

SONS OF ABRAHAM AFTER THE FLESH

Peter Hay, prepared for word ministry, 16 May 2021
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Introduction

Hello, everyone. In our last session, we considered the immortal, spiritual body of Christ which was the outcome of His offering journey. We made the point that it was as material as it was spiritual.

In this session, we will consider how we become children of Abraham and obtain our spiritual resurrection body from Christ through the process of the adoption.

Children of Abraham

Importantly, we are not children of Abraham by association or because of a common system of beliefs. I made the point last week that the adoption is not simply taking one person and putting them into a family with which they have no literal connection. That is what we understand adoption to be in our civic context.

Adoption

The adoption that Paul spoke of was that we are taken from the old creation and made a new creation as sons and daughters of Abraham; and that is what was promised to him.

We are not children of Abraham by association, or because we have a common system of beliefs. Neither are we children of Abraham because of our natural genetic heritage that we received from Adam.

The death of our natural bodies

Our natural, genetic bodies will go to the dust when we die, like everyone else's will. When we go into the dust, there is no way of discriminating between the origin of DNA. It is merely dirt.

Every person, whether Jew or Gentile, is brought forth as a child of Abraham through adoption, because they are, and are becoming, new creation sons of God in Christ Jesus.

Abraham became blameless as do we

We receive adoption in the same way that Abraham received the promise of the adoption - by walking before the Lord *blamelessly*.

Blamelessness is *daily fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ*.

We *join* this fellowship when we receive the same gospel that was preached to Abraham.

The word of the Lord, through which Abraham was introduced to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, was the process through which He obtained the adoption. And all of his children were likened to the stars of heaven.

The Lord is our shield

The Lord Himself said to Abram, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield [meaning 'I am your faith']; your exceedingly great reward.' Gen 15:1.

But how do we know that we receive what Abraham was promised as the adoption, in the same way?

We know this because, just prior to the commencement of His offering journey, Jesus declared this very same message to His disciples.

As He said to Abram, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your faith, your exceedingly great reward', so He said to the disciples, 'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.' Joh 14:1-2.

Jesus' words, 'Let not your heart be troubled', were the same as 'Do not be afraid, you believe in God *believe* also in Me'.

Our exceedingly great reward

How do we *believe*?

Paul said, 'Having received the same spirit of faith I *believed* and therefore I *spoke*.'

Christ has become our faith, just as He came to Abram. 'In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.'

This is the same as saying, 'I am your exceedingly great reward.' That exceedingly great reward, those mansions, are the bodies which are like lights, full of light.

Jesus prepared a pathway

Jesus then said, 'And where I go you know, and the way you know.' Joh 14:4.

He was saying that there is a *pathway to Him*, where the mansions are.

Thomas replied, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?' Joh 14:5.

Obviously, Jesus had not yet gone on His offering journey, and Thomas was saying, 'We are not sure where You are going.' Jesus answered him and said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through Me.'

When Jesus said, 'No-one comes to the Father', He meant 'No-one becomes a son of the Father *except through Me*'. This is the way that we are to walk as those who are obtaining what was promised to Abraham.

The mansions prepared for us by Christ; our resurrection body

The Father's *house* is *the body of Christ*, but what are the 'mansions' in the body of Christ?

Jesus did not speak about literal houses that we will live in when we go to heaven. He used the term 'mansion' to describe *our resurrection body*, through which we will have expression as sons of God *in the new heavens and earth*.

Our life, or our identity, is the expression of that identity *according to the word of our name*.

That name is in Christ, and describes all of the works that we will do in an immortal body as a son of God. That is what He was talking about when He spoke of 'mansions'.

Christ used the term 'mansion' to describe our resurrection body, through which we will have expression as a son of God in the new heavens and earth.

The apostle Paul made this point patently clear. He taught that when the Scriptures refer to 'dwelling places', they are describing bodies in which we have our expression.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, 'For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed'.

Here, he was not talking about living in tents; he spoke about our physical body, which is our mortal body, made from the dust, and is going to dust.

So, we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, 'We have a building from God [the Father], a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' 2Co 5:1. The 'house not made with

hands eternal in the heavens' is a mansion that Christ has prepared for us in His own body. 'In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you.'

We groan in our mortality

Then Paul continued to the Corinthians, 'For in this we groan ['Groaning' is not complaining. This groaning is a travail as we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.], earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven.' 2Co 5:2.

We note that there is a habitation, a heavenly body, in heaven, even though we are still in our mortal bodies.

It is not as though we are becoming heavenly beings while on earth. I will explain this point later in this session.

Our mortal and heavenly bodies

The point is that we are in a *mortal* body - but we also have a heavenly body that He has prepared for us.

Paul said, 'For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.' 2Co 5:2-3.

'Nakedness' means that we have an identity, but no capacity to express that identity. That is what Paul meant by 'nakedness'.

'For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God [the Father; another way of saying it as Paul said was that He 'predestined us to adoption in Christ'.] who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee [of getting that inheritance].' 2Co 5:4-5. Isn't that an amazing point?

The body of our adoption; immortal, spiritual, material

God the Father has given us the Spirit as 'a guarantee'.

When we read from Romans last week about the adoption, Paul said that we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, groan within ourselves, eagerly awaiting the adoption.

In the letter to the Corinthians referred to above, Paul spoke about this process of adoption, specifically drawing our attention to the nature of our bodies.

He wrote to the Romans, saying, 'We who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, eagerly awaiting the adoption.'

We know that that refers to the resurrection when we receive an immortal, spiritual, material body. Rom 8:23.

Children of Abraham inherit the heavenly Jerusalem; participating in Christ's offering and sufferings

Although we have identity through Adam, only the children of Abraham are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem in this age, and then citizens of the new heavens and earth through fellowship in Christ's offering and sufferings.

I will 'unpack' that a bit. We have received our identity from Adam, but we are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. That means we have a building from God, eternal in the heavens, if we remain joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

As we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings in this mortal body, we have a heavenly body in the resurrection.

A mortal, heavenly body; and a spiritual body

The *heavenly* body with which we are clothed becomes a *spiritual* body forever for our sonship in the new heavens and earth.

Although we have identity through Adam, only the children of Abraham are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem in this age, and then citizens of the new heavens and earth through fellowship in Christ's offering and sufferings.

There are two steps.

One is receiving an identity and a mortal body from Adam.

Second, there is the step of obtaining a spiritual, immortal body in the *anastasis*; in the resurrection.

King David explained and testified to these two steps. This is an amazing passage.

He said, 'For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.' This refers to procreation; a biological process.

'You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.' Psa 139:13-14.

David was referring to the first creation.

It is important to note that a person who fears the Lord will not complain about their physical natural being; about their identity; about their appearance; about who they are.

However, if you are like that, and you are being born again, you will be delivered from that view of yourself and will agree with what King David said: 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'

Procreation, our physical body and identity

However, that is still 'first man', the first creation.

King David spoke of his conception through the process of procreation, which is how we receive a physical, biological body, together with our identity, soul and spirit. These two - our body and our identity - are together; they are inseparable.

However, this was not the end of God's Everlasting Covenant plan for King David or for you and me. In fact, it was not the end of His plan for anyone.

Christ descended to the lowest parts to perfect our sonship

King David continued to testify, 'My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret.' Psa 139:15.

Initially, you might think, 'Oh well, he was still talking about what is created in the womb.' But he was not.

David said, 'My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skilfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.' When were we wrought in the lowest places of the earth? It was when Jesus Himself *descended to the lowest places of the earth* to prepare a mansion for us. How fantastic is that!

David continued, 'Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they were

all written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.' Psa 139:16.

In these verses, David spoke of the offering of Christ on the cross. This was when Christ descended to the lowest parts of the earth.

That is literally what Paul said. 'Now this, "He ascended" - what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?' Eph 4:9.

Through His offering journey, Jesus brought an end to my flesh and my other law. He finished, or perfected, my sonship.

This is the fulfilment of the Day of Atonement, where Jesus finished judgement and chastening for every person.

He also finished and perfected the sonship and the works of every son of God.

Christ has perfected my sonship, works and body

What does it mean that He finished, or perfected, my sonship?

It means that He prepared in Himself a body, or a mansion, for me, in Him.

That is what it means when He said, 'I go to prepare a mansion for you.' He was saying, 'I have finished the full expression of what your sonship life will be if you choose to join Me in My body.'

He prepared, in Himself, a body for me, and finished the works of sonship that belong to my name as a son of God. These works - the works of my sonship - were written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

'And in Your Book, they were all written when there were as yet none of them.' These works of my sonship were written in the Lamb's Book of Life as He authored the pathway of my salvation.

Our pathway from Gethsemane to the cross

We are drawing some threads together here. Jesus said, 'I go to prepare a place for you. And where I go you know, and you know the way.'

Through His offering journey, which was a pathway from Gethsemane through to Calvary, He finished judgement for every person, suffering death for every man.

And He did the works that belong to my sonship. He prepared for me a mansion, a body, in which,

as a son of God, I will be able to express this life. He wrote down all the works prepared for me, 'when as yet there were none of them'.

The Lamb's Book of Life written in the cross

Do you see that the writing of the Lamb's Book of Life happened while He made the journey?

In this regard, Paul said that, through His obedience, through the things which He suffered, He authored, He became the Author of, salvation to those who obey Him.

We must receive His word to be joined to that process through which we are able to be delivered from a fallen, dead way of life, and joined to a new creation.

It is through this process that we obtain a mansion which is, in the first instance, a heavenly body that becomes a spiritual body in the resurrection to the new heavens and earth.

Adoption summarises our participation in Christ

Let us summarise the implications of our fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

We will look at these implications again because you will see that this principle of the adoption, particularly in relation to the nature of our mortal body, our heavenly body, and of the spiritual body that we receive in the resurrection, is fundamental to the gospel of sonship.

You will see some of the things that we have understood about the gospel of sonship in what I am going to say now. We will connect it to this process of the adoption.

All died in Adam - born again of incorruptible seed

So, in the first instance, we are sons and daughters of Adam, because we have received our identity from him; and we have received a physical body, made from the dust of the earth, from him.

As sons and daughters of Adam, we all died in him. Paul said that all in Adam have died.

However, through the word of the gospel, we are born again of incorruptible seed.

Do you see that being 'born again' is fundamental to becoming a new creation; part of a new humanity?

We are sons and daughters of Adam who all died in him. However, through the word of the gospel we are born *again* of *incorruptible* seed.

Born of His zoe life – a new creation

Regarding the life of God the Father, 'life' in the Scriptures is referred to in the Greek as *zoe*. *Zoe* is the Greek word for 'life' and it is most often associated with the life of God.

We could say that the *zoe* life of God the Father becomes our life as sons of God when Christ comes to dwell in our hearts through faith. This is a new creation; this is a person who is *born of God*.

The other law to be cut out or we will die again in our sin

Although we are sons of God at this point, we still have another law within us. So, becoming a new creation son of God does not mitigate the other law within us. That other law needs to be taken out; needs to be cut out, and destroyed.

Although we are a son of God at this point, we still have another law within us. Unless we are delivered from this principle of life, we will die again in our sins! That is incredible, isn't it? Having been born again of incorruptible seed, we can die again in our sins.

Of course, we have looked at this before in relation to the parable of the sower and the seed. It is the issue of wayside, stony and thorny ground.

Two implications of baptism fundamental to the adoption

Now, a person who has been born of God, knowing that this principle of the flesh is within them, will desire to be baptised into Christ.

We will now focus on two mutually dependent implications of our baptism into Christ. These are not all of the implications, but I will focus on these two.

I. Made citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem

The first implication of being baptised into Christ is that we are made citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem as members of Christ's body.

We have already established that Christ's body is the Father's house. So, through baptism into Christ, we are made citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, as members of Christ's body.

There are many Scriptures, but we will focus on two to make this point.

'But God, who is rich in mercy [This is important because we will talk about 'mercies new every morning'], because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us *sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*.' Eph 2:4-6.

'For *our citizenship is in heaven*, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.' Php 3:20-21.

I do not know about you, but as I get up in the morning and go about my activities, I do not find myself in heaven! Unless, of course, this world in which we are interacting is 'heavenly'; but I am fairly sure you would agree with me that it does not quite feel like it!

So, what is going on here?

Having 'our citizenship in heaven' means that we have a heavenly body. We have a building from God, or a mansion, or a heavenly body; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This is true even while I am in my mortal body, which is like a tent, and I am groaning in it, eagerly awaiting to be clothed with that heavenly body.

The point is that I am a citizen of heaven because I am *in* the body of Christ, which is the Father's house; and there is a heavenly body that is prepared for me, where He is.

While I am on earth in my mortal body, I am not two people, but the activities that I do, as my fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, are in this mortal body.

The important thing to note is that what I do in my mortal body has an implication in relation to my citizenship in heaven.

Remember, the first implication of baptism is that we are made citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem as members of Christ's body.

I. Baptised into Christ's death

The second implication is that we were baptised into Christ's death. Rom 6:3.

We remember that, by the grace of God, He died our death, which we all died in Adam.

So, we have all died with Adam but, by the grace of God, He came and died that death. But He did not die it in the way that we died it, naturally. He died it *by the grace of God*.

He died our death by the grace of God; He died it uniquely, making it His death. Paul called it, 'the death that He died'. It was a unique death.

Life and immortality brought to light

Through His death, He brought an end to sin and the old creation. Paul said that He brought an end to sin and 'brought life and immortality to light'.

Remember that we are talking about what the children of Abraham 'look like'; so, we could say that He is bringing life and immortality to light.

His offering and suffering pathway

The fellowship of His offering and sufferings is the process, or the pathway, because we are joined to the fellowship of His offering, which was an offering journey through which sin and the other law in us are being removed from our lives and destroyed, as we groan.

The whole world is groaning. Your neighbour next door, who does not know the Lord, is groaning in the stress of their failing mortal body.

You may be failing in your mortal body in the same way, but if you are joined to Christ, the Holy Spirit is joining you to the travail of Christ and that groaning does *not* lead to your eternal damnation.

That groaning is leading you deliverance from your other law, in Adam. It is establishing for you a heavenly body, which, in the resurrection, you obtain as a spiritual body.

Everyone is groaning but, for you, as you suffer in Christ as your fellowship, or as your participation, in His offering and sufferings, you are obtaining something that is enduring; something that is eternal. It is a reward.

We are being delivered from death in Adam, and are made alive as sons of Abraham through faith in Christ.

This offering and suffering pathway is what Jesus described when He said, 'I go to prepare a place for you, and where I go you know and the way you know.' Joh 14:3-4. He was saying that if you

want to get that 'heavenly mansion', you must walk on the pathway, which is the fellowship of His offering and sufferings.

His pathway is the expression of the mercies of God to us

The opportunity to journey with Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings is the *expression* of the mercies of God to us, which are new every morning. Remember, 'But God, who is rich in mercy'.

We obtain this mercy so that, by the mercies of God, we can present our body as a living sacrifice. That is not talking about our heavenly body, but about our mortal body.

Paul said that by those mercies of God you present yourself for participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. That confession 'looks like', 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live ... I live by faith [every day].'

Is that not what a child of Abraham is?

By His mercies we are not consumed

'Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed.' Lam 3:22-24.

This means that we are not coming to an end, or to a silence, which is what is happening to everyone who is 'in Adam', in whom all died.

'Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.'

I love this, because it is not just that God is faithful to deliver us. It is, 'great is Your faithfulness' that we receive as our faith so that we can join mercies new, today.

'The Lord is my portion' - our confession of faith, each day

'"The Lord is my portion", says my soul.'

As an identity, I confess that, by faith, 'Today is my participation in Christ's offering and sufferings'. It is not that today I have 'good' things and 'bad' things happening.

Rather, *today*, I am walking by the Spirit, and *all things* are working together to that end, which He has finished for me.

A sure hope - He has already perfected our sonship

‘“The Lord is my portion”, says my soul, “therefore I hope in Him!”’

Our hope is sure because we are anchored in Christ, and He has already perfected our sonship. That is why it is sure; it is already finished! He has perfected *forever* those who are being sanctified’, each day, by the mercies of God. Heb 10:14.

Each day, by the mercies of God, I present myself as a living sacrifice for fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

Participating today in His finished work

I am participating, *today*, in what Christ has already perfected for me that day.

He has worked my works. All the days for me have been written when there was not one of them. Psalms 139:16.

That is what I am walking in. I am participating in what Christ has already perfected for me that day as a chastening, because He has finished all judgement and He turned it to chastening by which something can be removed from me; and then as the works that belong to my sonship.

Laying hold of the glory of our heavenly body, each day

Here is a key! The extent to which I participate in His offering as a member of His body, each day, in my mortal body, is the extent to which I lay hold of that which He finished for me.

He has already finished it, but I must lay hold of it so that it becomes mine. Jesus said that, for each day, there will be ‘some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some one hundredfold’. We must give attention to this. We must enter in. There is fruit being brought forth *each day*.

Through this fellowship, Christ’s life becomes my life, which I live by faith in this mortal body.

However, it is also the degree to which I am attaining the glory of my heavenly body, which is ‘hidden with Christ in God’.

I find what Paul said in his letter to the Colossians interesting: ‘For you died and your *life* is hidden with Christ in God.’ Col 3:3.

The word ‘life’ there is ‘*zoe*’; it is your *zoe*. Remember, ‘He brought life and immortality to light’, and that is where it is hidden.

The degree to which I lay hold of or participate in His finished work in my *mortal* body has an impact on the glory of my *heavenly* body.

In other words, my daily participation in the fellowship of Christ’s offering has an impact on the progressive glory of my heavenly body as a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Laying up treasure in heaven

Jesus called this ‘a treasure in heaven’, which we are to lay up for ourselves through fellowship in His offering.

But do you see the point? How do you lay up treasure for heaven while you are on earth?

This is what we are saying. How you live in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings, on earth in your mortal body, will lay up treasure in heaven, which is a heavenly body, the glory of which is dependent on how you live here and now.

We do not get that heavenly body yet; that treasure, yet.

As we noted at the beginning of this study, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. That is where it is, so do not think that, as you are going through life, your mortality is turning into the immortal body of Christ.

Your mortal body will go to the dust. But what we do in our mortal body, as those who are joined to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, which He did in a mortal body, has an implication for us in relation to a heavenly treasure.

We are not getting this body yet. We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Our journey in this life finishes when we physically die. And our body, which Paul call a ‘tent’, which we received in Adam, goes back to the dust.

Falling asleep in Christ - waking in the likeness of His anastasis

A son of God who is a member of Christ’s body literally falls ‘asleep’ in Christ, and awakes in the likeness of His *anastasis*; in the likeness of His

immortal, eternal resurrection. They are raised in a spiritual body.

Paul said, 'So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being".

He was saying that is what we received in the natural.

'The last Adam became a life-giving spirit [you are not receiving the nature of your body from Adam, but from Jesus Christ]'. 1Co 15:42-45.

A person who has fallen asleep in Christ and has risen in His *anastasis* has their spiritual body.

Our daily participation in the finished offering of Christ; obtaining *exanastasis*

They receive that because, each day, by the mercies of God, they have joined the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, and have obtained *exanastasis* in their mortality. They participated daily in the dying and living of Jesus.

This is a progressive attainment, which becomes an eternal inheritance. They receive their resurrection body from Jesus, the glory of which is commensurate with their daily participation in the finished offering of Christ, in this age.

What we do in our fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, in our mortal body, has an implication for 'treasure' that we are storing in heaven as 'a mansion', which Jesus has already finished, but which we are to attain.

When we die, that heavenly body that we are clothed with becomes the spiritual body of our sonship for the new heavens and earth, of which we are citizens. We are the children of Abraham whom he saw when he received the promise of the adoption.

Next week, we will talk more about the nature of this walk, and the distinction between the bodies of those who are not in Christ, and how we are building that heavenly mansion so that we receive that glory in the resurrection.