

LD 13; Gal. 4:1-7; John 1:9-18; Children of the Heavenly Father I. The Only Begotten II. The Many Adopted

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, most of us know of someone who has been adopted. Whether they were adopted as an infant or later on in life, the result is the same. Those who are adopted are received into a new family- they are brought into the fold of a new home. So adoption is the legal way of taking a child from one family and bringing them into another. Well, today we are going to be considering spiritual adoption. By nature, all humanity are born as children of rebellion- sons and daughter of Satan- enemies to God and slaves to sin. But by grace we can be welcomed into a new family! And you will remember that when Jesus was teaching his disciples how to pray he started by saying- "our Father." This is very instructive- Jesus did not say- My Father- or Your Father- but rather prayer is offered to Our Heavenly Father! So the Sovereign LORD is the Father of Jesus and His people! Today as we consider LD 13 we consider the Fatherhood of God- who specifically are His children. We look at this theme: Jesus Christ enables us to become children of God by faith!

I. The Only Begotten

In our first point we are going to consider Jesus. He is the Son of God- and His sonship is one that is unique. Truly Jesus is one of a kind- in every way there is no one like Him. Now this is true of all children- they are each unique. Even identical twins display different characteristics and their DNA and fingerprints can tell them apart. But that is not what we are talking about here- Jesus is different, distinct and set apart from all others. There is no other child of God that is like Him- He is unique in the way that He relates to the Father. Our QA 33 puts it this way- you can be a child of God in 1 of 2 ways. Either you become a child of God by adoption as we will look at in our second point- or you are the natural and eternal son of God as Jesus is. So Jesus is the natural and eternal Son of God. He does not experience a change in legal status- and there is no time when He was not the Son. Our reading from John 1:14 says that Jesus is the only Son of God. And again in John 3:16- the Father gave us His one and

only Son. The word used in the Greek here is “Monogenes” - meaning one of a kind or only begotten. Now to beget can mean to give birth- but it also can mean to come from the same nature. So Jesus is not born of God the Father like children are born today- rather He is one with the Father in nature. Jesus is not born from or of the Father- but yet He remains the only, begotten Son. Remaining one with the Father. So Jesus is here identified as the One and only Son who has the same nature as the Father. Not a similar nature- but one with the Father. Having the same substance with the Father- a divine nature. We could say that Jesus is unique as an heir- the chosen one by whom the Father will rule- the one who will receive all things. But this title of honor- the only Son- is not something that Jesus received in time. Rather, as we learned back in John 1:1- Jesus was with the Father- the Word was with God- in the beginning. So being the only Son does not mean that He became a Son- but rather Jesus remains the eternal Son. There is no beginning and there will be no end to this relationship- He always was and always will be the Son of God.

But what else does our passage have to say about this Son? Well, Jesus is said to be full of grace and truth in 1:14. Again, setting Jesus apart from every other child of God. Jesus does not need grace- He is full of grace! Where we need to be saved- He is full of that which saves! And He is full of truth- He does not need to be convinced of the truth- His eyes have always been open! He is the way, the Truth and the life! He brings light to those walking in darkness! And along with grace and truth, Jesus is said to have the glory of God from the Father. Jesus is the exact imprint- the radiance of God glory is evident in Him. His glory is what sets Him apart from creatures- and from all other children of God as well. Or as Heb. 1:3 says, the Son of the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being. So that which belonged to the Father is found in the Son. When the Son speaks, He is saying what has been heard from the Father. The glory of the Father is made evident- clearly seen in the Son. Now when we are speaking of the relationship between the 1st and the 2nd person of the Trinity- we are told that this is the relationship of a Father and a Son. This is an unchanging relationship. To be clear, when we speak

of Jesus as the Son of God we are not referring to His being born. Yes, Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of Man. As to His human nature, He was born of the virgin Mary. Taking from her flesh, Jesus took on our flesh by way of the Holy Spirit. His physical birth was a natural birth- He was born the same way we are born. But concerning His divine nature, He was not born in this way. He always was the Son of the Father- not by being born but by His very relationship and connection to the Father. So Jesus is the only begotten One- the only eternal, natural Son of God who is and remains one with the Father.

II. The Many Adopted

So this is what we mean when we say that Jesus is the Son of God. But, as you will remember, we too are called sons and daughters of God. Since we are God's children as well, how are we similar and how are we different from Jesus? We live in a world where families are not as they should be. When thinking of children there are two categories- those blessed and those that suffer because of their family. First of all there are those children who are abandoned or abused. They have been left all alone- to fend for themselves. Taking to the streets and scrounging for food. Also, think of those who belong to an abusive family. Where parents beat or harm their children- abusing those whom they should love and care for. So we have abandoned and abused children in our world. But there is a 2rd category- praise God- where children are cared for and loved within the home. Some children are blessed as they prosper in the home! Well, lets apply this to the spiritual realm. The fact of the matter is, there are those who belong to an abusive family that harms them- these are the children of the devil. And there are those who belong to a spiritual family that loves and cares for them- these are those who belong to the family of God. But how does one become a member of this family? Listen again to John 1:13- He gave them the right to become children of God! In order for us to become children of God, this right has to be given to us by the only natural Son of God! But to whom does Jesus give this right? Well, as we find earlier in this verse- to all who believe in His name. So it follows- everyone who believes in the name of Jesus is given the privilege- the right to become children of God! Children who are born not of

flesh and blood- not naturally- but rather we are born of God! To say this another way- Jesus is the Son of God as the only begotten- He has this status by His natural right. We however become children of God in time- and this right is given by to us as we are adopted by grace. Listen to how Gal. 4:5 puts it, we are redeemed so that we might receive the adoption as sons. We have been granted this privilege- raised to this elevated status! Grafted into the vine, planted in His field, transferred into His Kingdom, adopted in His family, welcomed into this home! Because of Jesus love for us, He is not ashamed to call us brothers- in His love He delights to make us His family!

Now the gracious nature of this adoption is clearly established in 1:13. We are not adopted by bloodline. Adoption into God's family is not based on our heritage or lineage. This family is not established based on who our parents are. Nor are we adopted by the will of man- not by our effort or striving. So we cannot be born by nature into God's family. Nor can we earn or purchase our ability to be called one of His children. No, it is only by the work of Jesus Christ- a right that is given to us- that we might become children. This is something that all need to become! That is because by nature we are all children or objects of wrath as Eph. 2 puts it. But we can be given a new home- granted a new family! Although not by nature, nor will; we can become something we once were not! Children of God! Jesus alone deserves to be called the Son of God- but we can receive this right! He gives it to all who believe in His name! This can be illustrated today as well. Do children need to earn their status- if they want to be adopted do they need to apply for it and pay the cost? Can a child force the hand of a couple to ensure that they will be chosen for adoption? No- adoption is something that parents freely and graciously bestow! They choose a child- make the arrangements- and if everything goes well- they take the child home as one of their own! In a similar way, we cannot and never will earn the right to become children of God! Jesus earns it and bestows this right on us! Now that we belong to the household of God, we have the same rights and privileges of the first-born. Our reading from Gal. 4:6 speaks of one of these privileges. We have received the spirit of adoption- the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our being

welcomed into God's family. By this Spirit we now cry out- Abba Father! One of the benefits we have in belonging to the family of God is that we have the Holy Spirit given to us. By this Spirit we can pray to our Abba- calling upon our heavenly Father- knowing that our Heavenly Father will surely hear and answer His children when they call! So the presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit is a direct benefit we have since we are children of God. Added to this, we have the privilege of prayer by which we can call upon our heavenly Father- even as Jesus Himself taught us to pray by saying- Our Father who art in heaven! It is such a privilege to belong to the family of God- to be chosen, loved, and adopted by grace! Blessed are those who can call God their Father- for to such as these belongs the Kingdom of God!

To conclude, being adopted children of God is great blessing. We are now sons and daughter of God- not strangers and no longer slaves in the household of Satan. But sons and daughters! This is good news! What Jesus earned for us as the first born we now receive by faith- adopted as heirs in line to receive all the riches that God has stored up for us. So in closing I ask you this question, to which family do you belong? Are you still in the natural and earthly family- following your father the Devil who is liar and deceiver? If so, your family is one that only brings suffering and bondage! But to those of you who believe in the name of Jesus- you have been given the right to become children of God! Heirs of glory- with God as your Father, the Son as your brother- and the church as your family! Rejoice in the privileges that belong to you- as children of the heavenly Father!