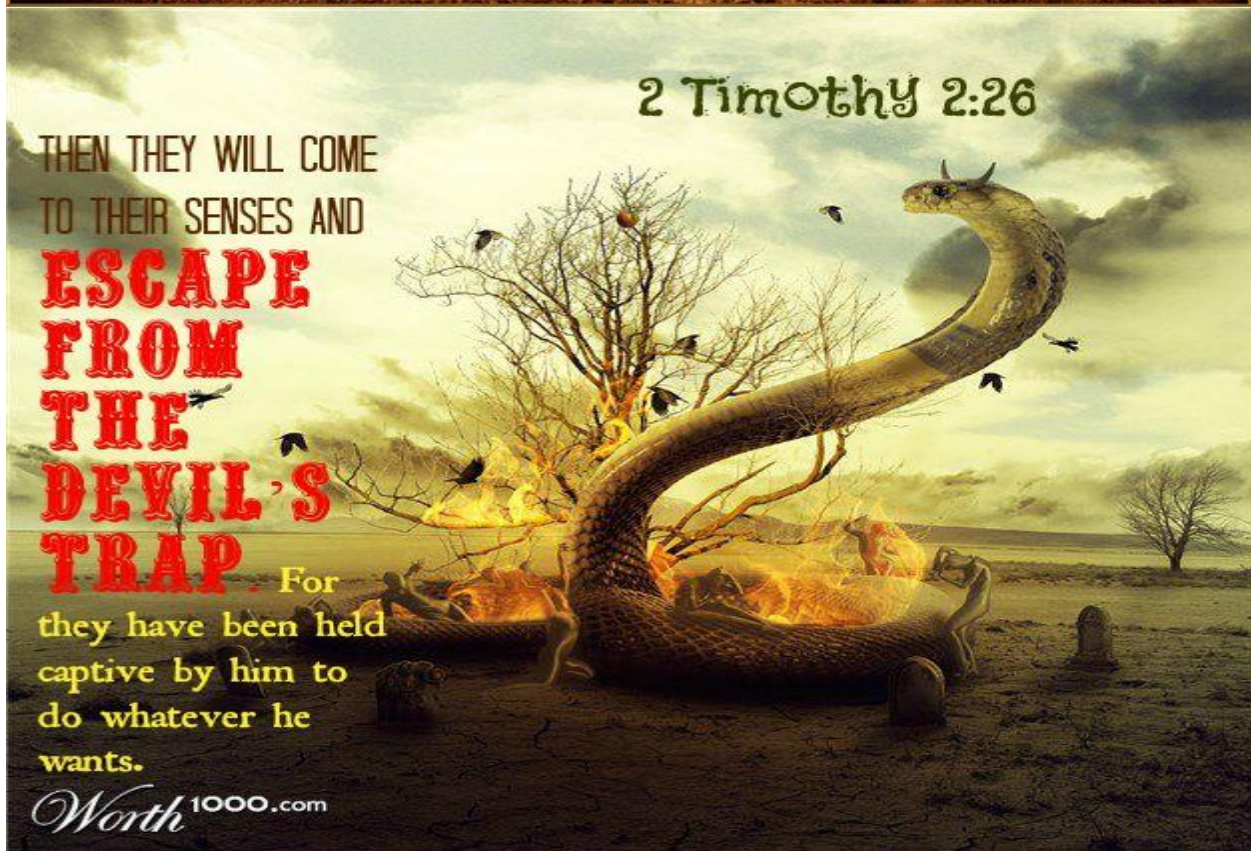
## 2 Timothy 2:26

THEN THEY WILL COME TO THEIR SENSES AND

**ESCAPE FROM THE DEVIL'S TRAP.**

For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

*Worth* 1000.com



## Debt-slavery

What do you do if you don't have anything you can offer up as security? This was a real problem in biblical times. Sometimes the poor were driven to desperate measures: offering as security the coat they slept under at night or, like Emma Abbott, the tools they needed to earn their living. The law of Moses contains specific warnings against creditors holding on to such pledges overnight (Exod **22:26**; Deut **24:12**).

Things could get even worse. Once a borrower had pawned everything they owned, the only things left to offer as pledges were their children or themselves. The law of Moses contains passages such as Leviticus **25** which make uncomfortable reading but which reflect the economic reality of the times: someone driven by famine or other disaster could find themselves having to sell themselves into slavery in order to avoid starvation.

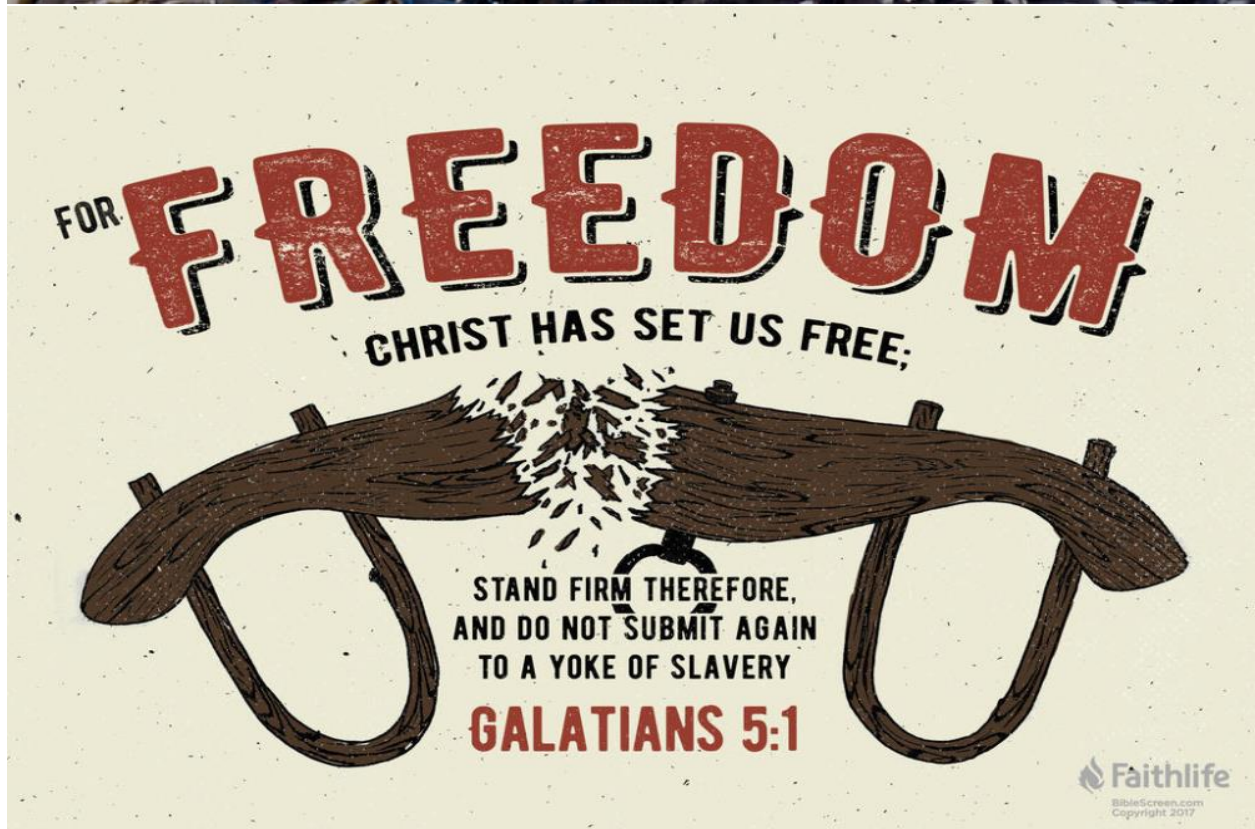
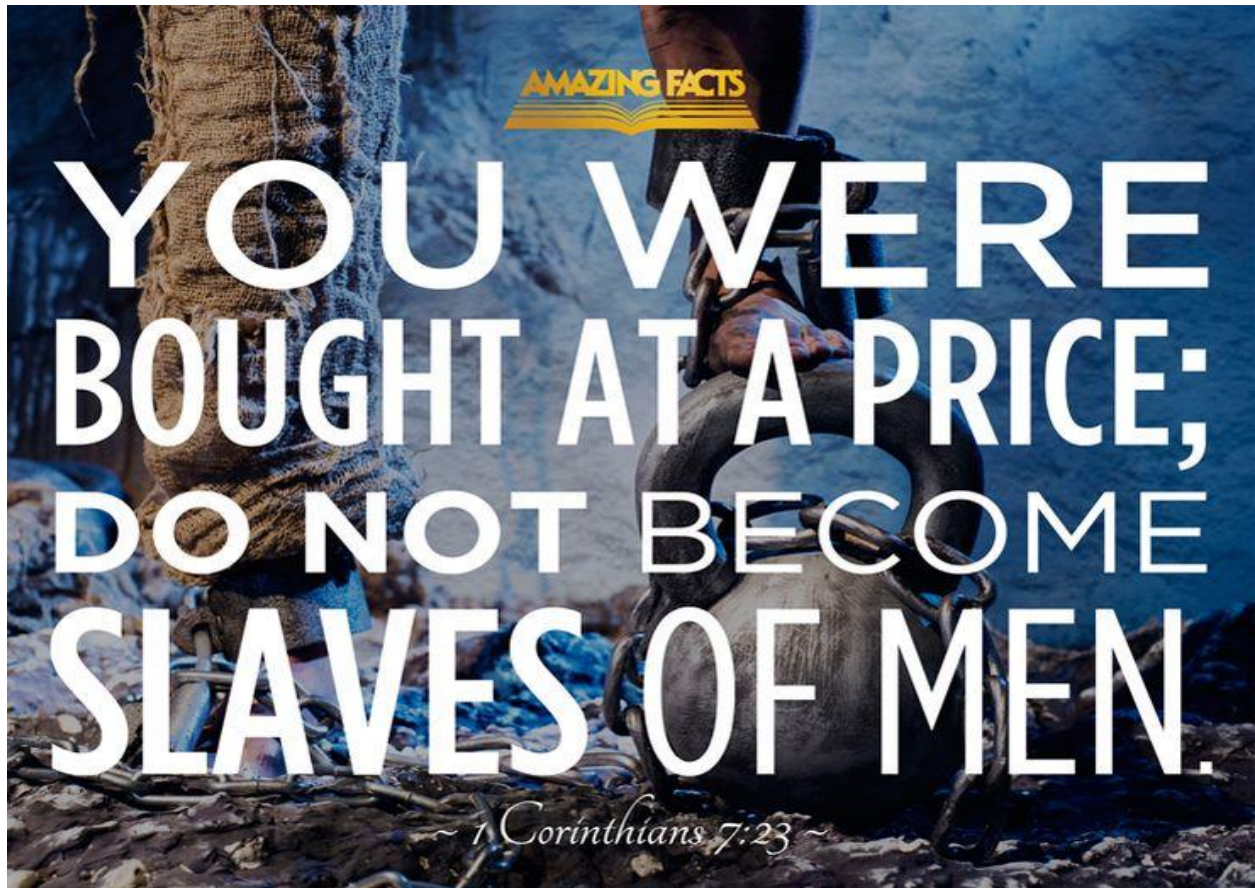
This type of debt-slavery (also known as **“debt bondage,”** “bonded slavery,” or “modern slavery”) persists across the world today, blighting the lives of millions of men, women, and children. Time and again, throughout time and across the globe, the poor get into debt when tragedy or disaster happens. When crops fail, the poor may have to borrow money to feed their children.

When injury or illness strikes, money may be needed to pay a doctor. Desperate, and with no access to anything that we would recognize as a bank, they borrow money from the local moneylender. The problem is the terms on which the money is lent: the loan must be paid back in full in a single sum—installments are not acceptable. In order to guarantee the payment of “interest” until such time as the family can afford to repay the full sum, one or more family members must work as a bonded laborer. Deprived of that person’s labor, the family’s finances become even more stretched, and the loan can never be paid off.

The realities of debt-slavery today are brutal. Debt-slaves are forced to work long hours, often seven days a week, for an employer who is also their creditor. Unable to leave to find work elsewhere, they are paid pitifully low wages which leave them with little or no chance of ever paying off the interest on their debt. Physical abuse is commonplace. In some cases, slaves are locked in small cages or rooms. Collective punishment, intimidation, and violence are used to break their will and to keep them in line. Often, not only the original borrower but also their children become slaves to the creditor, beaten and abused, denied their basic rights and any dignity.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> McIlroy, D. (2022). [\*Ransomed, redeemed, and forgiven: money and the atonement\*](#). Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock.



## From the *Dictionary of Paul & His Letters*:

**2.4. Household Codes.** The *Haustafeln*, or household codes, appear in the apostolic letters: Ephesians 5:21–6:9 and Colossians 3:18–4:1 (see also 1 Pet 2:18–3:7). The codes reflect the organization of the *familia*. Martin views the household codes as a corrective to “disruptions” of the typical family in light of the growing Christian movement’s liberative message.

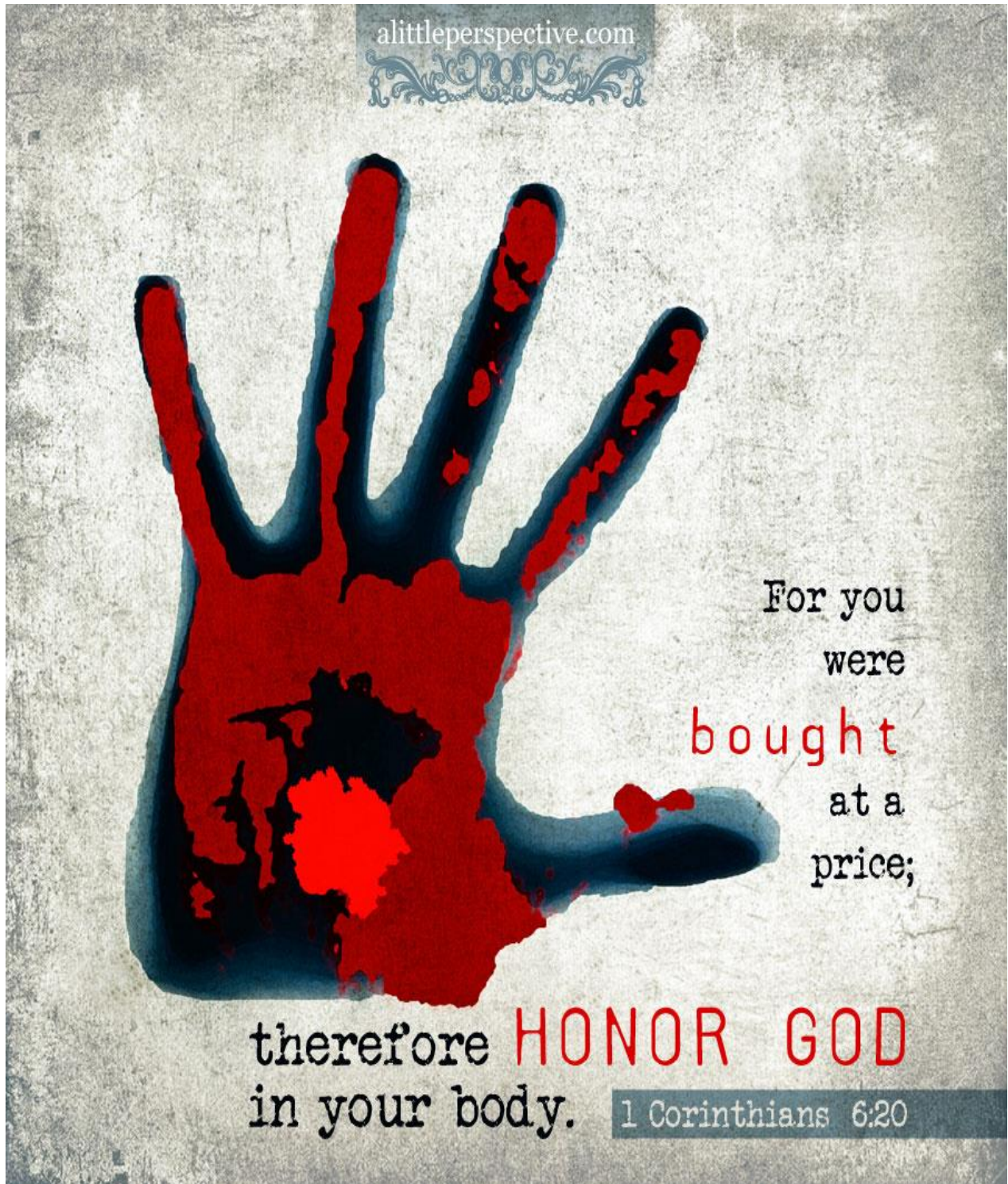
The NT *Haustafeln* reflect a degree of deviation from typical Roman societal stratification in at least three ways: (1) Those in the subordinate position are to be motivated by the lordship of Christ more so than by societal requirements. For example, in Ephesians 6:5–8 and Colossians 3:22–25 require that enslaved service be rendered as if working directly for the Lord Jesus Christ, with the expectation of godly reward, or inheritance. (2) Paul commands those in dominant positions—husbands, fathers, and masters—not solely those in the subordinate roles. Rather than functioning like Roman laws designed to regulate property, the instructions to those in the socially dominant roles urge loving and respectful attitudes as well as behaviors. In Colossians 4:1, for example, earthly masters are told that they have a heavenly Master who can see whether slaves are treated justly (*dikaion*) and equitably (*isotēta*). (3) Those in the subordinate position are addressed alongside those in the dominant position because both groups are fellow members of the Christian community.

**3.1. Ransom and Redemption.** First Timothy 2:5–6 identifies Christ as the only mediator between God and human beings, declaring that he gave himself as a ransom for everyone. This statement may reflect the ransom saying in the Jesus \*tradition (Mk 10:45), although it uses *antilytron* instead of *lytron* to express ransom, emphasizing the sense of exchange. By implication, human beings were held in captivity but were liberated by Jesus' offering of himself on their behalf or (more likely) in their place. The ransom is Jesus himself, and the captor is not identified; however, 2 Timothy 2:25–26 states that nonbelievers are held captive by the devil.

Redemption (*apolytrōsis*) can refer to the eschatological “day of redemption” (Eph 4:30) when believers' \*bodies will be set free from decay in the general resurrection and believers will receive their inheritance (Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 15:50–57; Eph 1:14). Believers' present experience of the Holy Spirit is the pledge of, or down payment on, that future inheritance (Eph 1:14).

However, redemption is also a metaphor for Christ's completed work, which involves the justification of believers (Rom 3:24) and the forgiveness of their sins (Col 1:14). This redemption is accomplished by Christ's death (Eph 1:7) and is embodied in Christ himself (Col 1:28). Gentiles are redeemed from their slavery to idols, while Jews are redeemed from their slavery under the law (Gal 4:8–9; 5:1–5, using *exagorazō*). Jesus' faithful obedience unto death broke the cycle of law-sin-death for Jews and opened covenant membership to Gentiles. Believers are no longer slaves, because they have been bought (*agorazō*) with the price of Jesus' death (1 Cor 6:20; 7:23). The Holy Spirit, who indwells them, is the stamp of Christ's ownership (Eph 1:13). Because they now belong to Christ, they must not become slaves to immorality or to other people.





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For you  
were  
**bought**  
at a  
price;

therefore **HONOR GOD**  
in your body. **1 Corinthians 6:20**

**3.2. Jesus' Victory.** In order to redeem believers, Jesus had to achieve victory over the powers that held them in slavery. All powers on earth and in heaven were originally created through Christ and for him ([Col 1:16](#)). However, these powers became enmeshed with earthly systems that kept people in bondage ([Col 2:18–23](#)). Through the cross, Christ triumphed over all these powers. God disarmed them by forgiving human sin, which had made human beings subject to them ([Col 2:13–15](#)). Sin itself, according to Paul, is an enslaving power from which believers have been freed ([Rom 6:1–11](#)).

Because of Christ's faithfulness unto death, the Father raised him from the dead and exalted him above all spiritual or material powers ([Phil 2:5–11](#); [Eph 1:20–21](#)). Believers acknowledge Christ's victory in their confession that "Jesus is Lord" ([Rom 10:9–10](#)). As exalted Lord, Christ can save those who belong to him. Moreover, Christ's exaltation was the necessary condition for the sending of the Spirit, who is the ultimate answer to the human sin problem. The Spirit can do what the law could not—namely, transform sinners so that they might ...

This concept found ready use in the [OT](#) as a [metaphor](#) for initial devotion to God. Even male children who opened the womb (thus the firstborn of the family) belonged to the Lord ([Ex 13:3](#); [Num 18:15](#)). But this was quickly explained as a symbolic ritual ([Num 18:15–16](#)), for such children were not to be sacrificed but redeemed with five shekels of silver. The Levites, in turn, took the place of the firstborn in Israel, performing special service before God ([Num 8:18](#)), and in their dedication were presented as a wave offering before the Lord ([Num 8:11](#); cf. [Lev 23:9–11](#)). Jeremiah similarly uses first fruits as a symbol of Israel: "Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of his harvest" ([Jer 2:3](#); cf. [Jas 1:18](#)).

## We belong to God because God has bought us (Lev 25:42, 55)

### Sacrifice and Compounding of Debt

The logic of sacrifice is the logic of what lawyers sometimes call “compounding.” If I owe someone £**1,000** and I cannot pay it, I may meet with my creditor and offer him £**600** now, in settlement of the debt. If my creditor accepts the offer, then I have compounded with him. I have been released from the full extent of my obligation by offering a lesser sum.

A farmer who, thanks to the goodness of God in sending the sun and the rain, owes the whole of his crop to God could compound that obligation by offering God the firstfruits of his crop (Exod **23:19**; Lev **23:10**; Deut **18:4**).

Because God had redeemed God’s people from slavery in Egypt, they all belonged to God. The reminder to God’s people of that reality was the setting aside of every firstborn male (Exod **13:1–2**). To be set apart is to be holy. The Israelites are called, in the Hebrew Scriptures, to recognize that they have been redeemed by God by acknowledging that some things are to be set apart for God.

Exodus **13:14–16** explains:

In days to come, when your son asks you, “What does this mean?” say to him, “With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed the firstborn of both people and animals in Egypt. This is why I sacrifice to the Lord the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons.”

The rescue of the Israelites from Egypt was reflected in Israel's law stipulating that firstborn animals and sons belong to God. However, God will accept substitutes. Numbers **3:11–13** specifies that the Levites belong to God in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The people of Israel as a whole owed everything to God, but God accepted the service of the Levites in lieu.

The idea of compounding applies when someone makes a monetary payment instead of experiencing the punishment that would otherwise be due to them. In the Germanic Laws that applied in the Dark Ages in Germany, France, and Anglo-Saxon England, a killer could avoid the death penalty by paying a *weregild*, a man-price. The payment of the *weregild* redeemed the debt of punishment created by the death.

### The Year of Jubilee

A striking feature of Israel's laws is the Year of Jubilee (Lev **25:8–55**). Every fifty years, debts were to be cancelled and land was to be returned to the family which originally owned it. The provisions for resetting the economy seem so dramatic that for a long time it was questioned whether such a Jubilee could ever have been applied in practice.

However, Assyriologists have discovered that debt amnesties were in fact a common feature of ancient Near East politics, dating as far back as **2400** BC, when Enmetena, ruler of the city of Lagash in Sumer, cancelled agrarian debts. The practice became commonplace among Sumerian kings and was taken up by Babylonian kings in the dynasty of Hammurabi. Michael Hudson explores the evidence in. . . . *And Forgive Them Their Debts: Lending, Foreclosure, and Redemption from Bronze Age Finance to the Jubilee Year (2018)*.

In Israel, God was Israel's king. The Year of Jubilee was God's standing legislation, meant to provide a predictable resetting of the Israelite economy to which everyone could look forward.

The first purpose of the Jubilee was to prevent debt-slavery being passed down the generations. In ancient Israel, economic security depended on having access to land to farm and not having unpayable debts to service. In the Year of Jubilee, a family was supposed to get back its ancestral lands and get rid of its ongoing debt. The next generation was given a fresh start, the opportunity to make a go of it without being crushed by the effects of the disasters or disadvantages inherited from the past. The Year of Jubilee represented the ongoing commitment of Israel's God that the Israelites never, ever would be slaves. God who had redeemed Israel as a nation from slavery was, through the institution of the Jubilee, still actively committed to redeeming Israelite families from slavery.

The Jubilee year looks forward to the Day of Christ, "for it is his coming which achieves for us the cancellation of all debt and the restoration to us of the rights we had forfeited as God's creatures and as members of God's family and household."

### The kinsman-redeemer

The word "redemption" literally means to buy back or to win back something which has been lost. The *go'el* is the kinsman-redeemer, the one with responsibility to bail a relative out of bankruptcy, slavery, or forfeiture of their lands, possessions, and other rights.

A key role of the *go'el* was to hunt down the murderer of a kinsman (Num **35:19**). This law prescribed if that if someone was killed, their nearest male relative was under a duty to avenge their death. [To avenge a family death one becomes liable to being killed by the other family avenger.] The kinsman has to be prepared to sacrifice his own life to avenge his family's honor. And so the cycle of vendetta continues. **Jesus is our *go'el*, our avenger, but one who breaks the cycle of death by destroying the man-slayer death itself.**

The Old Testament pictures God as Israel's kinsman-redeemer. **54**Leviticus **25** contains a series of detailed provisions by which property and persons who have sold themselves into debt-slavery can be redeemed. Verse **48** describes the plight of the impoverished Israelite who has sold himself into slavery to a foreigner. He should be rescued by his brother, or if not by his brother, by his uncle, or if not by his uncle, by his uncle's son, or if not by his uncle's son, by any one of his blood relatives from his family. But what if there is no family member who is able or willing to redeem him? YHWH's answer, in verses **–55**, is: “Even if someone is not redeemed in any of these ways, they and their children are to be released in the Year of Jubilee, for the Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

## **The O.T. anticipating redemption from sin and death**

Anderson explains that in Aramaic, the language which Jesus and his disciples spoke, the word *hōbâ* was the word not only for a debt owed to a lender but was also the word typically used to describe sin. *Hōbâ* was translated into Greek as *opheiléma*.

When Matthew writes in Matthew **6:12** that in the Lord's Prayer we should pray "forgive us our *opheiléma*," he is remembering vividly hearing Jesus teach that we should ask God to forgive our *hóbâ*. If sin is debt, and death is the interest incurred as a result, then redemption is the obvious way of talking about what needs to be done in order to free us.

### The cross as redemption - The cost of our redemption

The ideas of ransom (*lutron*) and redemption (*apolutrosis*) are closely connected in Greek. T. F. Torrance helps us understand their connection: "The term which the New Testament uses for redemption, *apolutrosis*, is derived not from the verb but from the noun *lutron*, which refers not so much to the act as to the cost of redemption. That should warn us that any account of redemption in the New Testament and early church which does not give central significance to the *lutron*, the price of redemption, is hardly likely to do justice to their understanding."

The word-picture of redemption focuses our attention on the cost of our rescue. The cost of overcoming the power of evil, sin, selfishness and death was the death of the Son of God. That's at the heart of the picture of Jesus' death as our redemption. It's the supreme cost which Jesus bore which was the focus of the church's reflections on the cross.

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul describes the penalty of death as the curse of the law. The Greek for marketplace is *agora*, and in Galatians **3:13** the verb used to describe Christ's action is *exagorazó*. **Christ went into the slave market and bought us.** He has bought us back; He has bought us out of our indebtedness.

Galatians **3:13** tells us that “Christ [bought us out] from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’” Paul is quoting there from Deuteronomy **21:23**, which says that a man guilty of a capital offence is to be put to death by hanging on a tree. The cost of our salvation was Jesus undergoing a death he did not deserve but we did.

### The price paid was the blood of Jesus

God did not weigh up exactly how much was needed to pay off the debts of our enslavement; God made the ultimate sacrifice in order to do far more than merely wipe them out. This is because “*In Jesus, it is the triune God himself* who has intervened to reclaim—to buy back, if you will—his lost creation, and the price he pays is his own self in the person of the divine Son of Man.”

Jesus died as Son of God and Son of Man. As Son of God, the price he paid was incalculable. As Son of Man, the price he paid was representative. He was the pure lamb, whose sacrifice was accepted as covering over the sins of the world. As we have already seen in our discussion of compounding, when a sacrifice was made, the offering was accepted on behalf of the whole. In **251** Corinthians **15**, Paul applies that logic to the resurrection. He describes Jesus Christ as the firstfruits of those who have died (verse **20**). Jesus’ death, offered as a sacrifice to God, is thoroughly effective. Just as “in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” (verse **22**). Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we can be confident that when he returns again, “those who belong to him” will be resurrected (verse **23**). All the powers of evil will be destroyed, ending with the extinction of death itself (verses **–26**).



## Jesus paid the price as our surety

A person who gives a guarantee is called a surety, because their promise gives assurance to the recipient that the money owed will be paid. But, depending on the wording used in the legal documents, a surety can do more than simply pay compensation if the primary debtor fails to pay up. A surety can promise to render the performance instead of the primary debtor. The kinsman-redeemer is a special case of a surety.

Jesus took on the full range of obligations to act as our surety. The idea that Jesus was our surety is a prominent theme in the writings of Puritans such as John Owen and Richard Sibbes. Owen saw Jesus as our surety, the one who gave the Father the faithful, trusting, and obedient love which every human being owed God. Jesus is the one who makes up for our failure to pay our debt to God; Jesus not only pays the price we have incurred because of our disobedience and rejection of God's love; Jesus is also the one who gives God the love and obedience we should have given God. Jesus acts as our surety both as our kinsman-redeemer and as our representative. In his death, Jesus represented not only each one of us as individuals but also the human race as a whole.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> McIlroy, D. (2022). [\*Ransomed, redeemed, and forgiven: money and the atonement\*](#). Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock.

In him we have

**REDEMPTION**

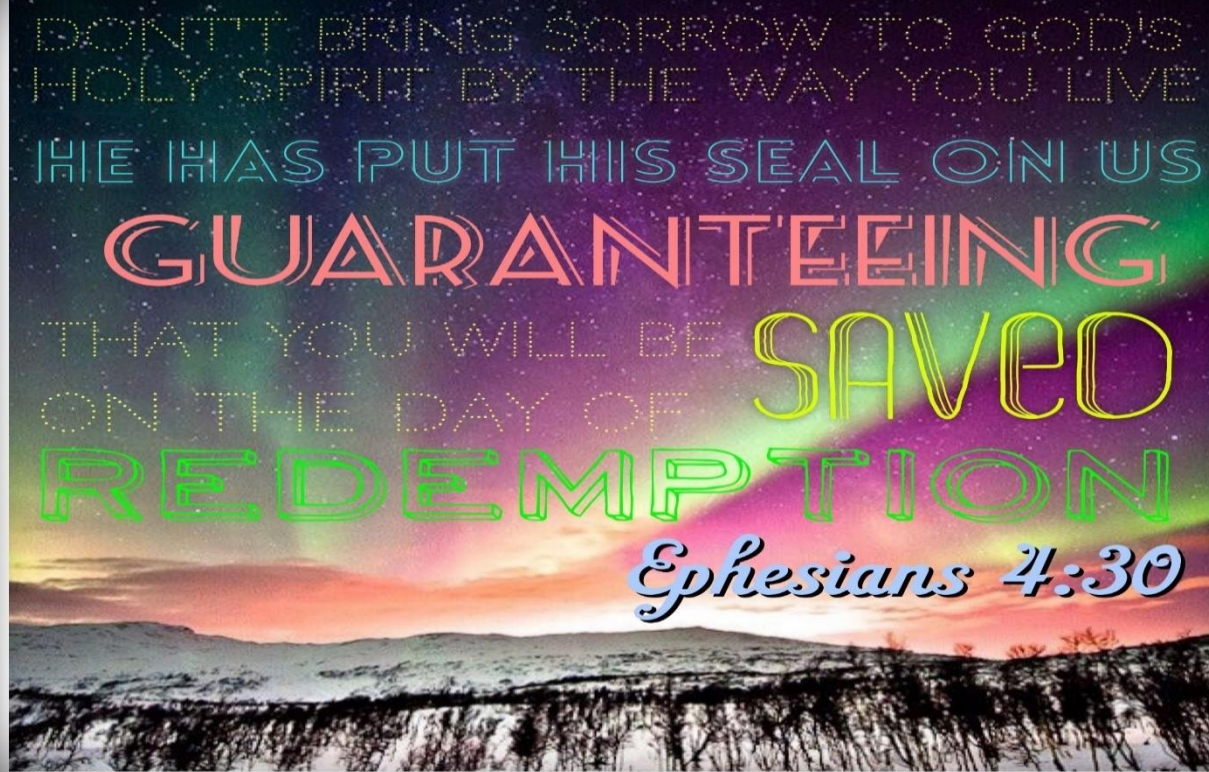
through his blood, the

**forgiveness of sins,**

in accordance with the  
riches of God's

**grace.**

Ephesians 1:7 NIV



## **ADOPTED & CARRY THE FAMILY NAME**

## **REGARDED & TREATED AS OFFSPRING**

### **From the *Dictionary of Paul & His Letters*:**

**Greco-Roman Adoption Practice.** Since ancient adoption practices differ substantially from contemporary Western notions of adoption, it is necessary to first examine the practice itself. Regarding Pauline adoption there is some disagreement on whether the term *huiiothesia* (adoption to sonship) is best understood as *adoption* specifically, or with the more general term *sonship*. However, this question has been largely settled by J. M. Scott, whose 1992 monograph conclusively demonstrated that *huiiothesia* always connotes adoptive sonship in particular and never is used to describe more general sonship. Yet, it is also important to point out that ***adoption describes an event that results in a permanent change in status—that is, adoption results in the sonship of the adopted son.*** Through adoption, a son of one father becomes the legal son of another father and is **legally estranged from the family of his birth. All debts are canceled & he is heir apparent in his adoptive family.**

There are some small distinctions between Greek and Roman practices of adoption, but it is likely that **the term *adoption* in Paul's letters is trading primarily on the Roman concept**, since Greek adoption practices were in decline by the time of Paul's writing (Heim). In any case, the two systems share much in common.

In both earlier Greek practices and then Roman practices, the purpose of adoption was to secure the lineage and legacy of a father and a household, rather than to protect a vulnerable child. **In both Greek and Roman adoptions, a father, through adoption, would name an adult male to be his son and heir in order to pass on his family name, inheritance, and estate.**

There are three types of Roman adoption—testamentary adoption, *adrogatio*, and *adoptio*—all of which illuminate the inner logic of the Roman *familia* and so are relevant to discussion of the Pauline adoption texts. In Roman adoption the *paterfamilias* (the head of a Roman \*household; usually the oldest male) chose an adult male (usually a younger son of a relative, or at least of a family of similar social status) to name as his son through an act of *huiiothesia*. As son and heir, the adopted son of a Roman *paterfamilias*, upon the death of the father, inherited the father's power as the head of the household (*patria potestas*), and his estate. The son (as the new *paterfamilias*) was also tasked with the maintenance of the *gens* (family name and religion) of his adoptive family. In most instances, adoptions were testamentary; the adopted son and heir was named in the last will and testament of the deceased *paterfamilias*. Testamentary adoptions also feature most prominently in extant legal sources, likely because they were the most contested since the adoptive son was not named while a father was still living.

Adoption is not a process. Adoption is not an identity. Adoption is a singular, nonrepeatable, unilateral event based on love, choice, sacrifice, and law, which binds the parties forever by an authoritative decree. I know that. I was not “given up”; I was *placed*. I was placed to become a son with a home and a name and a new life. I am not an “adopted person.” Rather, I *was* adopted.

The question of what language to use for adoption—in the earthly or the heavenly family—is not just a matter of sensitivities and politeness. In the New Testament the Greek word for adoption is a “presumed” compound of the Greek word *huios*, “son,” and the word *titheoemi*, “to place.” **Adoption is therefore, according to the Greek word employed by the Holy Spirit, most properly, “the placing of a son, or child, into a welcoming family.”** This also shows dignity as we contemplate all sides of adoption, including the human realm for the birth parent (or the court, as in my own case) who must make a plan to “place”—not give up—the child.

Sometimes I hear others refer to their children this way. Insensitive and thoughtless remarks about “real children” versus “adopted children” make adoption an ongoing identity rather than a once-and-forever event. They **elevate bloodline over covenant, a wrongheaded, human way of thinking in fleshly juxtaposition to the concept of family presented in the Bible.**

R. E. Ciampa, in his article on adoption in the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, defines adoption as “the legal establishment of a kinship relationship between two people that is recognized as being equivalent to one based on physical descent.” We need that good, sturdy, concise definition. We need to know that family relations are more than DNA and bloodlines according to the Bible.

One example of the Bible’s definition of families is that relationships are formed in Leviticus according to marriage, not bloodline alone—with the effect of restricting who may be married to each other. For instance, a father’s son may not marry his deceased father’s wife. This understanding, known as consanguinity and affinity, refers thus to blood and affinity through marriage. See Leviticus 18:6–23 and 20:11–21. See also the case studies of Herod’s relationship with his brother Philip’s wife in Matthew 14:3–4 and of Paul’s condemnation of a son marrying his father’s wife in 1 Corinthians 5:1.

As with family adoptions, when biblical adoption is not understood or believed, the same hurtful questions emerge.

- Are you *really* God’s son, given where you came from and what you have done?
- Are you *really* brothers and sisters since you come from such different backgrounds?
- Will you *really* be loved and welcomed into God’s family with the baggage that you bring with you?

- The world says that adoption is a second choice, leads to questions of identity, and seeks to perpetuate a story of an inner wound in search of a healing. Is that my destiny as God's child? Am I destined to spend my life seeking my *real* identity?
- Am I whole? Can I ever feel complete?

These existential questions are important. They are important because you or many of those around you are asking them. And there are answers. Some of those answers originate from the philosophies of man or even the diabolical suggestions of mankind's enemy. The world and the devil fill us with so many wrongheaded notions about "flesh versus covenant relations," and hurt, pain, and confusion fester from such ideas.

The same bad teaching or absent teaching on adoption has always been present, with the same tragic results. This is why Paul wrote to believers in his day because he did not want the flock of Jesus, the daughters and sons of God, limping through life as spiritual orphans. So, he would teach, with warmhearted pastoral sensitivity,

So, you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God (Gal. 4:7).

So, then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Eph. 2:19).

## Old Testament Teaching on Adoption

An in-depth study of the Old Testament prototype of New Testament “new covenant adoption” begins with God and His relationship to Israel, as well as to those who were Gentiles and grafted into God’s family. John Murray in his eminent study of the doctrine of adoption in his book, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, identifies key texts for grasping the doctrine in the Old Testament. I will give brief comments on the texts, but first I would like to add two narratives that point to the doctrine of adoption. In fact, I find these more potent and more easily understandable. These include the adoption of Rahab into the family of Israel, and the adoption of Ruth into the old covenant family. Both of these women are listed in the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:5.

The story of Rahab is the story of a woman in Jericho, not just any woman but a prostitute who chose to cast her lot with Israel. Joshua, representing the people of God, saved Rahab and her father’s household and all who belonged to her, and she came into Israel. She was, in every sense, adopted into the people of God. The writer to the Hebrews lists her as a heroine of the faith when he recorded the following: “By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies” (Heb. 11:31).

Rahab’s faith—a rejection of her former life and her own sinful people and a trust in the God of Israel—led her to be redeemed, and to her adoption. “But Rahab the prostitute and her father’s household and who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho” (Joshua 6:25). This woman of God, formerly a Gentile and a vile sinner, became a grandmother of our Savior.



Ruth's story is located in a book of the Bible that bears her name. Ruth was a Moabite, another Gentile woman. She had married a Hebrew man from Bethlehem who had sojourned to her country during a time of famine in Israel. This Hebrew man died, as did his father and his brother. His mother, Naomi, heard that the famine was over, prepared to go back to Israel, and urged her daughters-in-law to return to their own land. Orpah did return to Moab, but Ruth did not. Something had happened in her heart and life that was deeper than her love of her country and her old life. We read these remarkable words:

And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." (Ruth 1:15-16)

Once again, we encounter an Old Testament narrative in which a Gentile woman repudiates her old life and identifies herself with God. **This repentance and faith lead to adoption.** There was a witness of true faith in the one true God by Naomi, there was renunciation of the past life of Moabite gods and the people who followed them, and there was a commitment of faith to the Lord. The story then moves to God's provision for this childless woman by giving her a "redeemer" from the family. Boaz, this godly man, takes her as his wife. The Lord blesses the couple with a child, Obed. The sweet story concludes in perfect literary resolution with the child in the lap of Naomi, his surrogate grandmother. The final verses, a genealogy, are not to be overlooked:

Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David. (Ruth 4:21-22)

Again, in Matthew Chapter One, Ruth is listed as Jesus' forebearer through the adoptive line of Joseph.

The doctrine of adoption is introduced in Old Testament narrative even as it is more explicitly revealed in Old Testament relationship between God and His covenanted people. Let us turn our attention to other Old Testament texts that help us, from a theocratic fatherhood view of God, to see the doctrine of adoption. We will consider two of the many Old Testament passages available for study.

“For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth” (Deut. 14:2). It is important to see that this passage, which is essential to understanding the relationship of the ancient church (Israel) to God, is grounded in God’s adoption of Israel. We would do well to note that is the exact case in the New Testament passages. The children of God are just so because God chose them, they are treasured, they are His possession; they are to be differentiated from all the other peoples of the earth.

It is critical to note that while God is in a real sense the father of all creation (Acts 17:26–28), He is not the father of all in the same way He is to those He has adopted as His own children. One may think of a teacher who calls her class “my children,” for she nurtures them, instructs them, and is responsible for them. Yet those children are to be differentiated from children in her family. The most devoted teacher would not say that her classroom children are her “treasure” in the same way the children of her household and family are. **God is the father of mankind, but God is the father of His own household, His own intimate family.**<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Milton, M. A. (2012). [\*What Is the Doctrine of Adoption?\*](#) (S. M. Lucas, Ed.) (pp. 5–39). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

## New Testament Teaching on Adoption

*The Case of Lydia.* Then there is the remarkable case of Lydia, the first convert in Europe. We see a remarkable woman who repented and believed. She and her husband helped advance the gospel in the West. She was adopted to become a child of our heavenly Father.

*The Case of the Philippian Jailer.* The Philippian jailer, a pagan serving the cause of the enemies of God, was regenerated after seeing the power of God at work in the life of his prisoner, Paul.

Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God (Acts 16:30–34).

Once again, we may trace the divine pattern of regeneration, justification, and adoption. The baptism by Paul marked the sign to this Philippian jailer and to his whole household of the new covenant life that follows faith. This man was adopted to become a child of our heavenly Father.

*The Case of Our Lord Himself.* The greatest example of adoption in the whole Bible and in human history is the adoption of Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, to become the earthly son of Joseph. Joseph gave Jesus His name. Jesus' lineage is traced through this man of God.

And Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. (Matthew 1:16)

Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli. (Luke 3:23)

Joseph protected Jesus from the brutal hand of Herod. Joseph gave our Savior His earthy vocation as a carpenter. Our Savior was and is the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity. Yet He was and always remains now God in the flesh, the Son of God and of the Virgin Mary. Yet Joseph adopted Jesus as his son and Jesus obeyed His earthly father and honored him as such. How sweet and lovely is this truth when we consider the teaching of our spiritual adoption. God knows all about adoption.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Milton, M. A. (2012). [\*What Is the Doctrine of Adoption?\*](#) (S. M. Lucas, Ed.) (pp. 5–39). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery  
to fall back into fear,  
but you have received a  
spirit of adoption.  
When we cry,  
*“Abba, Father!”*  
it is that very Spirit bearing  
witness with our spirit  
that we are  
children of God.

*children of God* *sons*

**BREAK**  
*your* **CHAINS**

ROMANS  
8:15-16

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And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,  
groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons,  
the redemption of our bodies.”

Romans 8:23

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# **FROM *TABLETALK* MAGAZINE:**

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## PAULINE VIEW OF ADOPTION: ROMANS 8:14–17

The grace of adoption was afforded to slaves of sin to make them co-heirs with Christ. For Paul to declare that those who were once slaves to sin were adopted was a very influential message. The slave metaphor was personal to many people. Furthermore, when a person was adopted, a change in commitment was expected. It was the norm to carry the name, estate & religious rites of the adoptive family. **It was a new lineage.** The notion that they had been brought into the *household of God* through adoption was transformative. They were not simply freed slaves who were often considered only slightly better than slaves who were still in bondage. Even a manumitted slave who amassed wealth still faced class restrictions. So, **when Paul states that the Christians weren't simply freed but adopted, they understood that they had received greater privileges.**

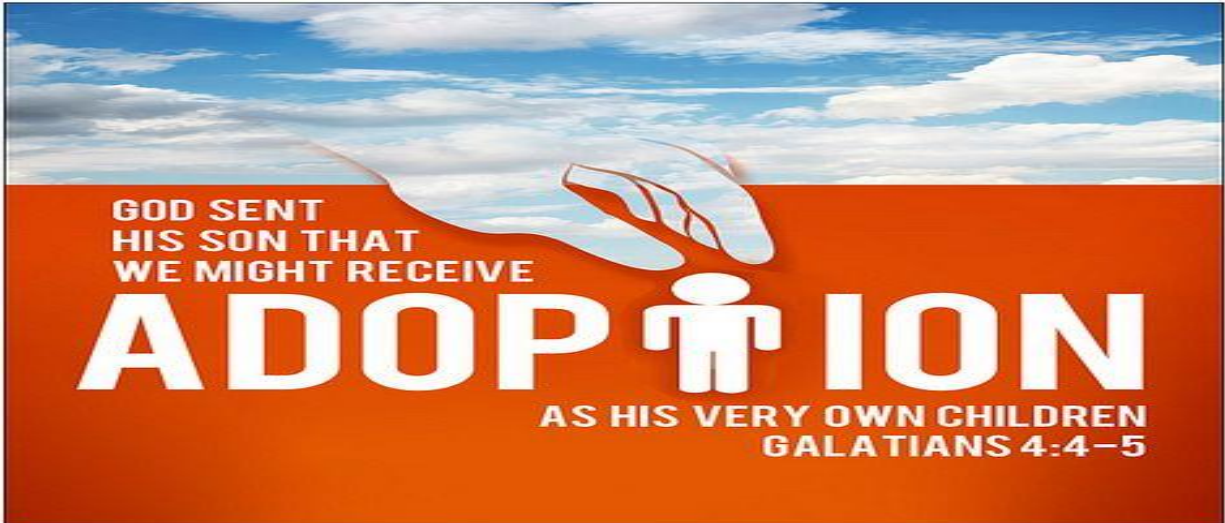
What are some of the privileges of being adopted by God? Those who possess the Spirit of adoption have the Spirit of Christ and are no longer slaves to sin (Romans 8:9–14). Though slaves in the ancient world had much to fear, especially when they served a harsh master, believers could cry “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:15–16). In Romans 8:17, Paul indicates that those adopted are “children” (Greek *tekna*). While believers are not shielded from present sufferings, those who suffer with Christ will also share in His glory (Romans 8:17). Hence, Paul speaks in Romans 8:23–25 about a future aspect of adoption, namely, the redemption of our bodies at the future resurrection.

# FROM BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS:

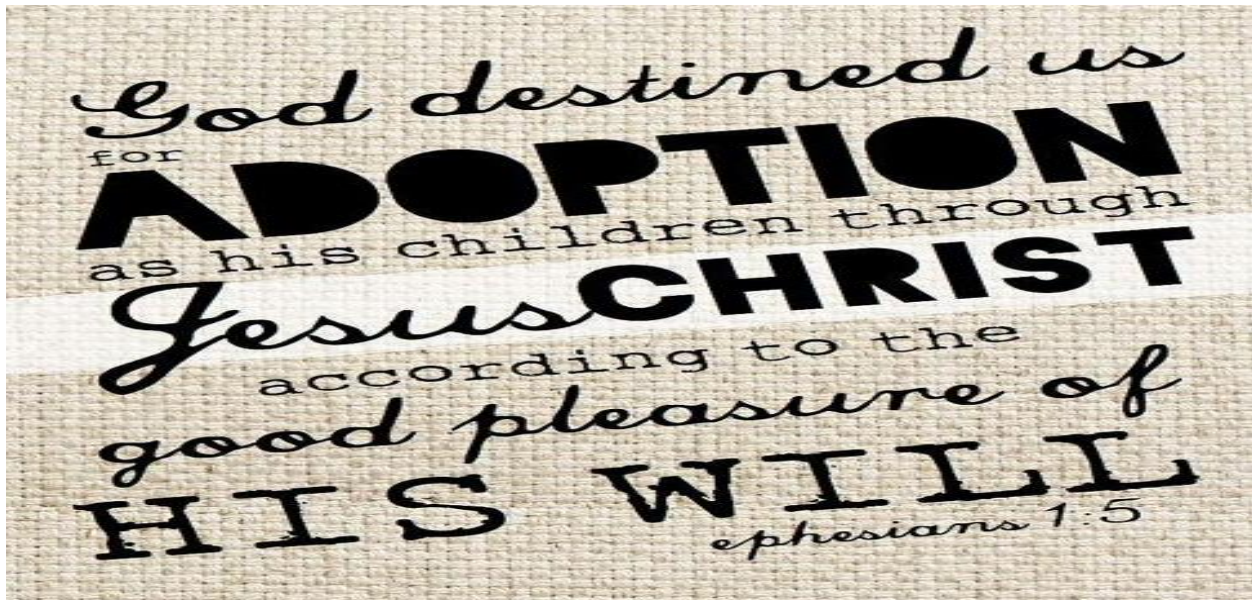
## The Texts

The key term in Greek is [υιοθεσία](#) (*huiiothesia*); it occurs in the NT only in the following texts (English is from the ESV; Greek is Nestle-Aland 27):

- [Romans 8:15](#)
  - For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of **adoption** <...>, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"
  - οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον ἀλλὰ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα **υιοθεσίας** ἐν ᾧ κρίζομεν· ἀββα ὁ πατήρ.
- [Romans 8:23](#)
  - And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for **adoption** <...>, the redemption of our bodies.
  - οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες, ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν **υιοθεσίαν** ἀπεκδεχόμενοι, τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν.
- [Romans 9:4](#)
  - They are Israelites, and to them belong the **adoption**, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.
  - οἵτινες εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται, ὧν ἡ **υιοθεσία** καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ αἱ διαθήκαι καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία καὶ ἡ λατρεία καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι



- [Galatians 4:5](#)
  - ...to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive **adoption** <...>.
  - ...ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν **υἰοθεσίαν** ἀπολάβωμεν.



- [Ephesians 1:5](#)
  - ...he predestined us for **adoption** <...> through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,...
  - ...προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς **υἰοθεσίαν** διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ.



## **1. The doctrine of adoption attributes the initiative for the relationship between God & fallen humanity to God**

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12–13)

As Russell Moore puts it, “adoption is a past tense verb,” and that is as true in spiritual adoption as it is in family adoption on earth; you were adopted, you are a son or a daughter of the Father, now and forever.

## **2. The doctrine of adoption acknowledges that we are part of a greater family**

One body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. (Ephesians 4:4 KJV)

Because all holy doctrine is connected, adoption connects us to the one, holy, timeless body of Christ. No longer can we think of ourselves in a private Christianity or ever believe again that our faith is just “a personal matter.” Rather, we are adopted into a true, organic family of God with all rights as fellow heirs with Christ. The terms “brothers,” “sisters,” “fathers,” and “mothers” in the faith are not just cute colloquial ways of addressing each other in the closing line of our letters. They are not some “clubby” insider terms of a closed society. Such filial terms are emotionally rich, unassailably real, and overflowing with deep theological, biblical, and even “blood-redeemed” meaning. [These terms] acknowledge our purchase from sin and our adoption in one common holy family.

**The doctrine of adoption means that we, the Father’s children, have *life together*.**

It is critical, therefore, to see in this passage that there is one body of Christ, not two or three, or more. There is one. There is one Spirit who baptizes us all into that body. There is one hope of our calling, and that is the hope to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The doctrine of adoption tells us that we are part of a family. We are not only part of a visible family, but also an invisible family that includes those family members in Christ who have gone before us. The church militant—those of us still moving on in Christ on earth—and the church triumphant—those who have gone from this life into the very presence of Christ—are all one family as well. We are truly a “communion of saints.” As A. A. Hodge wrote, *“Adoption presents the new creature in his new relations.”*

### **3. The holy doctrine of adoption attests to the biblical fact that there are two classes of mankind: those who have been adopted and those who have not**

All of God’s children were adopted into His family. The world is filled with those who are His by adoption into His family and those who are not. There can be no in-between place. You are a child of God through faith in Christ or you are not a child of God. The doctrine of adoption clearly teaches that we cannot be Christians when we are born. God has no naturally born children. We must be born again, as our Lord taught Nicodemus in the third chapter of John’s gospel, in order to be a child of God.<sup>6</sup>

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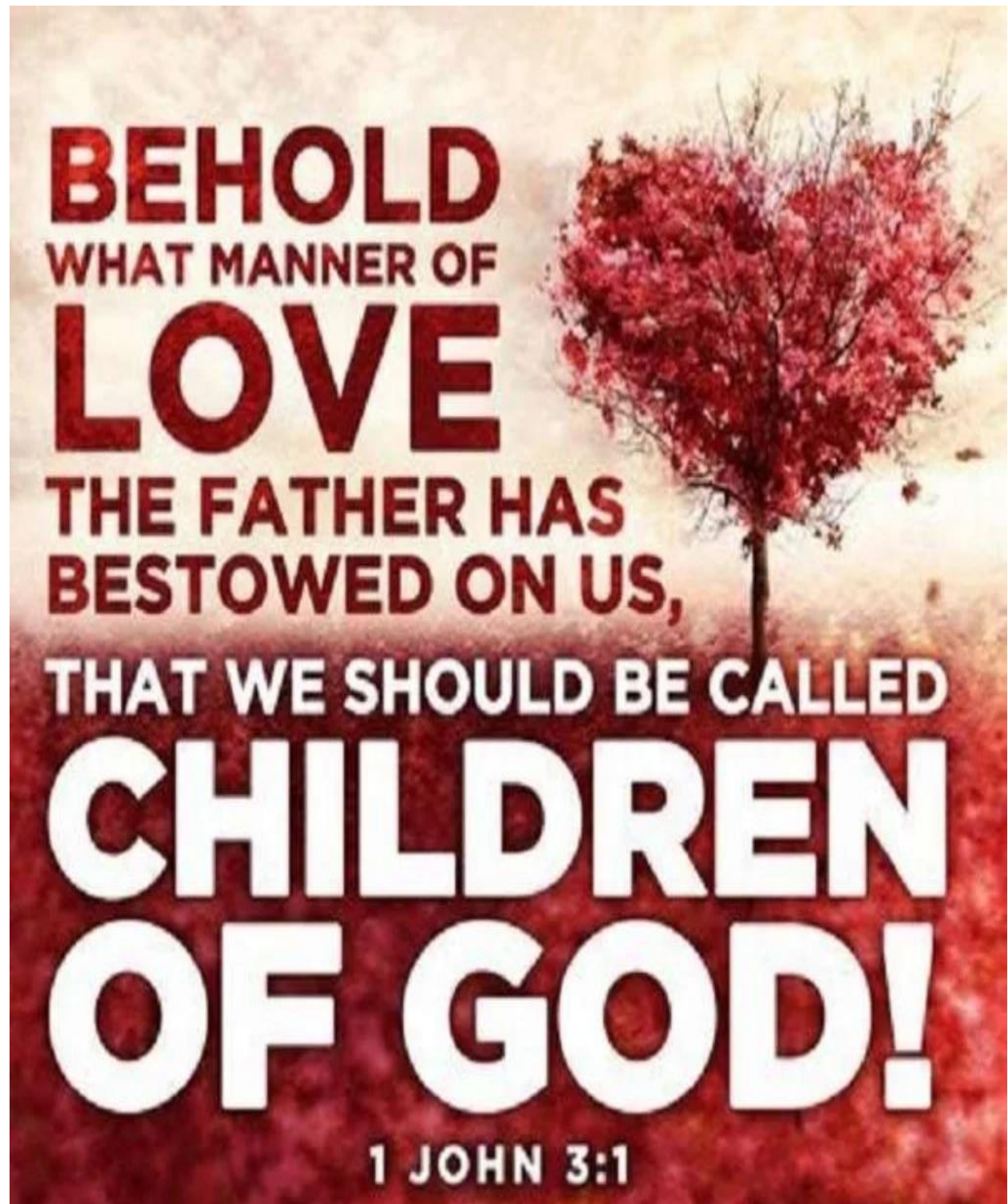
<sup>6</sup> Milton, M. A. (2012). [\*What Is the Doctrine of Adoption?\*](#). (S. M. Lucas, Ed.) (pp. 5–39). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

## The Children of Adoption

Long ago God told Abraham, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Genesis 22:18). The significance of this statement could be misleading to some, for some men actually feel that unless you are of the actual Jewish race, this passage has no real meaning to you. They plant emphasis on the words, “Thy seed” when in reality and of a truth, they ought to place the emphasis on the words, “all nations.”

The apostle Paul later describes significance of the statement God made to Abraham when he wrote, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed & heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:26-29). The simple point Paul is making is this: You do not have to be the literal seed of Abraham in order to enjoy the promise and be an heir, but you must of necessity be Christ’s! If you are Christ’s, then you are the sons of God.

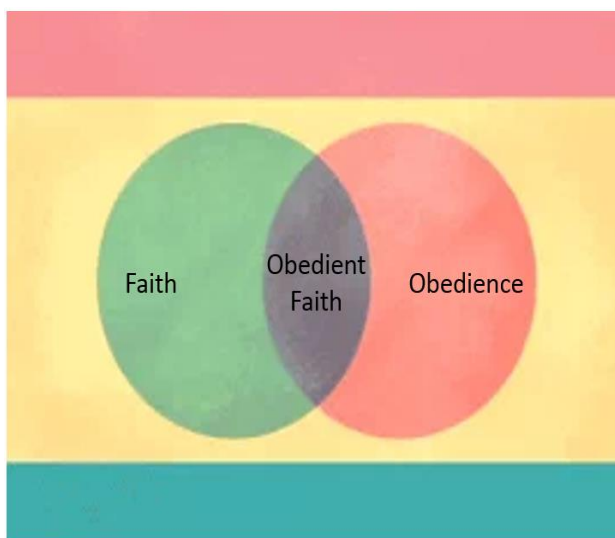
In the next chapter of the same letter, the Apostle Paul mentions the divine adoption procedure and says, “But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law (the Jew) that “we” (both Jew and Gentile) might receive the adoption of sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5) Realizing how, not by being the literal lineage, but by being Christ’s, we by the process of spiritual adoption, are the sons of God, we should rejoice! We’re heirs and have just as much right to be called his sons and daughters as did physical Israel long ago. It is a sad commentary to adoptive parents when some do proclaim, “they aren’t really mine, they are adopted,” or some who would have reared adopted children have said, “I just could not love them like my own.” Thanks be to God, he doesn’t view his adopted children as some parents do theirs.



## AT THE NEXUS OF GRACE & GLORY

# Five Steps For Saving:

- HEARING:
- Romans 10: 17; Matthew 7: 24 - 27
- BELIEVING:
- Hebrews 11: 6; Mark 16: 15, 16
- REPENTING:
- Acts 2: 38; 17: 30; Luke 13: 3
- CONFESSING:
- Matthew 10: 32, 33; Acts 8: 36, 37
- BAPTISM:
- Romans 6: 3 – 5; Acts 8: 36 – 38



*O That Will Be Glory*

2. *Wh* O that will be glory for me, grace,

*I an* Glory for me, glory for me; ce,

*When by His grace I shall look on His face, e*

*That will be glory, be glory for me. me.*

