

## Salvation—Adoption (2<sup>nd</sup>)

(Today we continue studying the doctrine of adoption unto salvation. This podcast continues to show that adoption does not originate at faith and that it is an eternal and immanent act of God before the foundation of the world.)

In the previous podcast we quoted from a few theologians to show the general belief that adoption is something that is not only a part of justification but that it takes place at faith. We showed from Ephesians 1:5 that this cannot be and that adoption originated in the mind and purpose of God before the creation of the world. To provide further information that adoption is an eternal and immanent act of God we will first quote from John Gill. Obviously, we cannot quote everything Gill wrote, but I will quote somewhat extensively from him. These quotes will come from his *Body of Divinity*, Book II, Chapter V and Book VI, Chapter IX. I highly recommend studying both sections and his commentaries on the verses containing the subject of adoption which are as follows:

Romans 8:15, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

Romans 8:23, “And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.”

Romans 9:4, “Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises.”

Galatians 4:5, “To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

Ephesians 1:5, “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”

First, we quote from Book II, Chapter V, where Gill shows that adoption is an eternal and immanent act of God.

Adoption; as predestination to it stands next to election, Eph. i. 5. which is no other than his will to adopt the chosen ones, which is his adoption of them; for as the will of God to elect any is his election of them, so his will to adopt the same is his adoption of them; and the complete essence of it lies in his will, and is as such an eternal immanent act of it; in like manner as election is, and may be considered as a branch of it, at least of the same nature with it; and which agrees with the sense of the word *adopto*, from whence adoption comes, which is compounded of *ad* to, and *opto* to choose; so that adoption is God’s choice or election of some to be his children; and by this option, or choice, of his they become so. The Greek word for adoption throughout the New Testament is *υιοθεσία*, which signifies *putting among the children*; the phrase used by God, Jer. iii. 19. *How shall I put them among the children?* or a putting one for and in the room of a son, that is a stranger and not a son by birth; a constituting and accounting such an one as a son, according to choice, will, and pleasure: and divine adoption is an act of the sovereign grace and good will of God, Eph. i. 5. to which he is not induced by any motive out of himself; not by any excellency in the creature; nor for want of a son; one or other of which is the case in human adoptions; as of Moses, a goodly child, by Pharaoh’s daughter; and of Esther, a beautiful person, and a relation by Mordecai; but divine adoption is of persons exceeding unworthy and undeserving,

nothing engaging in them; not only strangers, but children of wrath even as others, and like the wretched infant in Ezek. xvi. It is an act of distinguishing grace; it is of men, and not angels; who are servants and not sons, at least not by adoption; and of some men and not of all, though all are alike in their nature-state; and it is a most amazing act of unmerited love and free-grace, 1 John 3:1. Now this is an eternal act of grace:

*First*, It did not begin in time, but commenced from eternity; it is an act of God's will, and has its complete essence in it; and the will of God is eternal, no new will, nor any new act of will, arises in God in time; or otherwise he would not be the unchangeable God he is.

1. It is an act that does not first take place at believing; indeed the saints are *all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*, openly and manifestatively, Gal. iii. 26. but then it is not faith that makes them children, but what makes them appear to be so; adoption is the act of God, and not of faith; ...
2. Adoption does not first commence at regeneration; adoption and regeneration are two distinct blessings, and the one is previous to the other; though they are commonly confounded together by divines. Regeneration is not the foundation of adoption, but adoption the foundation of regeneration; or, the reason why men are adopted, is not because they are regenerated, but they are regenerated because they are adopted. By adoption they are put into the relation of children, and by regeneration they have a nature given them suitable to that relation; ...
3. The act of adoption is previous to any work of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of his people; *Because ye are sons*, sons already, sons by adopting grace; *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts*, both to convince, convert, regenerate, and effectually call by his grace, and sanctify, and also to comfort, and to enable to cry Abba Father, witnessing to their spirits, that they are the children of God; and hence he is called, *the Spirit of Adoption*; and it is his influences, teachings, and leadings, which are the evidences of adoption; *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*; not that those influences, operations, and leadings, make them, but make them evident to be such, Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 14.
4. Divine adoption, or sonship, took place before any work of Christ was wrought in time, for any of the sons of men; it was before his incarnation and birth; *forasmuch then*, or because *the children are partakers of flesh and blood*, the children of God, who are so by adopting grace; therefore *he also*, Christ, *himself took part of the same*; for though the nature he assumed was what was in common to all mankind, yet he assumed it with a peculiar view to the children of God, the spiritual seed of Abraham; whose nature he is said to take, and for whose sake he was the child born, and the Son given, Isa. ix. 6. Heb. ii. 14, 16. and in consequence they must be the children of God before Christ suffered and died; ...

*Secondly*, Adoption is an act of God's free grace from all eternity.

1. The elect of God are frequently spoken of as a distinct number of men, given to Christ, and as previous to their coming to him by faith, which is the certain fruit and consequence of that gift; see John xvii. 2, 6, 9, 24. and vi. 37. yea, they were given to Christ before the world was; for if grace was given to them in him before the world began, they themselves must be given to him, and be in him before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9. Now these were given to Christ in the relation of children, and therefore must be children so early; *Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me*, Heb. ii. 13.
2. The elect of God were espoused to Christ in eternity; ...

3. The elect of God were taken by him into the covenant of his grace, as children; the sum and substance of which runs thus, *I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty*, 2 Cor. vi. 18. Now this covenant was from everlasting; as the setting up of Christ the Mediator of it so soon; and the promises and blessings, made and provided before the world began, do abundantly testify.
4. Predestination to the adoption of children, is mentioned along with election, as of the same date with it, and as an illustration of it, and as an addition to it, or rather, a branch of it; as men by election are not only chosen to holiness, but to adoption, and the inheritance annexed to it, Eph. i. 4, 5. Adoption is a sentence of grace conceived in the divine mind, and settled by the divine will, and pronounced in divine predestination, which is an eternal act of God; and so says Dr. Ames<sup>1</sup> “Adoption is a gracious sentence of God—which sentence is pronounced in the same variety of degrees as justification; for it was first pronounced in divine predestination, Eph. i.5. afterwards in Christ, Gal. iv.5. then in believers themselves, ver. 6.”

Next we desire to quote from Book VI, Chapter IX, of Gill’s *Body of Divinity*. However, our time is up for today and we will continue with this in our next podcast. Farewell.

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<sup>1</sup> Medulla Theologiae, 1. 1. C. 28. s. 2, 3.