

Father God and His Firstborn Son

- ²² Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son,
²³ and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son."
²⁴ At a lodging place on the way the LORD met him and sought to put him to death.
²⁵ Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!"
²⁶ So he let him alone. It was then that she said, "A bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.

Exodus 4:22-26

Today I want to tell you the story about Moses' father. If you will listen to his story and believe it, then you will never be the same, because you will come to understand that this is not just the story of Moses' Father. It is the story of your own.

Moses' biological father is **Amram**, a God-fearing man. His adopted father is **Pharaoh**, a megalomaniacal tyrant. His father-in-law is **Jethro**, priest of Midian, employer, and advisor of Moses. Yet, as if three fathers were not enough for one man, Moses has still another Father in the story. And **it is this Father** that I will seek to tell you about this morning. This Father is the All-Important Father in the story, and if you come to know and trust him, he will be your Father, as he adopts you into his family as one of his blessed children.

The Greek Poet **Aratus** (315-240 BC) wrote a poem called *Phainomena* ("**Appearances**") which still survives to this day. It begins thus,

Let us begin with Zeus, whom we mortals never leave unspoken.
For every street, every market-place is full of Zeus.
Even the sea and the harbor are full of this deity.
Everywhere everyone is indebted to Zeus.
For we are also his offspring. . .
He it was who set the signs in heaven,

And marked out the constellations. . .
Wherefore him do men ever worship first and last.
Hail, O *Father, mighty marvel*. . . Hail to thee and to the Elder race.

Though not all religions see God as father (Islam being the most widespread among them today¹), here we see several centuries before Christ, the idea that a god is a father, the father of the heavens and the begetter of the ancients.

Yet, it is not Zeus as Father that I am concerned with showing you. Rather, I quote Aratus because the Apostle Paul quotes him when preaching to the Athenians in **Acts 17:28**. Paul's sermon is very relevant to a place like Boulder. It goes something like this, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. I even found an altar 'To the unknown god.' What you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man [as your gods do]. We do not serve him as if he needs us, since he himself gives mankind life and breath and everything. He made from one man every nation to live on the earth, and has determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet, he is not far from any of us, for as **Epimenides** wrote, 'In him we live and move and have our being,' and as **Aratus** wrote, 'For we are indeed his offspring.'"

What is so amazing about Paul's quotation is how it ironically places Zeus in the trash-heap of history, exalting the God of the Christian Scriptures as alone All-Mighty. For even though he quotes him, Paul does not say what Aratus says, that Zeus is our Father. He does not think it is OK to call God by the name the locals use in order to be culturally and religiously sensitive so as not to offend them, as some Christians are doing today when, for example, they think it is just fine to call God Allah, since this is what the Muslims call the supposed same god that we worship. Rather, Paul goes on to say that we are not to think of the divine being like gold or silver or stone (like Zeus), formed by the art and imagination of man. Previously, God overlook such ignorance, but now he "commands all people everywhere to repent, because there is a fixed day in which he is going to judge the world in

¹ Allah is said to be an avenger, compassionate, and a provider. Yet, he is never referred to as Father. **Why not?** As one person puts it, it is "because the spiritual being that Muhammad believed to be God was unable to be a loving father to Muhammad. Islam's god is indeed a master, and he can be a kind and forgiving master. But his love is predicated upon the Muslim's performance and obedience, not their relationship. He cannot deliver the goods as a God of infinite mercy and love. It is not in Islam's god's nature to be a father."

righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

I want to remind you of something that this ever-living raised man once taught. **Do you remember the words of Jesus and how he taught us to pray?** He said, when you pray say, “**Father, hallowed be your name**” (Luke 11:2). A lot of well-meaning people mistakenly think that Jesus is doing something new here, as if calling God “Father” is a novel idea born in his mind. I’ll talk about what is new in the way Jesus elsewhere refers to the Father later. Yet, as I have already shown you, even the Pagans understood that God is a Father. And this idea is not found only in pagan religion, but in the OT Scriptures that Jesus was so saturated in.

It is vitally important to understand that **God is a Father**, and to see exactly **what kind** of a Father he is, because it teaches you about his relation to his creation, to his mankind, and to his Son. In both Old and New Testaments, our God is called a father. The Psalmist says, “**Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the LORD; exult before him! Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation**” (Ps 68:4-5). Even here in this first reference, you can begin to see that this Father **God is deeply concerned** with the plight of the helpless. He is a caring heavenly Father.

Just as Jesus teaches, in the OT, many saints prayed to God by calling him Father. David cries out, “**You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation**” (Ps 89:26). Isaiah prays, “**You are our Father. . . O LORD, our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name. . . we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand**” (Isa 63:16, 64:8). Even Moses sings “**Is he not your father, who created you, who made you and established you?**” (Deut 32:6).

Moses understands that God is the father of Israel because he was told in **Exodus 4:22**, “**You shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son.’**” In Middle-Eastern cultures, the firstborn son was the favored son. He received the twice the inheritance of other siblings.² God begins to work out the inheritance of Israel by giving him the best land, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land replicating the very temple of heaven.³ This is how Israel (the Land) is described in

² For the Jewish understanding of this see especially **Num 8:14-17**, also **2 Kgs 2:9; Isa 61:7; Deut 32:9**. For the Christological implications see **Gal 4:7; Heb 1:2**.

³ See my chapter on the Promised Land as Temple in my baptism book.

the OT: “Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion” (Ps 114:2). God would dwell in Jerusalem in a house built for him: Solomon’s Temple.

Yet, you need to know that the Father is “father” to more than just national Israel that became slaves in Egypt. In fact, it is actually very important that you come to see this, because it has implications for whether or not you can be saved! In the first place, God is said to be the father—in some sense—to the angels. You can first see this by understanding what the (or at least certain) angels are often called in the Scripture: *Sons of God*.

Virtually every time the phrase “sons of God” or “son of the gods” is used, it refers to angelic being(s) (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps 29:1; 89:6. Also Gen 6:4 and Dan 3:25). If they are God’s sons, then he must in some sense be their father. James refers to God as the “Father of lights,” a strange phrase that might mean he is the father (creator) of the universe and its celestial fire-balls, and/or the father of the angels, who are often interchangeable with the stars.⁴ As I will show you, as his sons, they are given an inheritance too.

At this point that I want you to remember who Moses spoke to in the Burning Bush. He spoke to the “*Angel of the LORD*,” and as we saw there, this angel-messenger is none other than the pre-incarnate Christ.⁵ This is this same Christ that the Scripture later (especially the NT) refers to as the only begotten son of God (see Jn 1:14; 3:16, 18; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5, 5:5, 11:17; 1 Jn 4:9 but also Ps 2:7 and Dan 3:25).

It is critical to understand that the Angel of the LORD is a son of God in a very different sense than the rest of the angels. Other angels are created beings, and that is how they are related to the father. But this Angel is no creation, but rather the very Creator himself, the first-born word, the archangel of many names, the authority, the name of God, before all things, he who sees Israel.⁶

Not only the angels, but all nations of people are in some sense said to be sons of God. This was exactly Paul’s point that we are all his offspring; not that we literally came from his seed, as if the Father were a physical being like Mormons and others

⁴ See my sermon on Matthew 2:1-15.

⁵ Interestingly, Jesus is also called the “morning star” (Rev 22:16), showing again his earlier relationship to angels.

⁶ Cf. Philo, *On the Confusing of Tongues*, 146.

heretically believe, but that he created us. “**Have we not all one Father, Has not one God created us?**” (Mal 2:10; Deut 32:6). And so when Luke traces out the genealogy of Christ, he does so by referring to son’s father, ending with Adam who is the son of God (Luke 3:38).

If this is so, beloved, if God is the archetypal father, then it will not do for you who have had poor earthly fathers to compare your heavenly father with them, and so destroy a proper view of what a father is supposed to be, by making God in the image of your earthly father. It is very important that you come to learn what this heavenly father is like and hold all earthly (and sinful) fathers up to him. In doing so, you will be able to take joy and comfort in knowing that God is a father, rather than fearing and despising such a thing.

Firstborn Son

As I have already talked about, Israel is said to be God’s firstborn son. “Israel” holds a special place among the family of nations. There are several very interesting things about this phrase besides simply telling you of Israel’s favored position as one that would inherit the best land. This phrase actually foreshadows things to come in the immediate future of Exodus (as in chapters 4-5) as well as later in the story, and even later in the Bible as a whole.

Let me begin with the immediate context. Notice that Israel as firstborn son is not a word for Moses only. Rather, God tells Moses to **tell Pharaoh** that Israel is God’s firstborn son. **Why does Pharaoh need to know such a thing?** It is because he has held God’s son in the worst kind of tyrannical slavery. God’s son has been crying out to him for deliverance because of the terrible oppression and bondage imposed by the king of Egypt. Thus, the idea of the firstborn is intimately tied to Israel’s suffering (and the suffering of the servant).

If this does not teach you something about God as Father, I do not know what will. Not only is he the father of the helpless, he is the Father who seeks to release his imprisoned child from slavery, **to redeem him** out of bondage to the miseries and futility of this fallen world. Especially in the NT we see this idea spiritualized as release from the slavery **to sin**. But ultimately (and this is tasted and glimpsed dimly in the physical world even now), it will be release from the consequences that sin has wreaked havoc on in this world today.

In fact, our heavenly father will fight for our release by [going to war](#) against our enemies. The last enemy is death. But in the meantime, sin and Satan and physical oppressors are fought, and God gains the victory. Notice how Israel as firstborn is contrasted with Pharaoh's firstborn son in [Ex 4:23](#), "[If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.](#)" It is firstborn for firstborn. Moses knew better than anyone, "[The LORD is a man of war](#)" ([Ex 15:3](#)). Thus, we see a foreshadowing of the tenth plague where God strikes down Pharaoh's firstborn son while protecting his own: Israel (God's firstborn son corporately speaking) in the Passover blood that is painted onto the doorframes of their houses.

But we see something of this even sooner. At this point I want to move into [Exodus 4:24-26](#), because it too appears to be [a story of a firstborn son](#).⁷ This story shows how different the world of the ancients really was. This is one of the strangest and most difficult passages in the Bible to interpret. All I will tell you of it today is what I am sure of and how it relates to my topic. If you want to swing into the jungle of interpretations on your own, be my guest.

This is the story of Moses returning to Egypt with his wife and son(s?) at his side. It says that they were traveling and came to [a lodging place](#), presumably some oasis with room and board for the night. What comes next has befuddled even the best scholars. It *seems* to focus on circumcision. Yet, I think something else is the point.

We are looking at this story in the context of the firstborn son. I think *this* theme is what explains the insertion of this story here. It says that the LORD met "him" and sought to put "him to death." We do not know who the "him" is. It may be Moses (as some translations interpret). It may be Moses' son. But I am convinced that the LORD here must be understood as [the Angel of the LORD](#), which is one of the reasons I reminded you of him earlier. There is every reason to believe that this is a physical encounter with God: [A Christophany](#).⁸

⁷ Here I take the son that Zipporah circumcised to be Gershom. There is some question as to who Zipporah circumcised, as there is with almost every other detail of this story. Peter Enns summarizes, "[Who is it that the Lord wants to kill? Assuming it is Moses, why would the Lord want to kill him after he just gave him the command to go? Why is Zipporah able to appreciate the gravity of the situation and, more important, know exactly how to alleviate it? If the object of God's anger is Moses, why does Zipporah circumcise her son? Which son was it? Whose 'feet' does she touch with the foreskin? Who let whom alone? And what does 'bridegroom of blood' mean?](#)" (Exodus, *NIVAC*, 133). Besides these problems I would add that the term "feet" is debated. It is possibly a euphemism for genitals. The question of how God confronts Moses (invisibly or as a man/angel) and what he does with him (makes him sick, wrestles and holds him in a vice-grip) arises, as does the question of who Zipporah addresses in her speech (the LORD, the destroying angel, or Moses).

⁸ Cf. Ronald B Allen, "'The Bloody Bridegroom' in Exodus 4:24-26," *BibSac* 153:611 (Jul-Sept 1996), p. 265.

Based on the same word for and similar idea in vs. 27, when Moses and Aaron “met” and the two embraced, I believe that the Angel of the LORD appeared to Moses (*LXX, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*) and the two embraced in a different way, much as the Angel and Jacob did in the very first Wrestle-Mania. It says the LORD “met” with him (probably Moses) and sought to put him to death (again probably Moses). He apparently had him in a death grip.

The reason for the LORD’s wrath is that Moses’ son (presumably Gershom, his firstborn) had not been circumcised. If this is the correct interpretation (it is the most widely held and one of the most ancient), then it gives this bizarre story a purpose in the larger narrative. According to the Law (*Gen 17:14*), any uncircumcised male must be cut off from his people. If Moses is to be God’s representative to a people who will themselves be given renewed laws concerning circumcision at the Passover (*Ex 12:44-49*), then he most certainly cannot be violating the Jewish Prime-Directive of circumcision, especially with his firstborn son!

So what happens is that Moses’ wife *Zipporah takes a flint* and does the deed herself. She then apparently reaches out and touches Moses with the foreskin and makes a statement that no one really knows what it means. “*You are a bridegroom of blood to me.*” Whether Zipporah is upset with Moses or God, whether her words are directed to Moses or the Angel, Whether she is acting defiantly or mercifully we may never know. But one thing is certain.

As Phillip Ryken rightly observes, *God showed Moses the wages of sin by placing him under his divine wrath.* But he then *showed Moses more grace* than at any time up to this point (and that is saying a lot). *For, the Angel never had any intention of killing Moses. Rather, he shows Moses the lesson that will be learned on a national scale very soon: Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Heb 9:22).* *This is the basic requirement of salvation.* Because of her act (and once again you should note that a women saves the day!), God’s wrath is propitiated by the blood of the firstborn son.⁹ What we have then is a heavenly father caring very deeply about his own firstborn son, a Pharaoh who very soon will lose his because he despised God’s son, and a Jewish leader who needs to learn a lesson of what it means to have his own firstborn son saved and redeemed by blood. Don’t you think Moses would

⁹ Ryken, *Exodus*, p. 131.

have remembered this event on that night when the angel of death came and took Pharaoh's son?

If we fast-forward now forty years or so, we come to see that Moses' family (I'm thinking of immediate relatives like Aaron, Miriam, and Korah) as well as his extended family (the nation as a whole) have not learned the lesson that Moses was given here. In fact, even Moses himself sinned so greatly in the wilderness that he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. Rebellion and disobedience and disregard for their heavenly Father is front and center in the story of redemptive history. This is true from the days of the Exodus through the conquest, the Judges, the kings, the exile and beyond. **And don't you know that what Moses and his family did, you and your own have done.** All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We have all disobeyed the heavenly Father. His family is your family.

Now I want to think about the days of the prophets, men like Jeremiah and Malachi who tell us about this first-born's attitude towards his heavenly Father. The LORD tells Jeremiah, "Have you not just now called to me, '*My father*, you are the friend of my youth—will you be angry forever, will you be indignant to the end?' Behold, you have spoken, but you have done all the evil that you could" (Jer 3:4-5). A little later in the same chapter he says, "I said, How I would set you among my sons, and give you a pleasant land, a heritage most beautiful of all nations. And I thought you would call me, *My Father*, and would not turn from following me." But, "A voice on the bare heights is heard, the weeping and pleading of Israel's sons because they have perverted their way; they have forgotten the LORD their God" (3:19-21).

This is such a pervasive theme of the OT, that the LORD sees fit to end the Testament with these words to Malachi, "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a *father*, where is my honor... Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Mal 1:6, 10).

These verses and others show that God had to deal justly with his son, because the son had dealt treacherously with his Father. Jeremiah likens it to a divorce. And you should not move too quickly from this idea that a Father expects his son to act like a son! **What kind of a son is it that disdains his father's rules, his father's gifts, his father's blessings?** Yet, this is exactly what we are like when we sin, even as children of our heavenly Father, children that have been adopted into the Family of God through faith. The familial relationship that we have with God our Father really

ought to make us stop and think about what we are doing the next time we are even tempted to give into sin. And yet, even as Christians you and I constantly fall short of loving and obeying God with all our hearts. And this is to our shame.

Nevertheless, Israel *is* God's *son*. And more than upholding justice, God loves to dispense grace to his child. So the LORD holds out this mighty promise to his firstborn son: "Return, O faithless sons; I will heal your faithlessness" (Jer 3:22). Again he says, "With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn" (Jer 31:9).

It is at this point that we need to see how God plans on returning this estranged son to the household. You must know that it is not because his Son was capable or actually did return all on his own. Hosea looks back upon the Exodus and the very verses we are looking at today and says, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos 11:1). The passage goes on to say how wicked and rebellious the son was.

But this is a verse quoted in the NT about something very different. Matthew says Jesus' return to Israel from Egypt after Herod had died fulfills Hosea's words. The amazing thing about this is that Hosea is not even giving a prophecy. He is remembering history. This means that Jesus is not only the fulfillment of prophecy, he is the fulfillment of redemptive history.

To put it another way, God intends on bringing his son back into the fold by sending his only *begotten* Son Jesus to fulfill and obey in the place of Israel. Jesus is True Israel. He is what Moses and the rest should have been but never were because of sin. Jesus is the son called out of Egypt in an Exodus, passing through the waters on his way into the wilderness where he is tempted for 40 days, one for each year of wandering, so that he might stand where others fell. It is in *this* son that the Father is "well pleased."

The OT tells us more. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful (the name of the Angel of the LORD in Judges 13), Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:6). "He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father, my God. . . I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. My steadfast

love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand first for him” (Ps 89:26-28). “I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you” (Ps 2:7).

What we learn about Jesus is how he in fact does all of these things. The Angel of the LORD, the Word of God incarnates and becomes a man, a real man with flesh and blood. A child is born. So Hebrews says, “To which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’? Or ‘I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son’? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him’” (Heb 1:5-6).

This Jesus is “the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth” (Rev 1:5). “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Col 1:15). This is a statement of Jesus’ position, authority, and preeminence (Col 1:18).

But now I still have not answered how it is that the Father is going to restore created sinful rebellious humans to the family. Or have I? Scripture says that “those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom 8:29). It is here that something truly remarkable, incredible, and wonderful takes place.

Since Jesus is True Israel, the true Son of God, this idea of firstborn son that was spoken of Israel in Exodus 4:22 is placed upon him. He and he alone is the only true firstborn son. Today there is a lot of Israel worship among Evangelicals. If you want to worship Israel, worship Jesus!

As a true son of God, the Father has promised to give the Son an inheritance. Indeed, Hebrews reflects on this important point, “In these last days God has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb 1:2). Jesus told a parable of wicked tenants who kept killing all of the Master’s messengers. Finally the Master sent his son saying, “They will respect my son.” But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance” (Matt 21:36-38).

And so they killed our Lord Jesus, just as he and the prophets had predicted. But God did an astonishing thing. He raised him from the dead so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. But how is Christ the firstborn among many

brothers? It is because the Father said to the Son whom he had begotten, “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.” When God speaks of Israel as his son, he always had this adoption into the family in mind.

I want to go back to the Pentateuch to teach you something regarding the inheritance that God gives to his sons. In this, I am also going back to the beginning of the sermon. Remember how Paul said “He made from one man every nation to live on the earth, and has determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling.” Paul apparently has **Deuteronomy 32:8** in mind, which in turn has Genesis 10 in mind. This is all interesting because I have already quoted the previous verse in **Deuteronomy 32:6**, “Is not he your father, who created you?”

Genesis 10 is the account of the dividing up of the nations into their respective territories over the earth. This account shows territories from Spain to Russia to Babylon to Ethiopia, a span of thousands of miles and three continents. In Genesis 10 there are 70 nations that make up the table. **Deuteronomy 32:8** recalls this chapter saying, “Remember the days of old... when the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.” The next verse says, “But the LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance.”¹⁰ I plan on doing the next Pastor’s Pen on this topic so I won’t go into depth with it now except to say that the sons of God appear to be angels or fallen angels who not coincidentally number 70 in Jewish and other near-eastern religious systems. So the idea is that the Most High (Elyon; עֶלְיוֹן) gave these beings an inheritance of men to rule over (for a time), while he gave the LORD (that is the Angel of the LORD) Israel as his inheritance as part of that eternal counsel of peace or covenant of redemption that existed in eternity past.

This is not the only time we find such an idea. In **Numbers 8:14-16** we read who Moses and Aaron are to separate the Levites from among the people of Israel. “The Levites shall be mine,” says the LORD, “For they are wholly given to me from among the people of Israel. Instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the people of Israel, I have taken them for myself.” Here we see both that the

¹⁰ “Sons of God” (vs. 8 ESV) follows the *LXX* and the Qumran Scroll 4QDt^d and 4QDt^j, manuscripts 1000 years earlier than the Masoretic text’s “sons of Israel,” which I take to be an textual change for theological purposes. See *A Handbook of Deuteronomy* 32:8 and Michael S. Heiser, “Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God,” *BibSac* 158:629 (Jan-Mar 2001), pgs. 52-74. “Inheritance” (vs. 9) follows the NAS.

LORD takes the Levites and that they are given to him, presumably by the Father in heaven.

All of this is a foreshadowing of the adoption that is ours by Christ as the gift that is given to him by his Father. As the Angel of the LORD is given Israel and out of Israel a nation of priests, so the Son of God incarnate is given a people by the father, a people referred to in the NT as the “Israel of God” (Gal 6:16), “The circumcision” (Php 3:3) and Jews of the heart (Rom 2:28-29), and a royal priesthood to serve and worship him forever.

So it says in Psalms, Isaiah, and Hebrews, “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise” and “I will put my trust in him” and “Behold I am the children God has given me” (Heb 2:12-13; Ps 22:22; Isa 8:18). It is as Jesus has said before, “I will lose nothing of all that he has given me” (John 6:39).

And so here is the stunning truth of the gospel. Because the only begotten Son has obeyed as True Israel, because he is the True Son of the heavenly Father, because he has shed his blood and sprinkled it once-for-all, the Father has granted him his request. He has gifted unto the Son an inheritance. And this inheritance is likewise called a son of the Father through faith. Galatians 3:26, “In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.” Romans 4:13, “The promise to Abraham and his seed that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.” “Those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom 8:29). And now, by faith brothers and sisters, you have been adopted into the family of God! You have come to the “Assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven” (Heb 12:23).

The Father in heaven is Father in some way to the angels and to all mankind. And he has gifted to mankind the very places where they live so that they should seek God, in hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet, he is not far from any of us, for we are indeed his offspring. Yet, God does not live in temples and he is not a statue and does not contain an image fashioned by our creativity in our image. Rather, the Father has sent his Son, and now the commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has appointed a time when he will judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed and given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

To those who believe in this, the Father is their father in a very special way. The same way he was for Moses. His Father is your Father. Jesus did not merely call him “father,” but Abba. Abba is not the Rock-band from the 70’s. It is the Aramaic for daddy, a term of deep endearment, the most affectionate and intimate term you can call him. Since ours is the **adoption as sons, by the Spirit we call him Abba father!** This father is not “**the big-man in the sky.**” He is not a grumpy old graying bearded man. He is not that man who abused your physically or verbally growing up.

He is the one who looks after orphans and widows. He is the Father of the fatherless, the Rock of my salvation, our Redeemer, the one who gives good gifts to his children, the one who keeps his promises, the one who protects and fights for his sons and daughters, the one who is kind and patient with our sins always forgiving and not remembering them or holding them against us, the one whom we may approach boldly with prayers of intercession and thanksgiving, the one in whom we worship and delight. Is this the Father you worship? Worship him because of what he has done for his Son and for you in making you the very special gift, the inheritance that Jesus won by his work on the earth.

Grace to you and peace from the Father, him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.