

## SESSION 3: WHY MAN IS SO IMPORTANT

“What is man that you (Lord) are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” (Ps 8:4, 144:3)

King David was not the only person to have ever asked this question in Biblical times. Hundreds of years before him, Job had asked the very same question. “What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention,” (Job 7:17).

And perhaps we all have, from time to time, pondered that very same question, and in a very personal way. “What am I,” God, “that you are mindful of me and that you care for me?”

Created last in a stunning display of God's creative genius, and having been made in God's very own likeness and image, Man stands preeminent over all other expressions of God's created order. “Look at Man,” God was saying to all creation, “and you will be seeing me.” Not physically, as God is Spirit (Jn 4:24), but Man was always intended to represent God: his nature, character, purpose, knowledge, and wisdom. Furthermore, Man was meant to represent God's presence in the world and reflect glory back to him, from his world, for all eternity.

Hebrews also tells us that Man was initially made 'a little lower than the angels' (Hebrews 2:7). However, Man was always destined to be higher—to be an heir of God, in fact, as Paul tells us in Romans 8:17. In other words, Man was to be adopted into the very royal family of God, which Paul also makes very clear in Ephesians 1:4-5, “In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship...”

'Adoption to sonship' is a very important concept. This is a Roman concept, as Jews had no adoption law in their society. At the heart of this Roman law was the desire to be able to add someone from outside the family into the family, in order to provide an heir for the family inheritance and ensure the family's future wellbeing. Octavian, for example, was adopted by Julius Caesar to be his heir, and later became known as Caesar Augustus and the first Emperor of Rome.

In using the 'adoption' metaphor, Paul is making it clear that God's purpose for Man was to be God's heir or, more importantly, co-heirs with Christ (Ro 8:17). It is important to add that this is not primarily for our sakes—as precious as this thought might be—but for *his* name's sake. Paul says in Ephesians 1:18 that we have become his inheritance. We are God's inheritance. (Keep in mind the Roman reason for adoption that Paul is referencing here.) The commissioning of Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:26-28 to rule, be fruitful, fill the earth, and subdue it all reflect the purpose for Man's elevated royal family calling and adoption.

This means that God created us for work—that is, to work together with him in kingdom endeavors, to be in the royal family business, to live a life on mission with God. Often we hear that the reason God created us in his likeness and image was for fellowship. And while there is truth in this, we cannot separate fellowship with God from working together with God.

Sadly, today fellowship is often seen as something resembling a 'chilling out café experience' among friends. But this lacks the whole idea of kingdom purpose and of working together with God in seeing his 'creation project' blossom into fullness and glory. The many metaphors that describe our relationship with God does imply relational intimacy, such as father and son, husband and wife, but we need to add to these metaphors other Biblical metaphors such as master and servant to help us understand just what adoption truly means. And that is to be an heir with God—fulfilling kingdom purposes. This is why we were made in God's very own likeness and image in the first place.

And perhaps we should pause here to emphasize the point that 'adoption to sonship' was not some Plan B resulting from the Fall. It is part of God's Plan A, and has always been from before the world began, as Paul so emphatically states in Ephesians 1:4-5, "For he chose us...before the creation of the world...for adoption to sonship." Adoption into the royal family of God has always been our destiny, and is the very reason why we were created in God's likeness and image and why he has redeemed us.

So, what went wrong? Why didn't Adam and Eve enter into this intimate and purposeful relationship with God—become an heir, inherit royal prestige and glory, and together with God, embark on fulfilling his creation project, his glorious 'before the world began' dream, and bring it to fullness and glory?

Although Adam was created perfect, he wasn't created complete. In his incompleteness, he was made a little lower than the angels (Heb 2:7). His quest for completeness and participation in God's royal family was always going to be a journey. This journey is what the story of the Bible is all about!

I encourage you to ponder on this incredible idea that you were made for a special purpose: to be God's heir. His purpose for you from before the world began was adoption into his royal family, to live a life on purpose with God in fulfilling his awe-inspiring dream and for all eternity.