



THE CHALLENGER

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PROCLAIMING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

February 2009

Adoption (Part I)

BY THE EDITOR

ADOPTION is one of the most wonderful of all the blessings mentioned in the first chapter of Ephesians. Actually, it is the culmination of all doctrines. Our gracious God has supplied all that is necessary for our being in His holy family. No hypocrites or embarrassment within this crowd. Adoption is the gracious act of God toward members of once-alienated humanity, to give them a place in His household in Christ as acceptable and recognized children. Stop and think about it! A hopeless, helpless sinner headed for hell being placed in God's family with a full inheritance as an adult son. We are the children of God through faith in God's beloved Son, Who as the Son of God became the Son of Man, that the sons of men might become the Sons of God.

The biblical term "REGENERATION" is God's work within us by the Holy Spirit, resulting in possession of God's nature. "ADOPTION" is the action of God whereby He admits those born again to the conditions and privileges of children by a sovereign act on His part. This position is based upon the internal changes regeneration produces. The biblical term "PREDESTINATION" is one of the most misunderstood in the Bible. God has predetermined that every born-again person shall become His child and be a part of His family.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as He has chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us TO THE ADOPTION OF children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephesians 1:3-5). "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION OF SONS" (Galatians 4:4,5). The entire purpose of God's great salvation is that we may be qualified to be adopted sons in His family (His work, not ours). "He came to His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (authority or legal right) to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1:11,12).

There are four procedures leading up to adoption, the definitions of which I shall go into later: 1) Foreknowledge, 2) Election, 3) Purpose, and 4) Predestination. Look up verses "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of ADOPTION, whereby we cry, *Abba*, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:14-17).

Think of it! If in His family, we inherit God Himself. Everything Christ owns, we own as joint-heirs with Him. To be in God's family clearly indicates we have access to all His gracious, unlimited benefits for all eternity. You would not be living below your privileges in Christ, would you? You would not dare to forfeit some of His promises through unbelief and disobedience, would you?

The Privileges of Adoption

1. We become, on the basis of our adoption, "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).
2. Deliverance from a slavish fear of God. (Romans 8:15)
3. Heirs of God and joint-heir with Christ. (Romans 8:17)
4. We become obedient to all His commands. (Romans 8:5,29)
5. Freedom of cares and anxiety. (Matthew 6:25-34, 10:29-31)
6. An inheritance of future glory. (Romans 8:17, I Peter 1:4)
7. Family relationship and unity with fellow believers. (John 13:34)
8. Protection from evil, not affliction, testing, and temptation. (Luke 10:19, Psalm 91:10)

A sign of adoption is the unerring leadership of God's Spirit in all matters. (Romans 8:14) Whom God adopts, He anoints. Those He classifies as sons, He makes saints. We bear the heavenly image. He not only gives us a new name, but also a new nature. (II Peter 1:4) As God's children, we become Godlike. If this is not your life-style,

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Personal Word (continued from page 3)

Glorious Fellowship

The most intimate fellowship we can have with another person is now available. Are you personally enjoying such helpful and beneficial contact with this Person? I am referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible states that He lives within the heart and life of His children in the Person of the Holy Spirit. (You should secure my free printed message “Who Has Received the Holy Spirit?”) The location of our fellowship is thrilling. “That which we have seen and heard declare we to you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (I John 1:3).

The secret of this intimate relationship is found in the scriptural word “ABIDE.” Here is another of Christ’s commandments: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He that abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:4,5). We learn from this verse that as Christians we are not automatically abiding and producing much fruit. If so, we would not be given this commandment. Notice the benefit of such fellowship: “IF you abide in me and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you. Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so shall you be My disciples” (John 15:7,0). Abiding means maintaining a close fellowship. Our God has told us that if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. Many times the Bible instructs us to come to Him. “Come unto me all you that labor and are heavily laden; and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). We come to Him in prayer. Every time we read His Love Letter, we are approaching His Person by listening to His will, plan, and purpose. What a privilege to talk everything over with our Heavenly Father! “Be careful for nothing; but in EVERY THING by prayer and supplication with THANKSGIVING, LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD” (Philippians 4:6).

If we believe God answers prayer, we will pray. If we desire a more intimate relationship with Him, we will pray. If we desire to know Him in a more intimate fashion, we will read of how He is willing to reveal Himself to us in His Word. What a thrilling relationship can be ours by abiding in Him. What a difference in our life and testimony to others.

*What a fellowship, what a joy divine, Leaning on the everlasting arms!
 What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, Leaning on the everlasting arms!
 O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, Leaning on the everlasting arms!
 O how bright the path grows from day to day, Leaning on the everlasting arms!
 What have I to dread, what have I to fear, Leaning on the everlasting arms?
 I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, Leaning on the everlasting arms!*

Elisha A. Hoffman, 1887

(Deuteronomy 33:27)

Adoption (continued from page 1)

then you are not saved and never have been. Remember this position of adoption is one of the spiritual blessings in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3-5) If a child of Christ, all will know by your fruit, which means actions and demonstrations. The Word of God not only tells what we believe, but that His work within us will be a miracle. We are not saved until He

performs it. The Bible is also filled with evidence of that transaction. (II Corinthians 5:15,17) No change of lifestyle, then God has not given us repentance and faith. Both of these demands are supplied by God’s grace. (Ephesians 2:8-10) Many claim to be saved by what they did one day. But it has not lasted down to this day. We know what they claim was not eternal or everlasting life. If God demands repentance of sin, then

The Medes . . .

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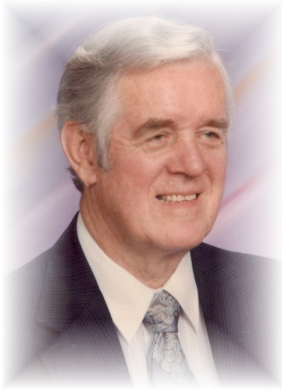
the believer’s responsibilities as a new creation in Christ, they must be avoided. They must be exposed so that others don’t fall prey to their devices. They must be renounced. They must not be followed or adhered to, lest you become part of the problem of apostasy in our churches or homes today. Jude wrote that these men were “**turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**” Amazingly today, most call these same people “brother” or “sister.” They are elevated and given credibility and respect. Why? Because they appeal to the flesh of fallen man and fallen men love having the flesh appealed to. Saved people see it. Lost people cannot see it. Salvation is the key to biblical sight and then sitting under the truth of God’s Word — receiving sound doctrine, which is spiritually healthy for all of us.

Picking up from Jude’s writing, may we see today, **The Apostasy is here: Judgment is coming!** Repent of these evil influences, turn to God’s holy Word and live out your Christian life in the Holy Spirit’s power and yieldedness to Him in all things, no matter what is going on all around you.

we must be brought to the knowledge of our sinful actions. This is the work of the Holy Spirit as we hear the gospel that Christ died for sinners.

Are we glad that God’s glorious salvation in and through His Son included adoption? Friend of mine, let’s live in the glorious reality of this relationship. Brother and sister in Christ, I will meet you in heaven. Look me up. In the meantime I shall labor within a family headed for heaven.

Personal Word



“It is hard to believe as much time has passed since that first day, driving down the road, I heard your radio program and sent you my first gift of \$10, which at that time meant a lot (about 45 years ago). You and Marian have been a spiritual light for me ever since. Every time I read *The Challenger*, I keep thinking this is the best one yet. This month was the best! Thanks for all your faithfulness and allowing me to be a partner with you. You are my greatest encouragement. Dwight, I pray that God will put more in my hand to give to your work. May God bless your ministry more and more and keep you in good health.”

— Port St. Lucie, FL

The above was part of her Christmas card. This lady has provided us with many thousands of dollars and continues her prayer and purse investments to this day. She is still as enthused about our ministry as she was upon hearing our first broadcast. God has given her to us. I praise Him for all she has meant to this ministry.

Year of Opportunity

Another day has arrived and that means we are nearer to the time that the Lord intervenes in the affairs of men to accomplish the events announced in the Bible. Christians can expect perilous times. The moral deterioration of our once great nation will gain momentum. The beginning speed has been within my lifetime. The Lord has allowed us another year in which to send forth His Word far and near. We must not take this fact for granted, but take advantage of the present situation that God has granted us. How much longer will prisons accept our gospel literature? The forces of evil are pressing in on us as we reach the minds and hearts of men and women incarcerated in our prison system. Thank God with us that the Holy Spirit is still working in lives, hungry to know God and to fulfill His purpose in their lives. How is anybody going to know their actual need if they learn not the condition of their heart and mind from the Word of God? He desires His message to be communicated to everyone. What method has He chosen? He has placed it all in a book we call the Bible. We Christians have been commissioned to preach and teach that Book.

This is the passion and vision of all our ministry. Do become involved with us. You may not be able to accomplish all your desires, but you can pray, which is your greatest assistance. Ask God for thousands of more dollars to reach more unsaved with the glorious gospel. Pray that many more Christians will become rooted and grounded in the Scriptures. Pray for the health of our volunteer workers. Pray that this director will be more dependent upon the Holy Spirit to do what is needed within the lives of our readers and listeners. Pray for our entire staff, for wisdom to reach many more in the most effective manner possible. May 2009 be our greatest year yet in seeing precious souls give glory to God in their salvation, which means praise to Him for eternity.

God's Explanation — Our Economic Crises

“Because I have called, and you refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but you have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear comes; When your fear comes as desolation, and your destruction comes as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I WILL NOT ANSWER; they shall seek me, but THEY SHALL NOT FIND ME, for that they have hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord” (Proverbs 1:24-29). (cont. pg. 2)

The Medes . . .

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Today our churches face even stronger challenges to maintaining “*the faith once delivered unto the saints.*” Emphasis has shifted from biblical to experiential. If it works for you, it must be right — whether or not it is from God’s Word. The Ecumenical Movements in our time have all but decimated the biblical teaching of separation. These men have written their books and spoke at seminars and churches under the guise of being fellow believers. Some no doubt are. Most are not. To these people, however, it makes no difference. But it does to God. The Holy Spirit moved upon Jude to write a book warning all believers of these people and the times that we live in. ***The Apostasy is here: Judgment is coming!***

We speak in terms of the last days as though they are not upon us yet. They are here and the apostasy spoken of in the New Testament is here. The Charismatic and Emergent Church Movements, coupled with the Ecumenical Movements dominate most of what is being produced over the airwaves and in the bookstores. The truths of God’s Word are ridiculed and mocked by the way people are living, while their blasphemies and false teachings are embraced as doctrine. The live-as-you-please crowd has grown so large that they have to think up new things to engage in to continue to hold their followers. One such leader boasted recently that he was a “Christian Hedonist.” What mockery and blasphemy to the Lord Jesus Christ and His holy Word. Yet that man continues his large following. The be-saved-and-live-any-way-you-want-afterward crowd draws their teaching from the pit of hell. That is surely not in the Word of God. Listen carefully: If any man or woman, church or seminary, television or radio program, or literature minimizes any portion of God’s Word, holiness, sin, righteous living, faithfulness, or

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FROM THE DESK OF . . . DR. MICHAEL ECCLESTON

www.heritagebaptistchurchtitusville.org

HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH
TITUSVILLE, FLORIDA

PART II

THE MEDES AND PERSIANS ARE COMING! *THE MEDES AND PERSIANS ARE COMING!*

In part one we wrote: It is early into the evening. Neighbors are increasingly leaving their rooftops to retire for the night. Inside Jude's simple and modest eastern home the light is dim and decreasing rapidly. Jude has earnestly been contemplating writing to the brethren concerning the important doctrines surrounding salvation. The attacks on the truths of the gospel are many and varied. It is during this time that the Holy Spirit compels him to write otherwise, and under divine inspiration. So, with his lamp full with fresh oil, Jude dips his pen into the ink well, and in the quiet solitude of fellowship and guidance of the Holy Spirit, writes . . .

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

"Certain men crept in unawares" (Jude 4a)

In this article, the main thrust of Jude's intent is brought into play. It is the more precarious of the two articles, for if the spiritual is in error, if what you believe is wrong, then how you act and teach will be wrong and in error as well — even if it deals with just motive.

The Holy Spirit reveals to Jude and to us that He is very concerned about the brethren in Christ concerning those who merely profess to be brethren but really aren't, and the damage they inflict by whosoever is contaminated by them or their teachings. It has been stated often in our local church that the most dangerous programming you can watch or listen to are on the religious channels. The most dangerous book you can read are in supposedly "Christian" bookstores. These are people who will often act like politicians, saying anything you want to hear to gain acceptance — and, of course, relieve you of your money. The trend that began in the first century churches has never been fully defeated. Truthfully, they are nowhere near close to being defeated. They still are before us, and we still need believers to recognize the dangers and either start or continue to *"earnestly contend for the faith."*

In both the Old and New Testaments there have been serious challenges against the truth. **From within!** As a nation, Israel was driven from the land and scattered because of departing from the true and living God in favor of the idolatry of the surrounding pagans. Their southern sister, Judah, saw what had happened to them. They knew better. They knew what the Scriptures said and what God expected. But they also saw how Israel embraced idolatry and loved it. They then reasoned falsely, that because Judah had the temple and the sacrifices and the promises of God, they could not be judged by God, and so therefore, embraced idolatry side by side with the worship of Jehovah. Imagine, if you will, worshiping Jehovah in the temple, and bringing in idols of all types as well, and worshiping them. The equivalent today in our churches is the bringing in of the world's music, dress, attitudes, and morals and calling it "praise and worship." The prophets sought to deal with their sins, but to no avail. Jeremiah cried for them and prayed over them to repent. Judah refused to listen to him, one man who stood alone and said that he spoke just what God said. There were so many other prophets (false) who stated the opposite and the people liked what they said. Jeremiah was basically crying to his own people, *The Apostasy is here: Judgment is coming!*

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THE CHALLENGER Dwight Porter, D.D., Editor

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OUR OPERATION

We have discontinued our radio ministry, but we continue full speed in our other outlets. You can hear our messages by cassette or CDs; let us know of your interest. Five couples volunteer their time and energy in this ministry. We pay no salaries, which means your gifts go 100 percent to reach thousands weekly by literature, cassettes, Bible studies, and on our website. We welcome your participation.

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*"Be you steadfast, unmovable, always
abounding in the work of the Lord . . .
You know your labor is not in vain
in the Lord"* I Corinthians 15:58

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