

GOD HAS NO GRANDCHILDREN!

Today's Text: Romans 8: 12 -17

Extracts:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. If indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together [Rom. 8: 14-17]

Chief Moshood Abiola is best remembered as the presumptive winner of the June 12, 1993 Presidential Elections in Nigeria which the then military government annulled.¹ That action plus his death in detention in 1998 provoked the end of military rule in Africa's most populous country. In his private life, the enormously rich man married multiple wives and allegedly sired about 113 children. But, unknown to most people, he had made a will dated October 25, 1989 in which he insisted that all the children bearing his name and presented as his biological children, except the five from his childhood love and first wife, had to undergo DNA testing before they could inherit any part of his huge estate. Reportedly, many women did not bother to present their children and more than half of those children presented did not pass the test!

Perhaps to take advantage of Abiola's generosity, many gold diggers had brought bastards to him as his children. In the end, the man's strict test separated his children from the pretenders. In like manner, many people make the claim that God is the Father of all human beings because He made them. Is that really true? Is the carpenter the father of everything that he has made- children and chairs? Is God also the Father of those who do not believe in Him or who claim that God does not have a Son like Jesus Christ? It, therefore, follows that only God can define for us those who qualify to be called His children. He certainly does not have grandchildren! In this week's Bible verses, Paul reveals to us those who can call God, "Abba, Father." Let us find out.

¹ Story based on Reuben Abati, "DNA test, Abiola's Will and those 'bastards,'" <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/reuben-abati/dna-test-abiolas-will-and-those-bastards.html> ; 09 August 2007

1. Introduction: Ways of becoming a father

The Scriptures tell us, “Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?” [Mal. 2: 10]. That suggests that God is the Father of His creations. But elsewhere, the Scriptures also say, “We have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the *Father of spirits* and live?” [Heb. 12: 9]. That suggests that God is the Father of spirits. Since Satan and his demons are spirits, is God their Father? To be able to adequately answer those questions, let us examine the concept of fatherhood as we understand it.

The role of fathers can be played in one of the following ways, among others:

a) *By birth*

This is the natural process. A man has relations with his wife; she conceives and bears a child. That child has come *from the seed of the father and the egg of the mother*. We are told, for example, “Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, ‘I have acquired a man from the LORD’” [Gen. 4: 1]. In this case, Adam was the father of Cain and the grandfather of Cain’s future children.

Adam has also been called “the son of God” [Lk 3: 38] but we do not know his mother! He did not have one because “the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and he became a living being” [Gen. 2: 7]. The only other person called the Son of God is Jesus Christ but He was not given birth that way. When Archangel Gabriel came to announce His birth to a young virgin called Mary, he told her, “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus.” When she questioned how that could happen since she did not know a man, the angel told her, “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God*” [Lk 1: 26-35].

From that story, we know that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (as we say in the Apostles’ Creed). He was the Seed of the woman [Gen. 3: 15] but a woman has eggs, not seeds. Therefore, *Jesus is related to humans through His mother, Mary, a descendant of Adam*. But He is called the Son of the Highest or the Son of God. Clearly, that relationship is not by birth as we know it or by creation as in the case of Adam. Jesus is unique. That is why He is said to be begotten, not made. In fact, ALL THROUGH HISTORY, Jesus alone has had that mark. That is why He is the only begotten Son of God [Jn 3: 16]. God Himself acknowledged this when a voice came from heaven after John the Baptist had baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, “This is My

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” [Matt. 3: 13-17]. ***So, by creation or by birth, God cannot be your father as we know fatherhood!***

b) *By fostering*

By childbirth outside of marriage or a previous marriage or widowhood, a woman may bring a child/children into her present marriage but ***her husband (by mutual consent or otherwise) does not adopt such children as his own. Instead, he chooses to foster them by giving them fatherly support and guidance. They do not bear his name, even when he may provide for their care and education. He is thus a foster father.***

Joseph, the husband of Mary, played that role in the life of Jesus. He raised Him along with the sons and daughters that he fathered biologically by his wife, Mary [Matt. 13: 55-56]. On one occasion, when Jesus was twelve years old, He accompanied “His parents” to the annual Feast of the Passover in Jerusalem. On returning to Nazareth, the parents discovered that Jesus had been left behind; so they came back for Him. After they had found Him in the midst of the scholars, both listening and asking them questions, His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, ***Your father*** [Joseph] and I have sought You anxiously.” Jesus replied, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about ***My Father’s*** [God’s] business?” He left with them back to Nazareth “and ***was subject to them***” [Lk 2: 41-51]. That suggests that ***the Father in heaven is more than a mere foster father that we are used to on earth.***

c) *By adoption*

By choice or by chance, some couples are unable to have biological children. So, they may opt for adoption, that is, take children who are not genetically related to them as their own. Even some couples with children, especially grown up ones, may also adopt younger children. Such children then answer the names of their adoptive parents. There may be different reasons for adopting, some altruistic and some selfish. What is important is that ***the new family is not based on race or creed but largely on love or charity.***

In this week’s Bible verses, Paul wrote, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ***you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’***” [Rom. 8: 14-15].

From the foregoing, it is clear that ***we are not God’s children by birth but by adoption. Such a privilege cannot be passed on to our children as an inheritance but they have to access it by themselves. Therefore, God can only***

adopt children, not grandchildren! Let us dig more deeply into the matter in the next section.

2. How God becomes our Father

In spirit, there are only sons, no daughters. In the words of Jesus, “In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven” [Matt. 22: 30]. However, for the sake of some of us who are gender-sensitive, we shall use sons and children interchangeably. Here is what we must do if we want God to accept us as His adopted sons:

a) *Accept that God exists*

You cannot be the son of a man whose existence you refuse to acknowledge. Therefore, a first and important condition is to accept that there is God. The word of God says, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for *he who comes to God must believe that He is*, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” [Heb. 11: 6].

A related issue is the kind of God that you believe in. In some religions, God is unknowable. In her famous book, *I Dared to call Him Father*, Bilquis Sheikh, a prominent Pakistani Muslim that later gave her life to Christ, wrote:

*If the Bible and Koran represent the same God, why is there so much confusion and contradiction? How could it be the same God if the God of the Koran is one of vengeance and punishment and the God of the Christian Bible is one of mercy and forgiveness?*²

You cannot relate to an unknowable God. The whole duty of man on earth is to “fear God and keep His commandments” because He “will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” [Eccl. 12: 13-14]. Therefore, you must try to relate to Him in a personal way.

b) *Accept that that God has a Son*

If you do not believe that God has a Son, then you cannot call Him Father! The concept of God-in-Three Persons³ is hard even for Christians, not to talk of people of other faiths. The Son of God is the Word of God that was with God from the beginning; all things were made through Him, and without Him was nothing made. The Word became flesh and dwelt

² Bilquis Sheikh with Richard H. Schneider, *I Dared to call Him Father* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Chosen Books, a Division of Baker House Company; 1978], p. 34

³ “One God in Three Persons,” *Weekly Bible Study Series*, Vol. 1 No 8: 8 July 2000; http://www.bibleresourcecentre.com/Volume_1/PDFs/OneGodinThreePersons.pdf

amongst us [**Jn 1: 1-14**]. He is the only begotten Son of God who died for us while we were yet sinners [**Rom. 5: 8**]. No man can come to God except through Him and he who has seen Him has seen the Father [**Jn 14: 6-9**].

Think of it this way. Here is somebody who alone is entitled to His Father's estate as His only begotten Son. Do you think that you can just bypass Him, walk straight to His Father and say, "Daddy, I'm home"? He will simply say to you, "I'm sorry I don't know you." But if His Son were to introduce you and say, "Father, here is my new friend. Please, adopt him as my brother and Your son." His Father will gladly do so because He loves and trusts His only begotten Son who does only what He sees His Father do [**Jn 5: 19**]. In some faiths, they do not want to hear any mention of the name of Jesus. That is where the Holy Spirit can help.

c) Accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your life

Paul wrote, "If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God" [**Rom. 8: 13-14**]. If you do not believe in the Trinity, you may not accept that there is a Holy Spirit or that He is also God. Yet, unless you are led by the Holy Spirit, you cannot be a son of God. Confusing?

Elsewhere, Paul has taught us that NO ONE can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit [**1 Cor. 12: 3**]. We also know from the Scriptures that as many as have received Jesus, to them He has given the RIGHT to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name [**Jn 1: 12**]. Therefore, it is a total package. You cannot accept Jesus and reject the Holy Spirit because Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit [**Lk 1: 35**] and that makes the Holy Spirit an integral part of God the Father. Unless you are born again of water and the Holy Spirit, you can neither see nor enter the Kingdom of God [**Jn 3: 3, 5**]. That was why before His ascension, Jesus promised His disciples of the descent on them of the Holy Spirit who will empower them to spread the gospel of the Kingdom of God "to the end of the earth" [**Acts 1: 8**].

d) Become an adopted child of God

Paul wrote, "You [have] received the Spirit of adoption by whom you cry out, 'Abba, Father'" and the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, His heirs and joint-heirs with Christ [**Rom. 8: 15-17**]. That is a big privilege as well as a huge responsibility. As a privilege, you are now assured of a mansion in your Father's house [**Jn 14: 2-3**]. As a responsibility, you must be ready to suffer with and for Christ so that you may also be glorified with Him [**Rom. 8: 17**].

From the foregoing, we now realize that *to be called the child of God is a spiritual matter*. It is your firm and irrevocable commitment to a lifetime of close and intimate relationship with your invisible Father in heaven through His visible Son and your brother, Jesus Christ. Isn't that great?

3. Conclusion: Only through Jesus can you become a son of God!

Jesus has made things easier for us. Having suffered and died in our place, He has paid the full price for our redemption. What does that mean? Go back to the night that the angel of death passed through Egypt and killed all the firstborn of Egypt. Before that, God had commanded the children of Israel to sacrifice the Passover lamb, a male of the first year without blemish, and put its blood on the two doors and on the lintel of the houses where they would eat it. God said, "Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" [Ex. 12: 1-13]. In like manner, Jesus our Passover has been sacrificed for our sins [1 Cor. 5: 7]. When we accept Him as our Lord and Saviour, His blood covers us and when His Father sees the blood, He forgives and forgets our sins!

It is only through Jesus that you can become a child of God. Your parents cannot do it because God has no grandchildren. Your religion cannot do it because it could be based on ignorance or falsehood. When you have seen Jesus, you have seen His Father [Jn 14: 9]. That is more than enough. It is sufficient!

God has no grandchildren.