

\*\*\*\* AUGUST 2017 \*\*\*\*

## GOD OUR FATHER

by Paul Galligan

### THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION

The Scripture says we have received *"the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba Father'"* (Romans 8:15). The Spirit of adoption is the Spirit who reveals to us that we are the sons of God. The adoption referred to is not making a baby legitimate, but placing the one who has reached the age of maturity into the place of the son receiving the inheritance. When we become aware of the Spirit of adoption working in our hearts, we come to a deeper and fuller relationship with God our Father. God wants each one of us to grow into a mature relationship with Him as sons to a Father.

### We all need a father

We all need a father. Some of us were blessed with good and worthy natural fathers, who did their best for us, but even the best natural father can never be the father to us that we need. We were created to be sons, and each one of us needs to come to that place where we know and experience in reality that God is our Father. For years I searched for a father. I did not have a close relationship with my natural father as I was one of many children, and he died when I was just a young man. For years as a born again believer and a young minister, I longed for a spiritual father to relate to; to grow close to, but it never happened.

One day as I grieved over my fatherless state, God spoke to me and said 'I will be your Father'. That was many years ago and I continued to long for that close relationship with God as my father. Then in 2002, the Spirit of adoption worked in my heart and revealed to me that 'I had come home to my father's house', and that I had become secure in my father's house. Since that time I have walked with a quiet confidence that I am in my Father and He is in me!

### It is the same Spirit that Jesus received

Galatians 4:5 says that Jesus the Son came *"that we might receive the adoption as sons"*. Then verse 6 says *"because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying out Abba Father"*. God has predestined us in Christ Jesus *"to adoption as sons"* (Eph.1:5). We are no longer slaves, nor even servants, but we are sons, and *"if a son, then an heir of God through Christ"* (Gal.4:7). We have the same spirit in us that was in Jesus.

### THE PATTERN SON

Jesus can be referred to as the Pattern Son. He demonstrates for us a relationship with God as Father that is unique and far reaching. Jesus says as the Son He *"can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner"* (John 5:19). God's goal from the beginning has been for us to be His sons; to know Him as our Father and live our lives in the same manner that Jesus has patterned for us.

### The prophetic word concerning Messiah

God prophesied to David through Nathan that a son would come in time, to inherit David's throne forever. This one would be the Son of God: *"I will be His Father, and He shall*

*be My son*" (2Sam.7:14a). This prophesy is confirmed in 1Chronicles 17:13a. The One who would come as Messiah, would be the Son of God. Through Jesus Christ we come to know the Father. There is no other way (John 14:6). What God has accomplished through Jesus Christ coming in the flesh, now makes it possible for all of God's people to grow up to be His sons. We are to come to know God as our Father in the earth and be led by His Spirit, even as Jesus was.

### **To be His sons and daughters**

God desires to dwell with His people. We are to be a separated people because as Paul writes, we *"are the temple of the living God. As God has said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.' 'I will be a Father to you and you shall be My sons and daughters, says YAHWEH Almighty.'"* 2Corinthians 6:16b-18. God is calling His people to come out of denominated beliefs and practices and allegiances to institutions and be fully joined to God as sons and daughters.

### **A Father to the fatherless**

In Psalm 68:5 God is identified as *"A Father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation."* Those who do not have a father can find a true and wonderful father in God the Almighty. Those who have a father still need to discover the Spirit of adoption and truly know God as our Father. Joseph, the husband of Mary, once he understood what had happened to his betrothed wife, fully embraced the call to be the father of Jesus the Son of God. We don't doubt that Joseph was a dedicated and very good father to Jesus, as Jesus grew up. But it was not until Jesus was thirty years of age that He came for baptism and received fully the **Spirit of God**. From that time Jesus identified as the Son of God, as God manifest in the flesh, as One who was able to do the works of God and speak the words of God, and to know that He was never alone but the Father was always with Him.

### **'Father' - a word wealth:**

In the Spirit Filled Life Bible at Psalm 68:5, there is a Word Wealth of the word *father*. The Hebrew word is *ab*, pronounced *ahv*, and is nearly always translated *'father'*. The word *Abba* in the New Testament (Rom. 8:15, Gal.4:6) is from the Aramaic language and also simply means *'father'*. However *'Abba'* has also come to mean *'daddy'*. We are all to call God *'Abba, Father'*, but we can also know He is our Dad.

*'Ab'* is found in a number of compound names such as, **Abraham**, meaning father of a multitude [nations]; **Abimelech**, meaning my father is king; and **Absalom** meaning father of peace. *'Ab'* can also mean *creator* and *producer*, and is applied to the Lord Jesus who is called *abi-ad*, meaning the Everlasting Father, or more literally, the Father of Eternity (Isa.9:6). It is a mystery, but the fatherhood of God is only made known to us when we have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Father of Eternity and through Him we can know and relate with God as our Father.

Another amazing thing about the Hebrew word for *'father'* is that it is #1 in the Hebrew Dictionary in Strong's Concordance. Father, *'Ab'*, is the beginning and source of all things. He is number one!

## **GOD AS FATHER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Generally God was not known as Father in the Old Testament. He is called Father very few times, but in the four Gospels alone, God as Father is either addressed directly by Jesus as Father or referred to as Father, more than 170 times. Jesus as the Apostle of God fully revealed and made known the one who sent Him (**Jn.20:21**).

### **Moses**

Moses declared *"Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you"* **Deut.32:6**. In verses 3-4 Moses said, *"Ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice ..."*. He said God is *"righteous and upright"*.

What do we learn about God our Father from the song of Moses? God is great; He is the Rock; His work is perfect; His ways are just; He is a God of truth and without injustice; He has bought [redeemed] us; He has made us and He establishes us in our predestined calling. In doing all of this for us, He is revealing Himself as our Father.

### **Isaiah**

In **Isaiah 63**, the prophet identifies God as our Father. He said *"doubtless you are our Father, though Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O LORD, are our Father, our redeemer from everlasting is Your name"* (**v.16**). This is very encouraging, especially for Gentiles. Often in history and especially in the Bible, the Jewish people wanted to claim exclusive rights to Abraham and wanted to insist that they alone were the true people of God. But God is our Father even if Israel does not acknowledge us; God is our Father even if Abraham was ignorant of us.

Again Isaiah cries out *"But now O YAHWEH, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand"* (**Isa.64:8**). As our Father, God makes us and shapes us into the predestined image He has in mind.

### **The Psalmist**

The Psalmist cries out *"You are my Father, My God, and the Rock of my salvation"* (**Ps.89:26**). Then God says *"My mercy I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall stand firm with him"* (**v.28**). If we dare to believe the word of God, then we know that God is our Father. The same one is the Rock of our salvation and He will remember us; He will keep His mercy for us forever and He will not take away the covenant that He has given us through Jesus Christ. We are His sons and His daughters.

### **Jeremiah**

Jeremiah cried out *"My Father, You are the guide of my youth"* (**Jer.3:4**), and then God said in **verse 19** *"You shall call Me, 'My Father' and not turn away from Me"*. God has given us His Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us as His sons and daughters. This is confirmed in the New Testament: *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God"* **Rom.8:14**, and *"When He the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth"* (**Jn.16:13a**).

In **Jeremiah 31:9b** YAHWEH says, "*For I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.*" God has always been the Father of His people, but His people have often not behaved as His children. Yet despite all the backslidings and unfaithfulness of His people, God sent His prophets to remind them that He is their Father and always will be the Father of His people.

## **THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

Paul greeted the church in Corinth in **2Corinthians 1:2** by ministering grace to them "*and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*". This greeting which Paul uses in most of his letters is translated more literally in the *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by Jay P. Green, Sr., as "*Grace to you and peace from God Father of us and Lord Jesus Christ*". It is amazing how the Interlinear indentifies God as Father and as Lord Jesus Christ: one God identified as Father and identified as the Lord Jesus Christ.

But then in the bigger picture our God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who is our God? He is the God and Father of Jesus. If we stay with Paul's revelation and presentation of who God is, we avoid all arguments and confusion about the Person [or 'persons' as some see it] of God.

### **Father of Mercies**

There is a very clear way for us to identify who our God is. In simple terms our God is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. In **2Corinthians 1:3** Paul says, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort*".

As the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God is identified as the Father of mercies. As Father He is the originator and He is the source of all mercy, and of all comfort. When Moses asked to see the glory of God, God could not fully show Himself to Moses but as He passed by He proclaimed His name and identified Himself as "*Merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth*" (**Ex.34:6**).

### **God of all comfort**

As the God of all comfort (**2Cor.1:3**), our Father ministers to us and helps us in times of tribulation. Tribulation refers to the pressures and stresses that we come under so easily in daily life. God wants to reveal Himself to us in the midst of those times of heaviness and suffering and confusion and to comfort us, so that we can comfort others.

### **Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing**

In **Ephesians 1:3** Paul blesses "*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*" saying that He has "*blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places*". What an amazing reality! That our God and Father has given us every spiritual blessing. These blessings are many, but let us mention six blessings from **verses 4-8**:

- i) chosen in Christ,
- ii) holy and without blame,
- iii) predestined to be sons,
- iv) accepted [graced] in the Beloved,
- v) redemption, the forgiveness of sins,

vi) abounding in wisdom and prudence [understanding].

### **Who grants us the spirit of wisdom and revelation**

In **Ephesians 1:17** Paul calls the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, and out of His glory, God is able to grant to us "*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him [the Lord Jesus Christ]*"; that out of His glory God would enlighten "*the eyes of our understanding*" (v.18).

### **From whom the whole family is named**

The whole family of God in heaven and on earth is named after the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God's people, those who are with Him in heavenly places (**1Thess.4:13-14**), and those who remain on the earth are all part of the one big family of God. We receive our identity from God our Father.

### **He is the One we pray to**

Paul says in **Colossians 1:3** that "*we give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*" and He is the one to whom we pray. We pray to the Father: remember Jesus said "*When you pray: say Our Father in heaven*" (**Lu.11:2**).

### **He has become our God and Father**

In **1 Thessalonians 3:11** Paul says "*May our God and Father Himself, and the Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.*" Then Paul prays "*That He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father*" (v.13a). This is awesome! The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is also, or has now become '**our God and Father**'! Jesus acknowledged when He spoke to Mary on the morning of His resurrection that His God is our God and that His Father is our Father. "*Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father, but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and Your Father, and to My God and Your God''*" **John 20:17**.

### **He has begotten us to a living hope**

The apostle Peter writes similarly to Paul, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (**1Pet.1:3**). Peter blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ "*who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*" (**1Pet.1:3**).

### **GOD IS OUR FATHER!**

- Are you getting this message? **God is our Father!**
- Our God and Father is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- He revealed Himself to His people in the Old Testament as their Father.
- He prophetically had it written in the Old Testament that One was coming in the flesh who would be His Son.
- That One would reveal to us the full revelation of God as Father.

- Then God planned to send His Spirit through Jesus Christ so that all who are in Jesus Christ would grow up to be His sons.
- We are to enjoy the beginnings of an eternal relationship with God as our Father.