

# Adoption: The Greatest Act of Commitment

By Doug Hamilton

This is our “Adopt a Friend Week” for the Golden Living Ministry. Many of us are going to be filling out a certificate with a resident of the home and pledging a commitment to be a special friend to that individual. That is what this is all about, COMMITMENT to a lonely and forgotten soul with the hope that we can touch them in such a way that will result in a deep relationship with the Father. We are making a deep commitment with another human being to be a good friend that cares for their souls, for that is the greatest love we could ever demonstrate for another. It is all about committing our time, committing our checkbooks and committing our gospel through adoption.

## Some Definitions of Adoption:

- Merriam-Webster’s: the act or process of adopting someone or something.
- Internet Dictionary: To take into one's family through legal means and raise as one's own child.
- Easton’s Bible Dictionary: the giving to any one the name and place and privileges of a son who is not a son by birth.
- The Talmud states, "Whoever brings up an orphan in his home is regarded...as though the child had been born to him." (Sanhedrin 119b).

## He Merely Showed His Hand

William Dixon lived in Brackenthwaite, England. He was a widower who had also lost his only son. One day he saw that the house of one of his neighbors was on fire. Although the aged owner was rescued, her orphaned grandson was trapped in the blaze. Dixon climbed an iron pipe on the side of the house and lowered the boy to safety. His hand that held on to the pipe was badly burned.

Shortly after the fire, the grandmother died. The townspeople wondered who would care for the boy. Two volunteers appeared before the town council. One was a father who had lost his son and would like to adopt the orphan as his own. William Dixon was to speak next, but instead of saying anything he merely held up his scarred hand. When the vote was taken, the boy was given to him. -Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Garland, TX

## God’s Great Commitment to Us

The apostle Paul makes an intriguing statement *Ephesians 1:5–6* “*He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,<sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*”

- In speaking to Christians, Paul reminded them that God predestined their adoption through Jesus Christ. It is through the sacrificial loss of His Son that we can have His kindness, His glory and His grace, just as He planned it from the beginning. It is not through the severe burning of a man’s hand that we find the greatest demonstration of commitment, but the piercing of the Savior’s hand on that cross so long ago. It is not through a man that lost his only son that we see that commitment, but through God who allowed His Son to go to the cross for you and me that we find it.

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## Some Examples of Adoption from the Bible

The Bible is filled with many examples of adoption practices that demonstrated commitment.

- Esther was adopted as a daughter by Mordecai.
  - Esther 2:15 When the turn came for Esther (the girl Mordecai had adopted, the daughter of his uncle Abihail) to go to the king, she asked for nothing other than what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the harem, suggested. And Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her.
  - Mordecai brought her orphaned relative into his home and lovingly guided her through some very difficult times. Things turned out well for her and the people of Israel because of it.
- Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter.
  - Acts 17:20-21 At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house, <sup>21</sup> and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son.
  - This would have given Moses several privileges that he would not have had, "*by adoption, and his high rank afforded him advantages in education*" -Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*.
- Gaius Octavius Thurinus
  - This is one that most will not recognize, but everyone in the first century would have known, for it was the most famous adoption of all time. In 44 BC, Octavius' great-uncle, Julius Caesar, adopted him posthumously through his will and testament. By 27 BC he was officially renamed Gaius Julius Caesar. When you received the family name, you received all the rights and privileges of being part of the family. That same year the Roman Senate gave him the title Augustus, which means "the revered one". We hereby know him today as Caesar Augustus, the first Emperor of the Roman Empire.
  - The writer Luke identifies the period of time that our Lord was born in *2:1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.* It was this census for taxation that forced a newly married couple into a remote small town of Bethlehem. While they were there to be counted, the mother gave birth to a son named Jesus, thus fulfilling yet another ancient well-documented prophecy '*AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.*' "

That leads us to the original intent of adoption in the ancient times. Adoption was not a rescue of a child from poverty, but the choosing of an heir for a kingdom. It is about a great commitment to the future of an individual to be part of something bigger and greater than they would have had before. It was all about COMMITMENT.

## Out of a great COMMITMENT God adopted the nation of Israel as a Son.

- Romans 9:4 "...who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises..."
- Hosea 11:1 When Israel *was* a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

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- Exodus 4:22–23 “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Israel is My son, My firstborn.”<sup>23</sup> “So I said to you, ‘Let My son go that he may serve Me’; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.” ’ ”
- Deuteronomy 7:6–8 “For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.<sup>7</sup> “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,<sup>8</sup> but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

### Out of a great COMMITMENT Christ adopted us into His kingdom.

- 1 Peter 2:9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
- Titus 2:11–14 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,<sup>12</sup> instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,<sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,<sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
- James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?
- Luke 12:31–32 “But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.<sup>32</sup> “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

### Through COMMITMENT of adoption Christ freed us from our sins.

- Galatians 4:3-7 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,<sup>5</sup> so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.<sup>6</sup> Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”<sup>7</sup> Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.
- Hebrews 2:15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

### Through COMMITMENT of adoption Christ promises us a new body for eternity.

- Romans 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.
- 1 John 3:1–2 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.<sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not

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appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

### Through Commitment of adoption God placed us in a great family with a great inheritance.

- Romans 9:14-17 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.
- John 14:18–19 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> “After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also.”
- 1 Corinthians 3:23 “...and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.”

### Will you be committed to Him?

- God has made the offer of adoption for you, but will you take Him up on the offer to be adopted?
- God deeply desires adoption for all men, but will you share that great news with others?
- God wants us to live like we have been adopted into His great family, but will we do it?

ADOPTION = COMMITMENT