

Adoption, Redemption of the Body **By Arlen Chitwood**

“The adoption” is spoken of in Romans 8:23 as being synonymous with “the redemption of our body”:

**“...waiting out adoption, [namely] the ransoming of our body”
(Lenski).**

**“...patiently awaiting son-placing, the redemption of our body”
(Wuest).**

And since “the adoption” and “the redemption of our body” are synonymous in this respect, the matter cannot possibly be a reference to that which will occur at the time of the resurrection and rapture at the end of the present dispensation, as commonly taught. If the redemption of the body were to occur at this time, all Christians would be adopted into a firstborn status. And this would be *completely contrary* to any Scriptural teaching surrounding adoption, for “sons” *alone* [those whom God presently recognizes in this capacity, as seen in Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:5-8], not children, find themselves in a position to be adopted..

If the redemption of the body/adoption does not occur at the time of the resurrection and rapture, then when does it occur? And exactly what is involved in this future redemption/adoption?

Romans 8:14-23 connects this future *redemption/adoption* with being “glorified together” with Christ and with “the manifestation of the sons of God.”

Then, in this same respect, note how these things have been put together in Phil. 3:20, 21:

“For our conversation [Gk. *politeuma*, ‘commonwealth,’ ‘political sphere of activity’] is in heaven [‘heavens’]; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall change our vile body [*lit.*, ‘our body of humiliation’], that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body [*lit.*, ‘His body of glory’], according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

The thought from the preceding two verses has to do with the Christians’ future regal position in the heavens, following Christ’s return; and it has to do with occupying this position in a “body of glory,” like unto the body presently possessed by Christ, not in the “body of humiliation” presently possessed by Christians.

There was a time when this same *humiliation* presently seen in connection with the Christians' body was also seen in connection with Christ's body. Note the quotation from Isa. 53:7, 8 in Acts 8:32, 33:

“...He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.”

(The Gk. word translated “humiliation” in Acts 8:33 [*tapeinosis*] is the same word translated “vile” in Phil. 3:21 [also in the Septuagint trans. of Isa. 53:8]. “Humiliation,” as in Acts 8:33, is *the correct* translation of the word.)

The preceding reference from Acts has to do with the events surrounding Calvary. Christ, following His being stripped of His garments and arrayed as a mock King, was again stripped of His garments and impaled on a cross. Reference is made in all four gospels to His garments being removed prior to the crucifixion (Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23, 24). Christ was lifted up in this manner, after His garments had been removed (except for perhaps an inner tunic), *exposing His uncovered flesh for all to see* (Psa. 22:16-18).

The time of *the humiliation* spoken of in the text was the time when two things occurred: 1) *His judgment* was “taken away,” and 2) *His life* was “taken from the earth [*i.e.*, He was cut off from the land of the living].” The former could only have to do with *regal activity* and the latter with *His death*.

Christ had come over three decades prior to the events surrounding Calvary as “King of the Jews,” “in the likeness of [or, ‘in the resemblance of’] sinful flesh” (Matt. 2:2; Rom. 8:3). And upon the cross, this body of flesh was *exposed for all to behold*. It was a body which, in all outward appearance, was *like* that which man presently possesses. It was a body which bore *a likeness* to that of all other men in their bodies of sinful flesh and, consequently, a body connected with *humiliation*.

To properly understand that which was involved in relation to Christ's body at the time of His first coming and in relation to man's body both prior to and following that time, one must go back to the fall and see exactly what occurred in relation to Adam's body at the time he partook of the forbidden fruit.

When man sinned in the garden in Eden, the complete being of man – spirit, soul, and body – became in a fallen state. God had commanded Adam concerning the fruit of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, “thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17).

After Satan had deceived Eve into eating of the fruit of this tree, she then “gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Immediately following this, “the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.” Then, in a vain effort to cover their nakedness, “they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:1-7).

At the time of the fall, Adam and Eve lost something; and it is clearly stated in Scripture that both immediately recognized this fact. That which they lost could only have been *a covering of pristine glory* which had previously clothed their bodies, for they, following the fall, found themselves in a twofold condition: 1) *naked*, and 2) *separated from God*.

God is arrayed in a covering of “light,” connected with “honour and majesty.” And man, created in the “image” and “likeness” of God, could only have been arrayed *in a similar manner* prior to the fall.

“Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with [‘you have put on’] honour and majesty.

Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain” (Psa. 104:1, 2).

Recognizing the loss of this covering, realizing that they were naked, explains why Adam and Eve, immediately following the fall, *sought to clothe themselves*. They tried to replace the covering which had been lost with a work of their own hands, with fig leaf aprons. And then, apparently realizing the utter inadequacy of this covering, they, in their fallen state, sought to hide from God.

God, finding Adam and Eve in this condition, completely rejected the works of their hands. God completely rejected their feeble efforts to atone for their own sin through seeking to replace the covering of pristine glory with fig leaves.

Then, to bring His fallen creature back into a right relationship (although not in complete keeping with their previously unfallen state – something still future even today [and, as will be shown, something in connection with the redemption of the body]), God provided a covering consisting of animal skins (Gen. 3:21). This necessitated *death and the shedding of blood*; and herein lie basic, unchangeable truths concerning the state of fallen man and the means which are necessary to effect his redemption.

Unredeemed man is a fallen creature, alienated from God; and two things are necessary to effect his redemption: 1) *Divine intervention*, and 2) *death and shed blood*. These truths have forever been set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis and can never change.

(Two different words are used for “naked” in the Hebrew text of Gen. 2:25 [before the fall] and Gen. 3:7 [after the fall]. In the latter [3:7], the word has to do with *absolute nakedness*, but not so in the former [2:25].

Remaining within the way a person dressed in the East at the time Moses wrote Genesis, and at later times as well, the word used relative to *nakedness* pertaining to Adam and Eve preceding the fall [2:25] could be used to describe a person clothed in a tunic [inner garment] but lacking the mantle or cloak [outer garment]. In the preceding respect, prior to the fall, Adam and Eve were clothed in the Glory of God but had yet to possess the regal outer garments worn by kings [fulfilling the reason for man’s creation – to rule the earth (Gen. 1:26-28)].

Then, following the fall, no longer clothed in the Glory of God, Adam and Eve were no longer in a position to be further clothed in regal garments, realizing the purpose for their creation. They, apart from the inner garment [the Glory] could not wear the outer garments [royal apparel].

Adam, prior to the fall, never wore regal garments or held the sceptre. In this respect, he never moved beyond the description given in Gen. 2:25 – a “naked” condition, “*naked*” in relation to the reason for his creation [lacking the outer regal garments].

Thus, if man, now separated from the Glory, is to ever fulfill the purpose for his creation, God must act. Redemption has to occur; and this, of necessity, has to include the complete man – *spirit, soul, and body* – with a view to not only a *restoration of the Glory but to regality beyond this restoration*.)

Flesh in Scripture is spoken of in synonymous terms with sin (e.g., Rom. 8:1-13; Gal. 4:23; 5:16; 6:8; I Peter 3:21; I John 2:16). But, in actuality, there is *nothing* inherently wrong with flesh. Flesh is sinful *only* in the sense in which Scripture uses the expression, *which must relate back to and have to do with the fall*.

God created man in a body of flesh; Christ appeared in a body of flesh, which He still has today and will continue to possess throughout eternity; and the whole of mankind, as well, will live in bodies of flesh throughout eternity – a type body which God designed for man in the beginning.

Flesh is referred to as *sinful* and spoken of in synonymous terms with *sin* when it is not covered in the manner which God originally covered flesh and intended that flesh remain covered. And the removal of this covering at the time of the fall, because of sin, provides the connection between flesh and sin, existing today.

Thus, Christ coming “in the likeness of sinful flesh” is simply a reference to His coming apart from His body being enswathed in Glory. And, in this respect, the height of His humiliation could only have occurred following His being arrayed as a mock King when His naked body, apart from the covering of Glory originally enswathing man’s body, *was exposed on the cross for all to behold*.

Christ *could not* have worn regal garments at this time, for there was *no covering of Glory*. Christ, as Adam following the fall, lacked the inner garment; He lacked the covering of Glory. And, apart from this covering of Glory, which would have allowed *regal garments* to be worn, “judgment,” *was not* Christ’s to render. Consequently, it was taken from Him.

Then, another – Pilate, a Gentile ruler (exercising power during the Times of the Gentiles, a time existing because of Israel’s past disobedience, extending over centuries of time) – was allowed to execute judgment upon Christ. And, as a result of this judgment, Christ was “led as a sheep to the slaughter,” with His “life” then taken away.

With all these things in mind, in the light of that stated in Rom. 8:15-23 and Phil. 3:20, 21, it should be a simple matter for anyone to see what is involved in the adoption, the redemption of the body.

Christ, at the time of His resurrection, was not raised in a glorified body. Christ’s body, following His resurrection, was still void of the covering of Glory. Christ’s body was not enswathed in a covering of Glory until at least forty days following His resurrection, when He ascended and “a cloud” received Him out of the disciples’ sight (Acts 1:9), an apparent reference to His being “received up into glory” (I Tim. 3:16).

In this respect, until His ascension, Christ still appeared exactly as He had appeared since the time of His incarnation – in a body of flesh, void of the Glory.

Note the differences in His appearance to the two disciples on the Emmaus Road following His resurrection and His appearance to Paul on the Damascus Road at a time following His ascension. In the former appearance, it is evident that the two disciples noticed no visible difference between Christ’s outward appearance and that of any other Jewish man of that day. However, following His being “received up into glory,” that changed dramatically. When Christ appeared to Paul in a body enswathed in Glory, Paul was blinded by His outward appearance, by light which he later described as occurring at “midday” and being “above the brightness of the sun” (Acts 9:3-9; 26:12-15).

(Note the similar description of Christ in Rev. 1:16, where He is seen at a yet future time in the role of *Judge* – a time when “judgment” cannot be and will not be taken from Him:

“...out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.”)

In like manner to Christ’s resurrection, Christians will not be raised in glorified bodies either. The bodies of Christians will not be enswathed in Glory until events following the judgment seat, for it will be there that decisions and determinations will be made surrounding Christians relative to their having been shown

qualified or having been shown disqualified to occupy positions with Christ in the kingdom. And *only those having been shown qualified to occupy these positions will enter into events surrounding the adoption, the redemption of the body, and the Glory.*

If a person takes the redemption of the body back to the time of the fall – *which is exactly where it must be taken, for something happened to the body at this time, necessitating redemption* – he can come to only one conclusion. “The redemption of the body” has to do with *placing man back in the position which he occupied prior to the fall and, in this position, allowing man to realize the reason for his creation, which is regal.* This is the way matters are set forth in both Rom. 8:15-23 and Phil. 3:20, 21.

The word “change” in Phil. 3:21 (referring to changing our body of humiliation) is a translation of the Greek word *metaschematizo*, which refers to *an outward change.* An *inward change* – described by the Greek word *metamorphoo* (Rom. 12:1, 2 [translated, “transformed”]) must have previously occurred, else there can be *no outward change* at that future time when Christians having previously been shown qualified find themselves *enswathed in Glory*, with their bodies “fashioned like unto” *Christ's body of Glory* (Phil. 3:21).

Thus, the adoption, the change in our body of humiliation, the redemption of the body, occurs at a time following the resurrection and rapture. This will be *the capstone of all which preceded, placing man back in the position which Adam occupied before the fall, though with regal garments.* And, accordingly, it will precede and anticipate Christ’s millennial reign.

