

TOGETHERFORADOPTION

Adoption and Our Triune God

“He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:5-6).

We really should not be able to talk about adoption without considering the Trinity. Adoption is ultimately about relationship; and the relationship that transcends all others is the relationship(s) that the Persons of the eternal Trinity have eternally enjoyed with each other. Our God has always been and always will be a communion of Persons. Reciprocal love forever flows between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

“Our vertical adoption brings us into relationship with the eternal Triune God.”

So what do the eternal relationships of the Trinity have to do with the doctrine of vertical adoption? First, there would be no biblical doctrine of adoption if God were not Triune. Think about it: If God were only one Person rather than three, there would be no love into which we could be brought to share through adoption. Only a God who is more than one Person can be love. There is much more that could be said here, but the bottom line is that if there is no Trinity, there is no adoption as sons, period.

Second—and this is absolutely staggering—God's gracious provision of adoption is the activity by which He enlarges *the circle of communion* that has eternally existed between the three Persons of the Trinity! The good news of the gospel is that God the Father brings us to share in the loving communion that He enjoys with His eternal and natural Son through the work of His eternal and natural Son. Through adoption God graciously brings us to participate in the reciprocal love that ever flows between the Father and His Son. This is the very heart of vertical adoption. T4A's passion is to explore and articulate this wonderful truth “to the praise of [God's] glorious grace” (Ephesians 1:6).

If it is true that we should not be able to talk about vertical adoption (i.e., God adopting us as His children) without considering the Trinity and the centrality of the reciprocal love that ever flows between the Persons of

the Trinity, then our understanding of this relational aspect of our vertical adoption should influence how we view horizontal adoption (i.e., couples adopting children). Adoption, whether vertical or horizontal, is about the loving communion of relationship and all the wonderful benefits that result from it.

Our vertical adoption brings us into relationship with the eternal Triune God. The first person of the Trinity, God the Father, becomes our Father (John 20:17); the second person of the Trinity, the eternal and natural Son of God, becomes our Elder Brother (Hebrews 2:10-12); and the third person of the Trinity, the Spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15), places the cry, “Abba! Father!” in our hearts and on our lips (Galatians 4:6). To be adopted by God is to enter, amazingly, into a profound relationship with each person of the glorious Trinity. This is the greatest benefit of adoption! As Augustine once prayed to God:

“You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

God made us for Himself, and adoption is His gracious work to give us the very thing for which we were made! If we understand and value what God has given us through adoption, shouldn't it be our great joy to see couples giving children loving family relationships through adoption?

Clearly, God does not call every Christian to adopt, but He does call all of His people to care for orphans in their affliction (James 1:27), whether by adopting themselves, helping others adopt, or through joining with other believers to provide some form of humanitarian aid or support. In any case, can you think of a better way to care for orphans than by providing them with the one thing they need the most horizontally, namely, a loving family relationship? What a great way to express our gratitude to our Triune God for bringing us to participate in the reciprocal love that ever flows between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

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